

system witnesses testify about boiler repairs.

The D.C. Court of Appeals rejected a District request yesterday to overturn Christian's order closing the schools. The court said it would first give Christian a chance to rule on a similar request that the city made over the weekend.

In the meantime, about 4,300 students—including 1,800 from two other schools that have been closed for a month because of roof repairs—are displaced without proper books, supplies or equipment.

"What we see happening is the egos and emotions of adults penalizing and punishing the children," said Roger Glass, PTA president at Whittier, where no boiler work was underway yesterday and where school officials say asbestos removal was completed last week.

"I don't know how else to explain it," Glass said. "I understand that the judge is the judge, and she has all the authority. But just because she has the right to do something doesn't mean that it is the right thing to do."

The boiler standoff between Christian and the school Chief Executive Julius W. Becton, Jr. is the latest in a series of clashes that began shortly after Becton was appointed in November to overhaul the troubled D.C. public schools.

As the retired Army lieutenant general has pushed forward with repairs never undertaken by his predecessors, Christian—who oversees school building safety because of a 1992 lawsuit against the city over the fire code violation in schools—has demanded detailed summaries of the repair work and repeatedly expanded her jurisdiction over safety issues.

This summer, Christian forbade roof work while students or staff were in school buildings, despite expert testimony that such repairs could be made safely. The appeals court upheld her decision. Last month, she ruled that no construction of any kind could take place while a school is in operation.

When a fire inspector said in court last week that the boiler work could be defined as construction, Christian put that on the list of forbidden work as well, even though boiler repairs have been made in the past without her interference.

"The court has ruled on these issues with respect to construction going on in these schools while they're occupied," Christian said, interrupting Assistant Corporation Counsel Robert Rigsby on Thursday as he tried to protest her decision. "This court has ruled that this work is to be done while the building is not occupied. Certainly the court has grave concerns about asbestos and children."

School Chief Operating Officer Charles E. Williams testified in court Friday that asbestos-related boiler work scheduled for Emery had not yet started. But Christian, who had closed Langdon the day before, said: "If Emery, Tyler, Whittier and Young are undergoing this process, then they are to be closed."

Rigsby tried to clarify the order but did not specifically point out that work had not begun at Emery. Christian told him to put his requests in writing. Neither school spokeswoman Loretta Hargde nor Corporation Counsel John Ferren returned telephone calls yesterday to explain whether they considered keeping Emery open because no work is going on there.

School officials say that it is costing them more than \$20,000 a day for buses to transport the students to alternative school sites. And the situation could get worse, they warned, if more schools must close before boiler repairs and other work can be started.

About 72 boilers in the city's 146 aging schools have needed replacing for years, officials

note. Unless the work is done, youngsters in many classrooms will continue to be dependent on temporary heat or end up taking tests in coats and mittens. The school system has secured \$40 million to begin replacing 47 of the boilers and had hoped to do the work this fiscal year.

Each project begins by unwrapping material that may contain asbestos from around the pipes of the old boiler—the procedure that concerned Christian the most last week. But the project manager that Christian wouldn't let testify said in an affidavit filed over the weekend that in accordance with the law and environmental regulations, extreme precautions are taken that would prevent the asbestos from endangering students or staff members at a school.

The boiler room, in school basements, is sealed off with a special fabric, approved by the Environmental Protection Agency, that does not allow air and asbestos to penetrate, said Narase Bob Oudit, senior project manager for the school system. An EPA-certified company monitors the air outside the area and is required to shut down the project if any asbestos is detected.

Oudit said he had monitored similar projects for 11 years and had never seen a case in which asbestos leaked out if the correct precautions were taken. Nor was any asbestos reported in the air during recent boiler work in the schools. If removal is done improperly, he said, the contractor can lose its license and be fined as much as \$1 million. Asbestos work at one of the closed schools, Young Elementary in Northeast Washington, doesn't involve a boiler. The heating-system work there is part of a five-month-old project with the EPA designed to improve the school's energy efficiency, school officials say.

The asbestos removal at Tyler in Southeast Washington should be completed today, an aide to Williams said.

