

**LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY FOR:****July 28, 1997**

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**LAST WEEK:****HOUSE AND SENATE PASS THEIR RESPECTIVE FY98 AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATIONS --**

On Thursday, both the Senate and the House passed their respective Agriculture Appropriations for Fiscal Year 1998. The Senate made one modification while the bill was on the floor which effected NRCS. The RC&D allocation was reduced by \$3 million from the committee recommendation. This was done to offset a \$1 million dollar increase in the outreach for disadvantage farmers, bringing that amount to \$4 million and to provide a \$2 million dollar increase in support of the Department's civil rights division. The Senate passed their bill, S. 1033, in a 99-0 vote.

Late Thursday, the House reached agreement on their bill, H.R. 2160, passing it in a 392-32 vote. Members who had offered amendments which may have affect NRCS were withdrawn, and the recommendations for NRCS remained unchanged from the committee report. Next, the House and the Senate will name members who will serve on the conference committee to work out differences between the two bills.

*(in Thousands)*

	<i>Request</i>	<i>House</i>	<i>Senate</i>
<b>Conservation Operations</b>	\$722,268	\$610,000	\$729,880 <sup>1</sup>
<b>Watershed Surveys and Planning</b>	n/a	\$ 10,000	n/a
<b>Watersheds &amp; Flood Prevention</b>			
Technical Assistance	0	0	0
Financial Assistance	\$ 40,000	\$101,036 <sup>2</sup>	\$ 40,000
<b>Forestry Incentives Program (FIP)</b>	\$ 6,325	\$ 6,325	\$ 6,325
<b>RC&amp;D</b>	\$ 47,700	\$ 29,377	\$ 44,700
<b>Wetlands Reserve Program</b>	\$163,579	\$163,579	\$163,579
<b>Wildlife Habitat Incentives (WHIP)</b>	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000
<b>Environmental Quality Incentives (EQIP)</b>	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000
<b>Conservation Farm Option (CFO)</b>	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000
<b>Farmland Protection Program (FPP)</b>	\$ 18,000	\$ 18,000	\$ 18,000

<sup>1</sup> Senate accepted President's Budget structure for Surveys and Planning and Watershed and Flood Prevention

<sup>2</sup> The House funded the program solely through the Small Watershed Account and limited technical assistance to \$50 million.

**IMPACT OF CLEAN AIR REGULATIONS ON AGRICULTURE** - The Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee (Chairman Lugar, R-Ind.) held a hearing on the impact of the new clean air regulations on the agriculture industry. Carol Browner, Administrator, for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was the principle witness. She assured the committee that agriculture would not be the focus of these new regulations. Ms. Browner also outlined the time frame involved in implementing these regulations, which included at least 3 years to build and install the monitors, then 3 years to collect the data, and that it would not be until 2003 or 2004 before communities could begin to develop plans to conform with the standards. She went further and stated that EPA would work with the committee so that the planning criteria provided to the states would help the states focus on those practices were the most efficient and cost effective gains could be made and that those areas are not agriculture.

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**THIS WEEK:**

**FY98 AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATIONS -**

The House and Senate will likely name their respective members to serve on the appropriations conference committee. Negotiations will begin soon to draft a committee report and a revised appropriations measure. This will allow for the conferees to work out any difference between the two bills during the August recess and have a conference report ready for final passage once Congress reconvenes in September.

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**LOOKING AHEAD:**

**CONGRESSIONAL RECESS -**

The traditional August recess is scheduled for August 2 through September 1, 1997. Members are scheduled to return to Washington September 2nd.

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