

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to instruct offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. RYAN).

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES ON H.R. 2419, FOOD AND ENERGY SECURITY ACT OF 2007

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion to instruct at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. Kind moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the Senate amendment to the bill H.R. 2419 (an Act to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012) be instructed to—

(1) insist on the amendment contained in section 2401(d) of the House bill (relating to funding for the environmental quality incentive program);

(2) insist on the amendments contained in section 2104 of the House bill (relating to the grassland reserve program) and reject the amendment contained in section 2401(2) of the Senate amendment (relating to funding for the grassland reserve program);

(3) insist on the amendments contained in section 2102 of the House bill (relating to the wetland reserve program); and

(4) insist on the amendments contained in section 2608 of the Senate bill (relating to crop insurance ineligibility relating to crop production on native sod).

Mr. KIND (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the motion be considered as read.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Wisconsin?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND) and a Member opposed will be recognized for 30 minutes each.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin.

Mr. KIND. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very simple motion. I understand we are in the waning, perhaps minutes of conclusion of the farm bill. But, nevertheless, I think it's important that we get the policies right. We do need a farm bill. We need it as soon as possible. It's planting season back home. Our farmers need some predictability. They need to know what rules they are being to be operating under, one way or another. But we need a good farm bill, not a bad farm bill; one that tries to get the policy right, not the wrong way.

I still believe there's more room for reform under the commodity programs in light of record high commodity prices. It's tough to justify to the average taxpayer that what is still being considered under the current farm bill is close to \$25 billion of direct payments to go out over the next 5 years, bearing no relationship to price or production. It's not a safety net. These are entitlement funding, automatic payments that go to large producers, primarily merely due to their existence and not because of market.

But there's another important feature of this farm bill and that is the conservation title. This farm bill offers this Nation the greatest public investment in private land ownership in regards to anything else we do around here. For a very long time, we have had important land and water conservation programs set up on a voluntary and incentive basis to help our producers be good stewards of the land; good manure management practices so they are not running off and polluting our rivers and streams and lakes and tributaries, making sure we have got buffer strips in place, making sure we have got the ability to absorb more CO₂ from the atmosphere so we don't lose ground on the global warming battle that we are confronting.

This is something that also benefits the American farmer, family farmers in every region. But it also benefits the community at large through enhanced water quality programs, through habitat protection, and wildlife, which is also vital to our own local and regional economies. Yet what is being considered right now in the conference is a dramatic reduction in the level of funding that came out of the House.

The House had an historic passage of conservation funding last year, calling for another over \$5 billion in these conservation programs. This, I think, in part, is to address the backlog of demand because today, under current funding, close to two out of every three farmers applying for conservation funding assistance are turned because of the inadequacy of funds. So the demand is there.

But what makes these programs especially attractive is their so-called "green box payments." They are non-market, nontrade-distorting, still a way to help our family farmers manage their own land, but in a way that doesn't distort the marketplace. What's being considered now is a dramatic reduction in the level of funding that came out of the House originally.

Our motion to instruct today would merely ask the conferees to try to get back to that House level of funding rather than going even below where the Senate took it. The Senate was proposing a \$4.2 billion increase. We were over \$5 billion. It's my understanding, and I haven't been privy to the ongoing negotiations, but they are talking about just a \$4 billion increase under conservation, substantially below where the House went.

More specifically, this motion would instruct conferees to maintain the House funding for the Environmental Quality Incentive Program. That is the main program that helps with manure management projects throughout the Nation, especially beneficial to large animal feedlots that have to control that and prevent the spillage into the environment.

It would also maintain the allotment for the Grassland Reserve Program. There is more pressure being put on these highly sensitive and highly erodible lands because of the increase in commodity prices. It would also maintain House funding for the Wetlands Reserve Program. That, of course, is a great filter that exists throughout our communities to enhance quality water supplies but also crucial to water fowl populations in North America.

It would also accept the Senate Sod Saver Provision so that the Federal Government doesn't incentivize the conversion of sensitive virgin prairie land back into crop production. Again, given the pressure that exists with these historically high commodity prices, it's a real concern that more of this virgin prairie land that has been vital for conservation efforts, especially in the Great Plains, are going to be brought back into production with the consequent adverse environmental and conservation effects that would result.