At Whittier yesterday, Glass handed out fliers to parents urging them to call Becton and Parents United, the group that filed the lawsuit, to demand a negotiated solution. Settlement talks began in earnest two weeks ago but faltered this weekend over how much money should be earmarked for school repairs and who should monitor the agreement.

At Emery yesterday, the breakfasts usually served before school were not available, and the after-school day-care program was canceled. The youngest children, Head Start through third grade, were bused about 12 blocks across North Capitol Street to Scott Montgomery Elementary School.

Fourth-, fifth- and sixth-graders were taken around the corner to Metropolitan Wesley AME Church, where by 9:30 a.m. they sat clustered with their teachers in a large open space usually used for Sunday school. Children wrote stories with paper and pencil supplied by the church or bought by individual teachers.

"We're doing the best we can under very, very trying circumstances," said Leonard Sanders, Emery's principal. A little girl raised her hand to ask when they would return to their school.

"I do not know," Sanders said slowly. "As soon as I find out, I will let you know."

Mr. JEFFORDS. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The distinguished senior Senator from the State of Mississippi.

CORRECTING A TECHNICAL ERROR IN THE ENROLLMENT OF H.R. 2160

Mr. COCHRAN. At the direction of the majority leader, I ask unanimous

consent the Senate proceed to the consideration of House Concurrent Resolution 167.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 167) to correct a technical error in the enrollment of H.R. 2160.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the immediate consideration of the concurrent resolution?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, this concurrent resolution was adopted by the House with the passage of the rule for the consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 2160, the Fiscal Year 1998 Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act.

It makes a technical correction in the conference report. Specifically, it inserts a proviso in the food stamp account language which was included in the House bill and agreed to by the conference committee but inadvertently left out of the conference report which was filed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the concurrent resolution is agreed to.

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 167) was agreed to.

AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1998—CONFERENCE REPORT

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I submit a report of the committee of conference on the bill (H.R. 2160) making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1998, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The report will be stated.

The clerk read as follows:

The committee on conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate, to the bill (H.R. 2160) having met, after full and free conference, have agreed to recommend and do recommend to their respective Houses this report, signed by all of the conferees.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of the conference report.

(The conference report is printed in the House proceedings of the RECORD of September 17, 1997.)

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there be 20 minutes of debate equally divided between the chairman and ranking member, and following the expiration or yielding back of time, the conference report be considered agreed to and the

motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I am very pleased to be able to present for the Senate's approval today the conference report on H.R. 2160, the Fiscal Year 1998 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act.

The conference agreement provides total appropriations of \$49.7 billion. This is \$4.1 billion less than the fiscal year 1997 enacted level and \$2.6 billion less than the level requested by the President. It is \$964 million less than the total appropriations recommended by the Senate-passed bill and \$146 million more than the level recommended by the House bill.

Including Congressional budget scorekeeping adjustments and prior-year spending actions, this conference agreement provides total discretionary spending for fiscal year 1998 of \$13.751 billion in budget authority and \$13.997 billion in outlays. These amounts are consistent with the revised discretionary spending allocations established for this conference agreement.

Both the House and the Senate passed this bill at the end of July. The conferees met and completed conference on September 17. I believe it is a credit to all members of the conference committee that we were able to reach a conference agreement quickly. Special recognition is due the ranking member of the subcommittee, my colleague from Arkansas, Senator BUMPERS; the chairman of the House Subcommittee, Congressman SKEEN of New Mexico; and the ranking member of the House Subcommittee, Congresswoman KAPTUR, for their hard work and cooperation in making this possible.

It was our intent that the conference report on this bill would be adopted by both bodies of the Congress and sent to the President prior to the October 1, 1997, start of the fiscal year. However, it was the decision of the leadership to withhold Senate approval of this conference agreement until further progress was made on the FDA reform bill, which reauthorizes fees to expedite FDA's prescription drug review and approval process.

The conference agreement on this appropriations bill was adopted by the House of Representatives on Monday, October 6, by a vote of 399 yeas to 18 nays. Senate adoption of this conference report today is the final step remaining to allow this measure to be sent to the President for signature into law. We have every indication that the bill will be signed by the President.

