

**LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY FOR:****January 25, 1999**

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**LAST WEEK**

**LEGISLATIVE WORKSHOP** - On Tuesday, January 19, 1998, NRCS Legislative Affairs Staff hosted the first Quarterly Legislative Workshop for Deputy Chiefs, Division Directors and program managers. The workshop was held in room 107-A Whitten Bldg. Guest speakers included Ms. Jan Poling of the USDA Office of General Counsel. Ms. Poling provided information to staff regarding provisions of the Anti-Lobbying Act. She stressed that Federal Employees must not engage in lobbying activities, or they are subject to legal action under existing statute. Galen Fountain, minority counsel for the Senate Appropriations Committee, provided information on the 106th Congress. He also summarized some of the activities on the FY'99 appropriations bill, and highlighted some of the key issues that will encompass debate on the FY'2000 appropriations bills. NRCS Legislative Affairs staff distributed informational packages regarding the make-up of Congressional Committees in the 106th Congress and also provided informational materials on communicating effectively with Members and staff.

**LEGISLATION OF NOTE-**

The following bills of significance to NRCS and conservation were recently introduced:

<b>Bill</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
H.R. 34	Goss (FL)	To direct the Secretary of the Interior to make technical corrections to a map relating to the Coastal Barrier Resources System.

**THIS WEEK**

**RESUMPTION OF SENATE IMPEACHMENT TRIAL** - On Monday, January 25th, the Senate will continue consideration of articles of impeachment of the President. Several Members have expressed interest in introducing motions to dismiss the articles, or to hold final votes on the matter. In addition, some Senators have expressed interest in hearing the testimony of witnesses. On the House side, Members remain in their districts on recess until Tuesday, February 2, 1999.

## NEXT WEEK

**RELEASE OF PRESIDENT'S FY'2000 BUDGET** - On Tuesday, February 2, 1999 the President is scheduled to present the administration's FY2000 budget proposal to Congress. Details regarding provisions of the budget are not public, however, provisions of a Lands Legacy Initiative announced both on January 12th and mentioned in the State of Union Address will be included. The initiative seeks to preserve valuable lands for public enjoyment and open space preservation including \$50 million for farmland protection.

## LOOKING AHEAD

**WATERSHED HEARING** - A hearing has been tentatively scheduled by the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Water Resources (Chairman Sherwood Boehlert, R-NY) to discuss the Administration's FY2000 budget submission and programs under the Subcommittee's jurisdiction. Specifically, the Subcommittee has requested testimony regarding the NRCS small watershed program and also updates on the aging watershed infrastructure issue. Other likely witnesses at the hearing will include the Army Corps of Engineers, EPA, and the Tennessee Valley Authority.

February 10, 1999      Time TBA                      Location TBA

**STATE OF CONSERVATION BRIEFING** - A briefing previously scheduled for January 12th regarding the state of conservation activities on private land has been scheduled for March 9th. 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.

March 9                      10:00am                      328-A Russell Bldg.