

pears; is second in the nation in the production of winter wheat, potatoes, Concord grapes, and carrots; and contributes more than \$5 billion to the State's economy annually. Not only do all these facts signify the importance of the agriculture industry to the State of Washington and the nation, but highlight the importance of having the proper tools and chemicals necessary to produce one of the most abundant, economical, and safest food supplies in the world.

I agreed to be an original cosponsor the Regulatory Fairness and Openness Act of 1999 for many reasons, but the most significant reason comes down to common sense. I supported the passage of the Food Quality Protection Act in 1996 and still believe in the intent of the legislation. However, recent accounts from the agriculture industry cite concern about the practical application of reliable data and science to the process.

Just this week a 25-year-old apple farmer from Orondo, Washington visited my office to voice her concerns over the implementation of FQPA. Karen Simmons explained that with the current manner in which FQPA is being implemented, entire classes of pesticides are threatened with elimination. Should these tools of agriculture be lost, an orchard like Karen's faces possible extinction. Karen's story is not the first I've heard, as farmers from Washington have been invaluable in expressing their concerns to me over the future of their livelihood.

Karen's account mimics the thousands of reports my colleagues and I have heard from growers across this country. Karen, like many farmers, never follows the application suggestions prescribed by the chemicals she uses. Not only does she not follow these recommendations for practical purposes, but because of the cost incurred as well.

For example, one of the pesticides she utilizes recommends application up to twice a week, but Karen informed us that she rarely uses it that frequently. While Karen might not utilize this chemical often, it is imperative that she has it as a tool. Should this tool be eliminated altogether, Karen's crop is susceptible to infestation, thereby putting her entire orchard in jeopardy.

Unfortunately, in establishing the risk cup for chemicals, EPA has been using application recommendations, often referred to as default assumptions, and not taking into consideration actual usage. This approach is threatening the tools growers have at their disposal. That is why it is imperative that we incorporate into the implementation of FQPA a rulemaking process, allowing growers, chemical utilizers, and household pest producers the ability to divulge actual usage and to apply practical sense to the process. How could we suggest threatening the livelihood of the American farmer and others, while not providing for them an avenue to participate, comment and clarify?

Children's health is equally important, and, as several of my colleagues

have suggested, improper application of the FQPA to household pest controls could create a host of health hazards for children and the elderly. For example, there is a real threat that current FQPA implementation could eliminate the use of some household insecticides and repellants. As many of you know, children and the elderly are susceptible to disease, often carried by cockroaches and other insects. Improper control of these pests could equate to serious health hazards across the nation, a scenario none of us predicted with the passage of FQPA.

Again, I stress that the intent of the legislation is not to alter the importance or significance of human health, but to ensure that decisions regarding health risks are informed and not hasty, that the intent of the FQPA is carried out with the use of sound science and practical application, that a dose of common sense is applied, and that adequate time is available to make certain all decisions and tolerance standards are healthy and equitable.

Without question, the United States produces the most abundant, desirable, inexpensive, and safest food supplies in the world. The FQPA must be implemented in a fashion that not only takes into account these very facts, but continues to consider the needs, choices and health of the American consumer.

I thank my colleagues for their continuing interest in this issue, and look forward to working with everyone to pass the Regulatory Fairness and Openness Act of 1999.

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. President, I rise today to speak for a moment about the Regulatory Fairness and Openness Act that I am pleased to cosponsor with a number of my colleagues who are concerned about the state of agriculture today. I want to thank Senator HAGEL and his staff for their work on this legislation which reflects the input of a number of agriculture groups, including the American Farm Bureau Federation.

When the Congress passed the Food Quality Protection Act in 1996, the idea was to update our pesticide laws so that our farmers could continue to provide the safest and most economical food supply in the world. FQPA eliminated the outdated zero-tolerance Delaney clause for pesticide residues and provided the EPA a framework to review and approve pesticides based on the best scientific evidence available about any health risks these chemicals may pose. What was not intended was to give the EPA the authority to embark on a course to eliminate pesticides based on unrealistic, worst-case scenarios while keeping important stakeholders in the dark.