Approximately \$37.2 billion, close to 75 percent of the total new budget authority provided by this conference report, is for domestic food programs administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. These include food stamps; commodity assistance; the special supplemental food program for

Women, Infants, and Children [WIC]; and the school lunch and breakfast programs. This is roughly the same as the House bill level and \$923 million less than the Senate level. The difference from the Senate recommended level is principally due to the fact that the Senate receded to the House on the transfer of funding Food and Consumer Service studies and evaluations to the Economic Research Service, and accepted the lower House bill level for the Commodity Assistance Program based on the Department of Agriculture's revised estimate of program need. In addition, the Senate receded to the House level of \$100 million for the Food Stamp Program contingency reserve, \$900 million less than the Senate bill level.

For agriculture programs, the conference report recommends a total of \$6.9 billion, \$57 million more than the House bill level. This amount includes \$1.2 billion for agricultural research and education, \$423 million for extension activities, \$430 million for the Animal Plant Health and Inspection Service, \$589 for the Food Safety and Inspection Service, \$703 million for the Farm Service Agency, and \$253 million for the Risk Management Agency.

For conservation programs, the conference report recommends almost \$790 million, \$30 million more than the House bill level but \$36 million less than the amount recommended by the Senate.

For rural economic and community development programs, the bill recommends \$2.1 billion, \$47 million more than the House level and \$9 million more than the Senate bill level. Included in this amount is \$652 million for the Rural Community Advancement Program, nearly \$8 million more than the Senate bill level, and the Senate bill level of \$535 million for the rental assistance program. The conference report also provides a total rural housing loan program level of \$4.2 billion.

For foreign assistance and related programs of the Department of Agriculture, the bill recommends \$1.7 billion, including \$131 million in new budget authority for the Foreign Agricultural Service and a total program level of \$1.1 billion for the Public Law 480 Food for Peace Program.

The Food and Drug Administration receives one of the largest discretionary spending increases over the fiscal year 1997 level. Included in the appropriation provided by the conference agreement for salaries and expenses of the Food and Drug Administration is \$24 million for food safety and \$34 million for youth tobacco prevention. These are the full amounts requested by the Administration for these initiatives.

Mr. President, there is no reason to continue temporary stop-gap funding for the programs and activities funded by this bill. As I indicated earlier, this conference report was filed on September 17 and was adopted by the

House of Representatives on October 6. Senate passage of this conference report today is the final step necessary to send this fiscal year 1998 appropriations bill to the President for signature into law. I urge my colleagues to support the adoption of this conference report.

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, I am pleased to join my colleague from Mississippi, Senator COCHRAN, in bringing to the Senate floor the conference report for the fiscal year 1998 appropriations bill for the Department of Agriculture, the Food and Drug Administration, and related agencies. We concluded a successful conference with the House and although our 602(b) allocation had to be adjusted downward, we were still able to maintain relatively high levels of funding for many important programs.

As I stated during consideration of the Senate bill, I had hoped we could provide higher levels of funding for agricultural research. I am happy to report that the conference agreement provides a higher level of funding for the Agricultural Research Service than was contained in either the earlier House or Senate versions. Funding for the Food Safety Inspection Service is provided at a level more than \$15 million above last year and additional funds are included for the President's Food Safety Initiative at USDA and FDA.

The conference report contains funding for conservation programs well above last year's level and I am happy to report that the House and Senate conferees have agreed to changes in rural development activities that will protect program integrity and make them more efficient. The WIC Program retains the increase of more than \$100 million above fiscal year 1997 that was included in the Senate bill and full funding for FDA's youth tobacco initiative is provided.

I regret that we had to defer consideration of this conference report until this time. We had completed conference action and had been prepared to conclude action on this bill well in advance of the end of the previous fiscal year. However, questions raised by the authorization committees of the Food and Drug Administration postponed this final action until today. I look forward to quick passage of this conference report and approval by the President.

