

LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY FOR: January 11, 1999

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LAST WEEK

106TH CONGRESS BEGINS - On Wednesday, January 6, 1999, the 106th Congress began, as incoming and returning Members took their oaths of office in both the Senate and House of Representatives. Rep. Dennis Hastert (R-IL) was selected as the 51st Speaker of the House. Hastert presented many objectives for the 106th Congress, including a goal of passing all 13 appropriations bills by summer. Both the House and Senate completed a number of procedural and housekeeping motions necessary to begin business for the year. Following last weeks activities, the House is in adjournment until noon on Tuesday, January 19th.

IMPEACHMENT TRIAL BEGINS - On Thursday, January 7, thirteen House prosecutors or “managers” introduced articles of impeachment to the Senate. That afternoon, Chief Justice William Rehnquist was sworn in by Senator Strom Thurmond, and all 100 Senators took an oath as jurors in the trial. Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott had called for two weeks of trial proceedings, however, many hill contacts expect the trail to last far longer. If it does, most Senate business will likely be postponed during that time.

COMMITTEE VACANCIES AND ASSIGNMENTS - To date, many organizational meetings have not occurred relating to Subcommittee assignments and setting priorities for committee activity during the 106th Congress. A list of new Committee assignments as they have been reported follows. NRCS legislative affairs will provide updates as new information is made official.

Senate AgricultureAppointed

Peter Fitzgerald, R-IL
Blanche Lincoln, D-AR

Senate AppropriationsAppointed

John Kyl, R-AZ
Richard Durbin, D-IL
Dianne Feinstein, D-CA

House Agriculture

Appointed

Gil Gutnecht, R-MI
 Greg Walden, R-OR
 Mike Simpson, R-ID
 Doug Ose, R-CA
 Robin Hayes, R-NC
 Ernie Fletcher, R-KY
 Ken Lucas, D-KY
 Mike Thompson, D-CA
 David Phelps, D-IL

House Appropriations

Appointed

Jo Ann Emerson, R-MO
 John E. Sununu, R-NH
 Kay Granger, R-TX
 John E. Peterson, R-PA
 James Clyburn D-SC
 Maurice Hinchey D-NY
 Lucille Roybal-Allard, D-CA
 Sam Farr D-CA
 Jesse Jackson, Jr. D-IL
 Carolyn Kilpatrick D-MI
 Allen Boyd D-FL

HOUSE AGRICULTURE SUBCOMMITTEE ON CONSERVATION IS

ABOLISHED - Last week, staff for the House Agriculture Committee announced that the Subcommittee for Forestry, Resource Conservation, and Research would be disbanded. As a result, a likely breakdown of the House Agriculture Subcommittee responsibilities may be as follows:

Department Operations, Oversight, Nutrition and Forestry --

Agency oversight, review and analysis, special investigations, pesticide regulation, nutrition, food stamps, hunger, consumer programs, and forestry.

General Farm Commodities, Resource Conservation and Credit --

Program and markets related to cotton, cottonseed, wheat, feed grains, soybeans, oilseeds, rice, dry beans, peas, lentils. The Commodity Credit Corporation, agricultural credit, natural resource conservation, small watershed program, rural development, rural electrification, energy, farm security, and family farming matters.

Livestock, Dairy, Poultry, and Fruit and Vegetable Crops --

Livestock, dairy, poultry, meat, seafood and seafood products, the inspection of those commodities, aquaculture, animal welfare, fruits and vegetables, marketing orders, and grazing.

Risk Management, Specialty Crops, and Research --

Commodity futures, crop insurance, peanuts, sugar, tobacco, honey and bees, research and education, and agriculture biotechnology matters.

NEXT WEEK

STATE OF CONSERVATION BRIEFING POSTPONED - A briefing previously scheduled for January 12th regarding the state of conservation activities on private land has been postponed. The briefing will be sponsored by the Senate Agriculture Committee and open to the public and media. NRCS staff will present information about the current state of NRCS program delivery-system and conservation assistance, and will also outline key priority issues for the agency for 1999. The briefing will likely be rescheduled for late February or March.

LOOKING AHEAD

FY'2000 BUDGET HEARINGS SCHEDULED - House and Senate Appropriations Committees have scheduled hearings on the Administration's FY'2000 Budget proposal relating to NRCS and Conservation programs. Key witnesses will include USDA Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment, Jim Lyons; and NRCS Chief, Pearlie Reed. The meeting dates and times for the Appropriations hearings are as follows:

Senate

February 23, 1998 10:00am

House

February 24, 1998, 1:00pm