Agriculture in my state of Oregon is incredibly diverse. We have everything from large wheat or nursery operations to small berry farms and hazelnut orchards. While implication of FQPA will surely have implications for program commodities like wheat and soybeans, it is the small specialty crops grown

in my state that I am most concerned will be the first to find what may be the only available crop protection tool arbitrarily axed by EPA. At a time when farms all across the country are in the grip of a price depression crisis, our farmers simply can't afford to take another hit—especially one from their own government.

Despite our hopes to the contrary, it has become apparent in recent months that legislation is needed to steer the Environmental Protection Agency back towards science-based review of pesticide tolerances under the Food Quality Protection Act. The Regulatory Fairness and Openness Act that we are introducing today requires the EPA to expose its decisionmaking process for public comment, identify areas where assumptions were made, expedite data collection procedures where needed, and streamline the process to get economically viable alternative products approved. The common-sense legislation is the result of consultation with more than 60 agriculture and pest control organizations.

Mr. President, the public has a right to know what processes are being used in the implementation of the FQPA and how the EPA is arriving at its decisions. Our farmers have a right to know that important crop protection chemicals will not be eliminated on a whim by a federal agency. I hope colleagues agree with me that this measure of regulatory relief is urgently needed, and I urge my colleagues to join me in support of the Regulatory Fairness and Openness Act.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Thursday, July 29, 1999, the Federal debt stood at \$5,640,577,276,840.14 (Five trillion, six hundred forty billion, five hundred seventy-seven million, two hundred seventy-six thousand, eight hundred forty dollars and fourteen cents).

One year ago, July 29, 1998, the Federal debt stood at \$5,543,291,000,000 (Five trillion, five hundred forty-three billion, two hundred ninety-one million).

Five years ago, July 29, 1994, the Federal debt stood at \$4,636,362,000,000 (Four trillion, six hundred thirty-six billion, three hundred sixty-two million).

Twenty-five years ago, July 29, 1974, the Federal debt stood at \$476,155,000,000 (Four hundred seventy-six billion, one hundred fifty-five million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$5 trillion—\$5,164,422,276,840.14 (Five trillion, one hundred sixty-four billion, four hundred twenty-two million, two hundred seventy-six thousand, eight hundred forty dollars and fourteen cents) during the past 25 years.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi is recognized.

MR. COCHRAN. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. COCHRAN and Mr. HUTCHINSON pertaining to the submission of S. Res. 169 are located in today's RECORD under "Submission of Concurrent and Senate Resolutions.")

WETLANDS RESERVE PROGRAM ENHANCEMENT ACT

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. President, earlier this week I introduced the Hutchinson-Lincoln Wetlands Reserve Program Enhancement Act to help strengthen the popular Wetlands Reserve Program administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Simply put, this legislation will act to strengthen the current WRP which provides financial incentives to farmers and private landowners who voluntarily set aside marginal lands and restore them to optimal wetland wildlife habitat.

These restored wildlife areas are some of the best wildlife conservation habitat in America and are critical to the future of waterfowl throughout our Nation. Established by the 1990 farm bill as a long-term conservation option for farmers, the WRP protects farm wetlands using 10-year, 30-year, and permanent easements. Land which is eligible for WRP is characterized by wetlands that are farmed, lands adjacent to protected wetlands, and croplands and pastures which are naturally prone to flooding.

If eligible, the landowner voluntarily limits the use of the lands while retaining private ownership and access to the land. In addition, they may also lease the land for hunting, fishing, and other undeveloped recreational activities. The NRCS, in conjunction with the landowner, then develops a plan for the restoration and the maintenance of the wetland.

Once restored, wetlands act to: No. 1, improve water quality by filtering sediments; No. 2, reduce flooding; No. 3, recharge ground water; No. 4, promote biological diversity; and No. 5, furnish educational, recreational, and aesthetic benefits. These benefits, as a result of the WRP, have helped landowners throughout the 46 States where farmers have currently enrolled in what has become a very successful program.

At the local level, I want to mention three farmers in Arkansas who are benefiting from the WRP. Hattie Neely of Moro, AR, in Lee County, grows soybeans and has enrolled 31 acres in this very important program. Then there is Donald Wallace of Gillett, AR, in Arkansas County, who grows soybeans, and he has enrolled 30 acres in the WRP. And Dick Carmichael of Monticello, AR, in Drew County, grows soybeans and rice and has enrolled 115 acres in the WRP.