We have already seen the President exercise his new authorities of line-item veto on bills presented to him. I no doubt suspect that he will review this legislation with a similar critical eye and, without doubt, he will find items that had not originated with the executive branch. Mr. President, I do not here intend to reopen floor debate on the ill-conceived line-item veto. However, I remind my colleagues, and my friend in the White House, that the Congress has very explicit responsibilities derived from the U.S. Constitution relating to the expenditure of funds. Simply because an item does not

originate with the executive does not mean it is without merit. Let me plainly observe that when this bill was on the Senate floor in July of this year, it passed by a resounding 98 to 0. Mr. President, that simple statistic should speak for itself and send an important message to those who would undue the work we have done.

In closing, let me again say what a pleasure it has been to work with my friend from Mississippi, the chairman of this subcommittee. He understands the programs and the issues contained in this bill and his leadership has been beyond value. Let me also again thank the subcommittee's majority staff, Rebecca Davies, Martha Scott Poindexter, Rochelle Graves, and, on this side, Galen Fountain, Carole Geagley, and Ben Noble of my personal staff. All their work has been important to completing work on this bill.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, the pending Agriculture and related agencies appropriations bill provides \$49.0 billion in new budget authority [BA] and \$41.5 billion in new outlays to fund most of the programs of the Department of Agriculture and other related agencies for fiscal year 1998.

When outlays from prior year budget authority and other completed actions are taken into account, the bill totals \$48.8 billion in budget authority and \$49.2 billion in outlays for fiscal year 1998.

Of the \$49.2 billion in outlays, \$35.2 billion fund entitlement programs like food stamps, child nutrition programs, and price support payments. The remaining \$14.0 billion funds discretionary programs like rural housing and economic development, food safety inspection, activities of the Food and Drug Administration, agriculture research and the Farm Service Agency.

The conference report falls within the current 302(b) allocation for the Agriculture and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee. I commend the distinguished Senator from Mississippi for bringing this bill to the floor within the subcommittee's allocation.

The bill contains important increases over the 1997 level from programs like the WIC Program and the new food safety initiative, and I urge adoption of the conference report.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a table displaying the Budget Committee scoring of the conference report be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the table was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

H.R. 2160, AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATIONS, 1998
SPENDING COMPARISONS—CONFERENCE REPORT
(Fiscal year 1998, in millions of dollars)

	De- fense	Non- defense	Crime	Manda- tory	Total
Conference Report:					
Budget authority		13,751	.....	35,048	48,799
Outlays		13,997	.....	35,205	49,202
Senate 302(b) allocation:					
Budget authority		13,791	.....	35,048	48,839
Outlays		14,167	.....	35,205	49,372

H.R. 2160, AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATIONS, 1998 SPENDING COMPARISONS—CONFERENCE REPORT—Continued

(Fiscal year 1998, in millions of dollars)

	De- fense	Non- defense	Crime	Manda- tory	Total
President's request:					
Budget authority		14,025	.....	35,048	49,073
Outlays		14,282	.....	35,205	49,487
House-passed bill:					
Budget authority		13,650	.....	35,048	48,698
Outlays		13,989	.....	35,205	49,194
Senate-passed bill:					
Budget authority		13,791	.....	35,048	48,839
Outlays		14,038	.....	35,205	49,243
CONFERENCE REPORT COMPARED TO:					
Senate 302(b) allocation:					
Budget authority		-40	.....		-40
Outlays		-170	.....		-170
President's request:					
Budget authority		-274	.....		-274
Outlays		-285	.....		-285
House-passed bill:					
Budget authority		101	.....		101
Outlays		8	.....		8
Senate-passed bill:					
Budget authority		-40	.....		-40
Outlays		-41	.....		-41

Note.—Details may not add to totals due to rounding. Totals adjusted for consistency with current scorekeeping conventions.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I regret to come to the floor once again to talk about wasteful and unnecessary spending in an appropriations conference agreement.

During Senate consideration of the Agriculture appropriations bill, I presented a nine-page list of add-ons, earmarks, and set-asides in the bill and report language.

I had highlighted four provisions in the bill language of the Senate version of the Agriculture appropriations bill, and not surprisingly, every one of these provisions, with minor modifications, is included in the final conference bill.

Interestingly, though, the conferees also made sure that most of the earmarks and set-asides in the report language of both Houses is included by reference in the final agreement. The report language of the conference agreement says:

The House and Senate report language which is not changed by the conference are approved by the committee of conference. The statement of the managers, while repeating some report language for emphasis, does not intend to negate the language referred to above unless expressly provided herein.

