

LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY FOR:**October 12, 1999**

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LAST WEEK -

SENATORS THREATENED TO BLOCK AGRICULTURE CONFERENCE

REPORT - On Wednesday, October 6, a few senators threatened to block the conference report to the agriculture spending bill (HR 1906) in order to secure more disaster relief for mid-Atlantic farmers and passage of the Northeast Dairy Compact. Senators from Vermont, Pennsylvania and New Jersey charged that the spending bill would aid Southeastern and Midwestern farmers, but did not meet the needs of Northeastern farmers suffering from drought and last month's Hurricane Floyd.

The \$69 billion spending bill includes \$8.7 billion in emergency relief to farmers. Senator Rick Santorum, R-PA, said 70 percent of the relief goes to farmers not affected by drought but by low prices. The senators said they will try to filibuster the bill, and they suggested that they had the votes needed to maintain it. But Senator Robert Torricelli, D-N.J., admitted a cloture vote would be close. If that plan fails, the senators said they will ask President Clinton to veto the measure. Although, Clinton has indicated he would sign the bill, Torricelli said the president had not made a final decision.

HOUSE PASSES FARM BANKRUPTCY PROTECTION LEGISLATION - On

Monday, October 4, the House passed, by voice vote, a nine-month extension (S1606) of the farm bankruptcy program allowing bankrupt family farmers to keep operating while they organize their debts. The bill is another stopgap measure for Chapter 12, which expired October 1. Its current provisions are effective until July 1, 2000.

Chapter 12 was first enacted in 1986 to provide relief to family farmers during the 1980s farm crisis and has been extended several times since its inception. It initially was set to expire in 1991, extended until 1993, then again until 1998. It recently received a series of short-term extensions as Congress wrestled with a comprehensive overhaul bankruptcy law. Senator Charles Grassley, R-IA, initially introduced S.1606 as a measure to make Chapter 12 permanent, but the legislation was amended last week to provide nine months for a permanent fix to the program. The Senate passed the legislation by voice vote on September 30 without debate.

THIS WEEK

USDA CIVIL RIGHTS PROGRAMS - The Department Operations, Oversight, Nutrition and Forestry Subcommittee (Chairman Goodlatte, R-VA) of the House Agriculture Committee will hold a hearing on the civil rights programs and responsibilities of the Agriculture Department.

Oct. 14 10:00am 1300 Longworth Bldg.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND CROP INSURANCE - The Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee (Chairman Lugar, R-IN) will hold hearings on risk management and crop insurance.

Oct. 14 9:00am 328 Russell Bldg.

CLEAN WATER ACT ISSUES - The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee (Chairman Chafee, R-RI) will hold a hearing on S. 669, a bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to ensure compliance by federal facilities with pollution control requirements. The committee will also hear testimony on other issues and legislation relating to the Clean Water Act.

Oct. 13 10:00am 406 Dirksen Bldg.

LOOKING AHEAD

ENERGY FULL COMMITTEE MARKUP - The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee (Chairman Murkowski, R-AK) will markup S. 25, a bill to provide coastal impact assistance to state and local governments, to amend the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act Amendments of 1978 and the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965.

date TBA time TBA 366 Dirksen Bldg.

RESOURCES FULL COMMITTEE MARKUP - The House Resources Committee (Chairman Young, R-Alaska) will meet to markup H.R. 701, a bill to provide Outer Continental Shelf Impact Assistance to state and local governments, to amend the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 and the Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Act of 1978. The committee will also markup H.R. 798, a bill to provide for the permanent protection of the resources of the United States in the year 2000 and beyond.

date TBA time TBA 1324 Longworth Bldg.

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