In each case, these farmers are using the WRP to restore bottom land hardwood forests and a natural wildlife habitat. Other farmers in Arkansas are using WRP to retire agricultural lands

unsuited for crop production because of elevated levels of salt from irrigation water. In this case, WRP lands filter runoffs, keeping salts and sediments in the wetlands and out of the natural waterways.

Despite the benefits to farmers across America, the WRP will soon become a victim of its own success. The current WRP is authorized to enroll up to 975,000 acres nationally through the year 2002. WRP is in such high demand from America's farmers that it will reach its acreage cap next year. The top 10 States—Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, California, Missouri, Iowa, Texas, Florida, Oklahoma, and Illinois—have a combined enrollment of almost 427,000 acres in these States alone.

In response to the success of WRP, my bill seeks to expand the acreage cap from the proposed 180,000 acres in fiscal year 2000 to a newly authorized maximum of 250,000 acres per year through the year 2005. This will help to ensure that farmers who want to enroll in the program will have the option to do so.

There is no doubt that the American farmer faces an industry that is in crisis. In the race to find solutions for the many challenges facing farmers, I want to ensure that my colleagues in the Senate do not overlook the importance of conservation to family farmers, both as a way to protect valuable wildlife resources and as a source of additional income.

In the Mississippi Delta, family farmers are using the WRP to move frequently flooded farmland away from high-risk, high-cost farming back to original hardwood timberlands.

Mr. President, I thank you for this opportunity to speak on behalf of family farmers who care about protecting the natural resources with which they are entrusted. I ask my colleagues to consider the importance of wildlife conservation in the life of family farmers. Join me in the support of what I think is very good, very important, bipartisan conservation legislation.

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 3:20 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Berry, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 2587. An act making appropriations for the government of the District of Columbia and other activities chargeable in whole or in part against revenues of said District for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 9355(a), the Speaker appoints the following Members of the House to the Board of Visitors to the United States Air Force Academy: Mr. THOMPSON of California and Mr. DICKS of Washington.

The message further announced that pursuant to section 5(b) of Public Law

93-642 (20 U.S.C. 2004(b)), the Speaker appoints the following Members of the House as Members of the Board of Trustees of the Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation: Mrs. EMERSON of Missouri and Mr. SKELTON of Missouri.

The message also announced that the House insists upon its amendments to the bill (S. 900) to enhance competition in the financial services industry by providing a prudential framework for the affiliation of banks, securities firms, insurance companies, and other financial service providers, and for other purposes, disagreed to by the Senate, and agree to the conference asked by the Senate on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon; and appoints the following Members as the managers of the conference on the part of the House:

From the Committee on Banking and Financial Services, for consideration of the Senate bill, and the House amendment, and modifications committed to conference: Mr. LEACH, Mr. MCCOLLUM, Mrs. ROUKEMA, Mr. BEREUTER, Mr. BAKER, Mr. LAZIO, Mr. BACHUS, Mr. CASTLE, Mr. LAFALCE, and Mr. VENTO.

As additional conferees from the Committee on Banking and Financial Services, for consideration of titles I, III (except section 304) IV, and VII of the Senate bill, and title I of the House amendment, and modifications committed to conference: Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Mr. KANJORSKI, Ms. WATERS, and Mrs. MALONEY of New York.

As additional conferees from the Committee on Banking and Financial Services, for consideration of title V of the Senate bill, and title II of the House amendment, and modifications committed to conference: Mr. KANJORSKI, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mr. WATT of North Carolina, and Mr. MALONEY of Connecticut.

As additional conferees from the Committee on Banking and Financial Services, for consideration of title II of the Senate bill, and title III of the House amendment, and modifications committed to conference: Mr. KANJORSKI, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, and Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon.

As additional conferees from the Committee on Banking and Financial Services, for consideration of title VI of the Senate bill, and title IV of the House amendment, and modifications committed to conference: Ms. WATERS, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mr. GUTIERREZ, and Mr. BENTSEN.

As additional conferees from the Committee on Banking and Financial Services, for consideration of section 304 of the Senate bill, and title V of the House amendment, and modifications committed to conference: Mr. FRANKS of Massachusetts, Mr. KANJORSKI, Ms. WATERS, and Mr. ACKERMAN.

From the Committee on Commerce, for consideration of the Senate bill, and the House amendment, and modifications committed to conference: Mr.