So the list I present to the Senate today does not represent all of the wasteful spending in the Agriculture appropriations bill, but only that which the conferees made the effort to specifically mention in the conference statement of managers. The rest of the earmarks are simply carried over from the Senate and House Appropriations Committee reports.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the list be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the list was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

OBJECTIONABLE PROVISIONS IN H.R. 2160 CONFERENCE AGREEMENT ON FY 1998 AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATIONS BILL

BILL LANGUAGE

\$20 million earmarked for water and waste disposal systems for the Colonias along the U.S.-Mexico border

\$15 million for water systems for rural and native villages in Alaska

Section 716 contains "Buy America" domestic source restrictions on expenditures of appropriations in this bill

Section 729 exempts the Martin Luther King area of Pawley's Island, South Carolina, from the population eligibility ceiling for housing loans and grants

Section 730 prohibits closing or relocating the FDA Division of Drug Analysis in St. Louis, Missouri

REPORT LANGUAGE

[NOTE: Statement of managers explicitly directs that report language is binding, and that any language in either Senate or House report that is not specifically addressed in conference report should be considered direction of the conference. Following list represents objectionable provisions specifically stated in conference agreement.]

Agricultural Research Service:

Earmarks and directive language for research programs:

\$250,000 for apple-specific E. coli research at the Eastern Regional Research Center, Wyndmoor, Pennsylvania

\$1 million for grazing research, earmarked equally for centers in Utah, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Pennsylvania

\$500,000 for fusarium head blight research at the Cereal Rust Laboratory in St. Paul, Minnesota

\$500,000 for research on karnal bunt at Manhattan, Kansas

\$1.25 million for Everglades Initiative, of which \$500,000 is for research on biocontrol of melaleuca and other exotic pests at Fort Lauderdale, Florida, \$500,000 is for hydrology studies at Canal Point, Florida, and \$250,000 is for a hydrologist to work on south Florida Everglades restoration

\$1 million for an Arkansas entity to perform dietary research, \$500,000 for similar work by a Texas entity, and \$250,000 for each of three other centers proposing to do dietary research.

Earmark of \$250,000 for Appalachian Soil and Water Conservation Laboratory

\$650,000 for ARS to assist Alaska in support of arctic germplasm

\$250,000 to initiate a program for the National Center for Cool and Cold Water Aquaculture at the Interior Department's Leetown, West Virginia Science Center, where the national aquaculture center will be collocated

\$250,000 for high-yield cotton germplasm research at Stoneville, Mississippi

\$250,000 to support research on infectious diseases in warmwater fish at the Fish Disease and Parasite Research Laboratory at Auburn, Alabama

\$500,000 increase for the National Aquaculture Research Center in Arkansas

\$250,000 for grain legume genetics research at Washington State University

\$500,000 earmark for additional scientists to do research on parasitic mites and Africanized honeybees at the ARS Bee Laboratory in Weslaco, Texas

\$100,000 to continue hops research in the Pacific Northwest

\$500,000 increase for the National Warmwater Aquaculture Research Center in Mississippi, and direction in the House report that the center be renamed the Thad Cochran National Warmwater Aquaculture Center

\$500,000 for Northwest Nursery Crops Research Center in Oregon

\$250,000 increase for Southeast Poultry Research Laboratory in Georgia

\$250,000 increase for an animal physiologist position at the Fort Keough Laboratory in Montana

\$250,000 increase for additional scientific staffing at Small Fruits Research Laboratory in Mississippi

\$5 million for Formosan subterranean termite research

\$200,000 for sugarcane biotechnology research at Southern Regional Research Center in Louisiana

Earmark of \$500,000 for ginning research at laboratory in Texas

\$100,000 for funding of research at Poisonous Plant Laboratory at Logan, Utah

\$1 million for coastal wetlands and erosion research at the Rice Research Station in Louisiana

\$250,000 for research at the Food Fermentation Center in Raleigh, North Carolina

\$450,000 to hire two small grain pathologists, one at the ARS laboratory in Raleigh, North Carolina, and the other at the laboratory at Aberdeen, Iowa

