

**LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY FOR:****February 21, 2000**

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**LAST WEEK:**

**PRESIDENT'S DAY RECESS** – Last week, the House and Senate began a district holiday work period in honor of President's Day. The Senate will be in recess until Tuesday, February 22, 2000. The House will be in adjournment until February 29, 2000.

**LEGISLATION OF NOTE –**

The following bills of significance to NRCS and conservation have been introduced:

<b>BILL</b>	<b>MEMBER</b>	<b>PURPOSE</b>
S. 1739	Wellstone, (MN)	Would impose a moratorium on large agribusiness mergers and establish a commission to review large agriculture mergers, concentration, and power.
S. 1925	Feinstein, (CA)	Would promote environmental restoration around the Lake Tahoe basin.
S. 2039	Hutchinson, (AR)	Would amend the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to provide emergency loans to poultry producers to rebuild chicken houses destroyed by disasters.
S. 2040	Bunning, (KY)	Would exclude the receipts and disbursements of the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund from the budget of the United States Government, and for other purposes.
H.R. 3288	Wilson, (NM)	Would authorize the acquisition of the Valles Caldera, to provide for an effective land and wildlife management program for this resource within the Department of Agriculture, and for other purposes.
H.R. 3313	Johnson, (CT)	Would amend section 119 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to reauthorize the program for the Long Island Sound, and for other purposes.
H.R. 3384	Barton, (TX)	Would strengthen provisions in the Energy Policy Act of 1992 with respect to the potential Climate Change.





**FARM POLICY FIELD HEARINGS** – House Agriculture Committee Chairman, Larry Combest (R-TX) and Ranking Member Charlie Stenholm (D-TX) have announced the schedule of farm policy hearings in 10 cities in regions from March through May, encouraging producers to submit detailed proposals for agriculture policy. Although each hearing may last for up to four hours, full discussion of producers' plans and Committee Members' questions will limit the number of witnesses who can testify at the hearings. Producers may be invited to offer testimony as a witness, or if not selected, producers may either submit specific views for the record, or e-mail informal comments to the Committee. To be considered as a potential witness at the hearing, producers should include information about their agricultural experience and their farming operations. The Committee will select witnesses who are qualified to provide specific testimony about federal farm policy, and answer questions posed by Agriculture Committee Members about policy alternatives.

The first three committee hearings have been scheduled for

- **Monday, March 6 in Lubbock, Texas at the Civic Center Banquet Hall;**
- **Friday, March 17 in Memphis Tennessee at Agricenter International;**
- **Saturday, March 18 in Auburn, Alabama at the Auburn University Hotel and Conference Center.**

Dates will also be announced soon for the following cities: Boise, Idaho; Kutztown, Pennsylvania; Peoria, Illinois, Raleigh, North Carolina; Sacramento, California; Sioux Falls, South Dakota and West Chester, Ohio. Those who are interested in testifying at the field hearings in March for Lubbock, Memphis or Auburn, must send a letter addressed to the Chief Clerk, c/o House Committee on Agriculture at 1301 Longworth Building, Washington, D.C., 20515. If contacted to testify for the hearing, producers are required under the Rules of the House of Representatives to file an affidavit disclosing the amount and source of each federal contract or grant they receive (disclosure of farm payments or USDA loans is not required). A brief biography of the witness must also be included. Also, those witnesses will need to provide 100 copies of their testimony in advance. Producers who are unable to testify at a field hearing may instead submit written testimony for the official record by May 20, 2000, but must include their name, address, phone number and 10 copies of their testimony in their letter to the Agriculture Committee's Chief Clerk.

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