

LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY FOR:**May 17, 1999**

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LAST WEEK -

SENATE ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE BRIEFED ON USDA'S ROLE IN THE CLEAN WATER ACTION PLAN (CWAP) - On Monday, May 10, Glenda Humiston, Deputy Under Secretary, Natural Resources and Environment, briefed the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee staff on USDA's role in the President's Clean Water Action Plan (CWAP). Ms. Humiston used the list of the 111 Action items from the CWAP to explain the progress the Department has made with the current funding and staffing. This was a preliminary briefing prior to the Secretary's testimony on the CWAP held on Thursday with the same committee.

SENATE ENVIRONMENT & PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE HOLDS HEARING ON THE PRESIDENT'S CLEAN WATER ACTION PLAN (CWAP) - On Thursday, May 13, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee (Chairman John H. Chafee, R-RI) held a hearing to receive testimony on the CWAP. During the first panel Secretary Dan Glickman, USDA, and Administrator Carol Browner, EPA, gave testimony and answered questions concerning their role in the CWAP. Secretary Glickman's testimony concentrated on the ability of NRCS to deliver technical and financial assistance. He called EQIP the heart of our nation's conservation program. The questions from the members were primarily targeted toward the Unified National Strategy for Animal Feeding Operations (AFO) and the Unified Watershed Assessments (UWA). Senator Craig Thomas (R-WY) was the most vocal of the members during the question and answer period. His concerns were the lack of local and state input in the AFO and UWA plans, as well as the CWAP process in general. The second panel consisted of presenters from Wyoming and Maryland state water quality agencies, Texas Cattle Feeders, American Forestry Association, and the Wyoming Outdoor Council/Clean Water Network. Testimony was given on varying views of the CWAP. Overall, testimony strongly supported the need for increased technical and financial assistance to implement CWAP actions, while adhering to a locally led process.

CONFEREES COMPLETE WORK ON EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL - Late Thursday, House and Senate appropriators completed work on the FY'99 emergency supplemental package relating to needs in agriculture, defense, and other international disaster assistance. Congressional staff will spend the weekend completing many technical tasks associated with finalizing the bill. The Conference agreement contains the following provisions of interest to NRCS:

Technical Assistance funding to implement CRP/WRP	--	\$28 million (FY'99)
	+	\$35 million (FY'00)
		\$63 million total

Emergency Watershed Protection Program **\$95 million**

Next week, the House and Senate will likely begin consideration of the Conference report, with final passage expected before the Memorial Day recess.

HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE BEGINS MARKUP OF FISCAL YEAR 2000 APPROPRIATIONS - On Thursday, May 13, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies (Chairman Joe Skeen, R-NM) marked up funding levels for agriculture agencies and programs for Fiscal Year 2000. *This begins the process for determining funding levels for next year and is entirely separate from work on the FY'99 Supplemental.* Funding levels agreed upon by the Subcommittee are reported as follows:

Conservation Operations.....	\$654,243,000
Watershed Surveys and Planning.....	\$10,368,000
Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations.....	\$99,443,000
RC&D.....	\$35,265,000
Forestry Incentives Program (FIP).....	\$0
Farmland Protection Program.....	\$0
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).....	\$174,000,000

These funding levels will now go to the full House Appropriations Committee for consideration.

LEGISLATION OF NOTE -

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

BILL	MEMBER	PURPOSE
S. 961	Burns, (MT)	Would amend the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act to improve shared appreciation arrangements.
H.R. 1712	Stupak, (MI)	Would authorize testing of any substance that may be found in discharges of pollutants into navigable waters if the Administrator determines that a substantial population may be exposed to such substance.

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THIS WEEK**SENATE HOLDS HEARING ON NOXIOUS WEEDS AND PLANT PESTS**

Forestry, Conservation and Rural Revitalization Subcommittee (Chairman Craig, R-Idaho) of Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee will hold a hearing on noxious weeds and plant pests.

May 18 9:00 am 328 Russell Bldg.

FOREST SERVICE PAYMENTS - Department Operations, Oversight, Nutrition and Forestry Subcommittee (Chairman Goodlatte, R-VA) of House Agriculture Committee will hold a hearing on Forest Service payments to counties.

May 18 1:00 pm 1302 Longworth

PLANT BASED FUELS AND CHEMICALS - Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee (Chairman Lugar, R-Ind.) will hold a hearing on fuels and chemicals produced from plants, trees, grasses and agricultural residues.

May 20 9:00 am 328 Russell Bldg.

LOOKING AHEAD -

CONSERVATION AND WILDLIFE- Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans Subcommittee (Chairman Saxton, R-N.J.) of House Resources Committee will hold a hearing on H.Con. Res. 63, a concurrent resolution expressing the sense of the Congress opposing removal of dams on the Columbia and Snake rivers for fishery restoration purposes.

May 27

10:00 am

1334 Longworth Bldg.

WATER SYSTEMS HEARING - Water and Power Subcommittee (Chairman Smith, R-Ore.) of Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee will hold a hearing on S. 623, a bill to amend Public Law 89-108 to increase authorization levels for state and Indian tribal, municipal, rural and industrial water supplies and to enhance natural resources and fish and wildlife habitat, and for other purposes.

May 27

2:00 pm

366 Dirksen Bldg.

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