\$950,000 for rice research in Beaumont, Texas, and Stuttgart, Arkansas

\$200,000 for plant genetics equipment for the ARS laboratory at Greenhouse, Missouri

\$700,000 for natural products in Mississippi

Earmarks for unrequested building projects:

\$5.2 million for the Western Human Nutrition Research Center in Davis, California

\$1.8 million for the Avian Disease Labs in East Lansing, Michigan

\$7.9 million for two projects in Mississippi (planning and design for a Biocontrol and Insect Rearing Laboratory in Stoneville, and National Center for Natural Products in Oxford)

\$606,000 for a pest quarantine and integrated pest management facility in Montana

\$4.4 million for Human Nutrition Research Center in North Dakota

\$4.824 million for the U.S. Vegetable Laboratory in South Carolina

\$600,000 for a Poisonous Plant Laboratory in Utah

\$6 million for a National Center for Cool and Cold Water Aquaculture in Leetown, West Virginia

Supportive language:

Notes importance of barley stripe rust research at Pullman, Washington laboratory and expects work on controlling root disease of wheat and barley in cereal-based production systems to continue at FY 1997 levels

Support the addition of a new lettuce geneticist/plant breeder position at the ARS in Salinas, California

Expects ARS to expand research for meadowfoam at Oregon State University and the ARS facility at Peoria, Illinois

Directs National Sedimentation Laboratory to initiate integrated watershed research program for Yalobusha River Basin and Grenada Lake

Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service:

Earmarks:

\$51.5 million for 110 special research grants:

Less than \$7 million of this amount was requested, and the conferees reduced funding for 3 requested projects

All but \$7 million of the \$51.5 million is earmarked for particular states.

Almost \$9 million for unrequested administrative costs in connection with 14 research programs in specific states, including:

\$150,000 for the Center for Human Nutrition in Baltimore, Maryland

\$844,000 for the Geographic Information System program in Georgia, Chesapeake Bay, Arkansas, North Dakota, Washington, and Wisconsin, and new entities in New Mexico, and Colorado

\$100,000 for the mariculture program at University of North Carolina at Wilmington

\$150,000 for the National Center for Peanut Competitiveness

\$3.354 million for shrimp aquaculture in Arizona, Hawaii, Mississippi, Massachusetts, and South Carolina

Directs consideration of Pennsylvania State University E. coli Reference Center as candidate for \$2 million food safety initiative

\$6.1 million for 14 unrequested special grants for extension activities and personnel in specific states

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service:

Earmarks and directive language:

\$1.225 million for rabies control programs in Ohio, Texas, New York, and other states

\$400,000 for a geographic information system project to prepare to expand boll weevil eradication program into remaining cotton production areas

Supportive language: Urges APHIS to continue cooperative efforts to eradicate boll weevil in New Mexico

Agricultural Marketing Service:

Earmarks: \$1 million for marketing assistance to Alaska

National Resources Conservation Service:

Earmarks:

\$350,000 for Great Lakes Basin Program for soil and erosion sediment control

\$3 million for technical assistance in Franklin County, Mississippi

\$750,000 for Deer Creek watershed in Oklahoma

\$300,000 to assist farmers around Lake Otisco in New York

\$100,000 for Trees Forever program in Iowa

Supportive language: Supports continuation of Potomac Headwaters project, which was proposed by Senate at \$1.8 million, and encourage continued work with West Virginia Department of Agriculture for further development of poultry waste energy recovery project at Moorefield and project implementation at Franklin

Rural Community Advancement Program:

Supportive language: Urges consideration of grant proposals from 5 entities (in Texas, Colorado, New Mexico, and the Midwest) which were not mentioned in either report [page 52 of conference report]

Rural Utilities Service:

Supportive language: Encourages Agriculture Department to give consideration to an application from State University of New York Telecommunications Center for Education for a distance learning project, which was not mentioned in either report.

Total objectionable provisions: \$152.4 million.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, let me take a moment to highlight some of the items that are specifically earmarked in the conference agreement.