So that is merely what this motion to instruct would do; get back to what the House passed last year under conservation, give the farmers throughout the country the tools they need to be good stewards of the land, and do it in a nonmarket, nontrade-distorting fashion, especially in the tremendous increase in commodity prices today and the pressure that producers are under to bring the land that has been conserved for many years back into production and resulting with a lot more sediment and nutrient runoffs that will be a consequence of that action.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the motion.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Oklahoma is recognized for 30 minutes.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to now yield half of that time to my colleague, Chairman HOLDEN.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOLDEN) will be recognized for 15 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. HOLDEN. I thank the gentleman from Oklahoma for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, I say to my friend from Wisconsin and my friend from Oregon that we appreciate their support for the funding for conservation at the House level. I have got to say honestly, though, we wish we would have had your support last July. I also say to my friends, and I mean my friends, that we

wish that we could work the will of the House and pass legislation here and send it over to the other body and have them rubber stamp it and send it down to the President and have him sign it, as we have done our work here. But in reality, that is not the way we can operate.

I say to my friend from Wisconsin, who served on the Agriculture Committee, and you know this, to my friend, we do not have partisan disagreements on this committee. My friend from Oklahoma will agree with that. We have regional differences. We have to balance those regional differences and try to figure out a way that those of us on the committee who care strongly about the commodity title are satisfied with the safety net but also realize that there has to be a reform. And those of us who care strongly about the conservation title realize that we need to have increased investment in conservation. You can pair that with energy and nutrition, everything else, but we are here to talk about conservation this afternoon.

I'd say to my friend, sure, we would like to have more money. My father used to always say to me that everybody wants to go to heaven but nobody wants to die. We have to put this together and we have to realize what is possible.

When we debated and discussed this bill in the House of Representatives, we had \$13.6 billion in addition to baseline. When we are negotiating in the conference committee, we have \$10 billion. So you can see the difference. So everyone had to give and take.

Again, I think when the conferees have done their work, we are going to see significant reform in the commodity title and you're going to see reform in the conservation title. The chairman asked me to make one thing perfectly clear in this motion to instruct. We have consistently said reform would apply to all titles, and we would spread scarce dollars out to more producers.

The conference agreement will do that, and we will fully fund conservation. We believe we have an obligation to do that. But we have limited resources. So we are going to do the best we can, hopefully tonight and tomorrow, to have a fully invested, robust title for conversation.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1515

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, let me be clear. I do appreciate the hard work that our friends from Pennsylvania and Oklahoma have done and the strong support they have shown throughout the years under these important conservation programs under the conservation title, and now that we are getting into closure of this farm bill, I hope that voice of advocacy will rise again in defense of these programs, especially in light of the pressure that exists to bring this land back into production.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to my friend and colleague from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I appreciate the gentleman's courtesy. I appreciate his continued leadership and advocacy in this bill.

I would remind my good friend from Pennsylvania that earlier in this debate, Mr. KIND and I, Mr. RYAN and Mr. FLAKE, we advanced proposals that would have provided more than enough money to fully fund the conservation, would have provided more than enough money to deal for the areas of agriculture that are dramatically underserved.

This does a terrific job for the large corporate enterprises, for the richest of farmers. Lowering the limits to \$900,000 may in the minds of some be a draconian reform. But when we know that the average farmer makes twice what the average homeowner makes, the average citizen makes, and I was actually campaigning in Pennsylvania for a campaign in the presidential effort here a couple weeks back, and I was in some very rural parts of Pennsylvania engaged in the discussion there, and I found that Pennsylvania is much like Oregon. We are short-changed dramatically in the farm bill.

Earlier we had my good friend from North Dakota, a State that produces less agricultural value than the State of Oregon and gets one-sixth the subsidy. Pennsylvania is a massive farming effort. Twenty-seven percent of the land area is devoted to farms. But Pennsylvania farmers get one-half of their share of the subsidy nationally, 62 percent of the applications for conservation are not paid for, and the average farmer in Pennsylvania, 83 percent make less than \$100,000 a year. So these are small farmers. They are hard pressed. They want conservation, and they don't have the money for the application. It is just like in my State.