The conferees earmark \$3.354 million of the research funds provided to the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service [CSREES] for shrimp aquaculture studies in Hawaii, Mississippi, Massachusetts, California, and my home State, Arizona. Funding for shrimp aquaculture is a perennial congressional add-on that has not, to my knowledge, ever been included in an administration budget request. And I have yet to fathom the logic of conducting shrimp research in the desert.

The conferees earned another \$150,000 from the same CSREES account for the National Center for Peanut Competitiveness. Again, this item was not in-

cluded in the budget request but was added by the House with the expectation that the Department of Agriculture would "exploit every opportunity to collaborate with the Center"—according to the House report language.

Two earmarks are included in the conference managers' statement for the National Center for Cool and Cold Water Aquaculture in Leetown, WV. The conferees earned another \$6 million to complete construction of a building at this site, which was funded at the same level in the fiscal year 1997 bill. And the conferees also provided \$250,000 to initiate a program to be conducted at this new facility which, according to the Senate report language, will "ensure that risks associated with the long-term stability of the [cool and cold water aquaculture] industry are reduced."

Finally, the conferees earmarked \$1.7 million for new personnel at various centers. The specific earmarks in the statement of managers language include: \$500,000 for additional scientists to do research on parasitic mites and Africanized honeybees at the Agriculture Research Service Bee Laboratory in Weslaco, TX; \$250,000 for an animal physiologist position at the Fort Keough Laboratory in Montana; \$250,000 for additional scientific staffing at the Small Fruits Research Laboratory in Mississippi; \$450,000 to hire two small grain pathologists, one at the Agriculture Research Laboratory in Raleigh, NC, and the other at the laboratory at Aberdeen, IA; and \$250,000 for a hydrologist to work on south Florida Everglades restoration. The report language of both Houses and the conferees also includes numerous instances of language supporting or urging or encouraging various agencies to hire additional staff personnel, including a particular reference in the managers' statement, that was not included in either report, to express the conferees' "support [for] the addition of a new lettuce geneticist/plant breeder position at the U.S. Agricultural Research Station in Salinas, CA."

Mr. President, these are just a few examples of the egregiously wasteful spending practices of the Congress. I cannot condone wasting millions of taxpayer dollars at a time when we are finally making progress toward a balanced budget. Even when we have eliminated annual deficits, hopefully within just a few years, our Nation will still face a debt of over \$5.4 trillion. Why not stop wasting money on unnecessary projects, and start repaying this huge debt?

I plan to recommend that the President exercise his line item veto authority to eliminate these earmarks and set-asides. I hope he does so, because eliminating unnecessary spending is in the best interest of all Americans.

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, I rise today in support of my colleagues', Mr. FEINGOLD and Mr. GRAMS, efforts to clarify study language included in the

Agriculture appropriations bill being discussed today.

My friends from the Northeast have worked hard to boost prices above market clearing levels by creating a regional compact for their farmers. Now that the compact is implemented and operating, we need a timely, comprehensive economic analysis by the Office of Management and Budget of the marketing and pricing of milk within the six State compact and surrounding areas. The pricing of milk is an extremely complex issue. Artificially manipulating the marketing and pricing of milk will have major impacts on other regions of the United States, like Wisconsin.

Their proposal to raise prices for farmers has worked well and that cost is being passed on to consumers. A recently released study announced that Massachusetts consumers will pay an additional \$25 million for their milk over the next 12 months. The print media has reported that consumers are paying \$.27 a gallon more per gallon of milk in the compact area. We need to analyze the impact this price increase has not only on government purchases of dairy products for lunch programs, but also the impact on low-income families that spend more of their income on food and dairy products.

Although the program only regulates class I milk, other classes will be impacted by the economic signals encouraging Northeast dairy farmers to overproduce. What happens to that excess fluid or manufacturing milk that will be produced in the Northeast and forced to find a new processing plant outside the compact area? Again, the print media has reported that distressed raw milk has moved out of the Northeast to plants in Ohio and as far away as Wisconsin and Minnesota. Ohio plants reportedly were paying \$8.00 per cwt. delivered milk filling all manufacturing plants to capacity in that State. That excess supply of milk added to the overproduction that occurred in the United States further exasperating record low price paid to farms this summer.

Finally, the study should consider a cost/benefit analysis for each State participating in the compact. For example, Massachusetts has only about 300 dairy farms, roughly 10 percent of New England total, while its consumers pay half of the aggregate total consumer costs.

I encourage the Office of Management and Budget to take a serious look at the issue.

RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, the conference report (105-252) on Department of Agriculture appropriations includes \$34.4 million for resource conservation and development [RC&D]. The conferees note that this increase in funding is not specifically earmarked for any initiative but should be used for approved RC&D Councils waiting for funding. I agree that the Natural Resource Conservation Service

[NRCS] should prioritize funding for newly approved RC&D Councils. These councils provide much needed assistance to watersheds and conservation districts seeking to maximize the environmental benefits of their conservation programs. RC&D Councils should be funded. RC&D is a very important program for protection and prudent development of our Nation's natural resource base. Working through local RC&D Councils, this program helps enhance our ability to meet economic objectives within the context of a wise and sustainable use of our natural resources. In Washington State, a State rich in natural resources, RC&D offers the chance to meet the challenges of threatened resources in the face of demands for continued economic development.

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, I agree with the Senator from Washington. The purpose of the RC&D program is to encourage and improve the capability of State and local units of government and local nonprofit organizations in rural areas to plan, develop, and carry out programs for resource conservation and development. The NRCS also helps coordinate available Federal, State, and local programs to ensure adequate protection of natural resources while promoting sound development practices. Funding of the RC&D Councils is an important priority for the NRCS, as correctly emphasized by the conferees, and I urge the NRCS to not overlook opportunities to enhance the efforts of the RC&D Councils in a manner complimentary and consistent with these stated objectives.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I would like to join my colleagues in expressing support for the important work of RC&D Councils as well as opportunities to enhance these efforts. I urge the NRCS to seek avenues that maximize the beneficial conservation and environmental purposes of RC&D activities.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, as provided by the unanimous-consent agreement taking up this appropriations conference report, there are 20 minutes equally divided available for further discussion of the conference report. I have had some indication that there may be one or two Senators who may wish to comment. Pending their arrival on the floor, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I have been advised by the staff that hotlines have been sent out to Members on both sides, and we have no indication that any other Senator wants to come and speak on the subject of the conference report.

Therefore, I am authorized by the distinguished ranking member to yield back all time remaining on the conference report on both sides of the aisle, and I now so do.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the conference report is agreed to.

The conference report was agreed to.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for morning business until 6:30 p.m. within which Senators may be permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Tuesday, October 28, 1997, the Federal debt stood at \$5,429,321,910,123.66 (Five trillion, four hundred twenty-nine billion, three hundred twenty-one million, nine hundred ten thousand, one hundred twenty-three dollars and sixty-six cents).

One year ago, October 28, 1996, the Federal debt stood at \$5,233,941,000,000 (Five trillion, two hundred thirty-three billion, nine hundred forty-one million).

Five years ago, October 28, 1992, the Federal debt stood at \$4,065,988,000,000 (Four trillion, sixty-five billion, nine hundred eighty-eight million).

Ten years ago, October 28, 1987, the Federal debt stood at \$2,385,891,000,000 (Two trillion, three hundred eighty-five billion, eight hundred ninety-one million).

Fifteen years ago, October 28, 1982, the Federal debt stood at \$1,142,243,000,000 (One trillion, one hundred forty-two billion, two hundred forty-three million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$4 trillion—\$4,287,078,910,123.66 (Four trillion, two hundred eighty-seven billion, seventy-eight million, nine hundred ten thousand, one hundred twenty-three dollars and sixty-six cents) during the past 15 years.

NGAWANG CHOEPHEL

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I regret that I must again bring to the Senate's attention the situation of imprisoned Tibetan music and dance scholar, Ngawang Choephel. I had hoped that Chinese authorities would have recognized by now the grave mistake they made in sentencing him to 18 years in prison.

In 1995, Mr. Choephel was in Tibet making a documentary film of traditional Tibetan music and dance when he was detained by Chinese authorities. After being held incommunicado for 15 months without access to his family or independent legal counsel, Mr. Choephel was sentenced to 18 years in