I would suggest that we look hard, because I agree with my friend from Pennsylvania and my friend from Oklahoma. This is not necessarily partisan. There are areas that agriculture policy divides, not necessarily partisan, but sometimes it is urban and rural. Sometimes it is east, west, south, midwest. It is more likely the type of agriculture that is practiced, because the vast majority of farmers in this country would have been well served by the reforms that we advocated from here, limiting the payments to \$250,000, for instance, like have been advocated by the Bush administration and by many people here.

But we don't even have to get to that point. My friend Mr. KIND's motion to recommit should bring us together, because farmers all across the country, in States large and small, east and west, are for environmental protection. This is the most important environmental bill that the 110th Congress will address. We should not miss this golden opportunity.

It is frustrating to me that the conferees are talking about cutting what

we approved at \$5.7 to as low as \$4 billion. And who knows what it might end up? There are lots of missing pieces. We need to go on record here strongly supporting maintaining at least a \$5 billion level.

I will tell you, farmers in my State regularly identify conservation programs as their top need. They have to comply with all sorts of difficult environmental regulations, and we need to ensure that they get the payments they deserve for environmental protection that they provide.

It is the farm community, the ranchers, that are the source of the cheapest, most cost-effective water quality and water quantity improvement. This money supports programs that protect our most sensitive and ecologically important lands. It keeps pollution out of the lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands. It represents the largest Federal investment in private land, and it should be an investment that our farmers and ranchers can count upon year after year.

It is not just the clean water. It is maintaining abundant wildlife populations. It is storing carbon. Agriculture is one of the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions, the largest internationally. With the increased pressure on lands from biofuel mandates and high food prices, these programs matter more now than ever before.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. KIND. I yield the gentleman 1 additional minute.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Thank you.

Too often I have watched in the farm legislation that I have seen work through here that conservation ends up being the piggy bank for the farm bill. This is an area that is shortchanged to deal with more powerful political interests.

Well, if the American public knew what was at stake, there would be no more powerful interest than protecting the environment. Two-thirds of the farmers who apply are turned down. This is not right. Increased conservation programs help balance out some of the inequities in the farm program and provide benefits to everybody.

I urge you to support family farmers, the environment and sportsmen, and support a good farm bill by supporting Mr. KIND's motion to instruct.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I do rise in opposition to this motion. I think my good and dear friends are well intended. I think they believe that they are sincerely trying to do something positive.

But I would say to you, this process that we are working through is a complicated, challenging process. Ultimately, the final goal of any farm bill is to take the limited resources that we have and use them in a way to achieve the maximum benefit for our fellow Americans, whether that is enhancing the quality of the environment through

the conservation programs, or making sure that the world's safest and yet most affordable food supply continues to be available to everyone.

Let's think for a moment about what farm bills represent. The first comprehensive Federal farm bill was not passed until 1933 in the depths of the great economic depression, and, in my region of the country, the great droughts of the 1930s. It was an effort to prevent rural America from disintegrating. It was an effort to make sure that food and fiber remained available to all American consumers at a price that they could afford. We have worked through many policy concepts. We have had many different ways of addressing those needs since 1933.

With time, the focus of the farm bill has shifted. In the 1960s it went from being a farmer's farm bill, as the coffee shop folks back home might think of, to being a major player in meeting the nutritional needs of this program. President Kennedy's pilot program on ultimately what became food stamps adopted by President Johnson and this Congress in the 1960s became a major element. But it was an element of the farm bill. In the 1980s, the focus added conservation to that, CRP, EQIP, all of the things that enable farmers, ranchers and property owners to maximize the positive environmental impacts on their property.

The farm bill evolved. Where are we right now? We have a bill that is the result of one of the most challenging set of circumstances in decades. We were given the baseline last year to write a farm bill, and for those of you who might not remember what the baseline is, that is simply saying you have the money you had 5 years ago, and not a penny more. And, oh, by the way, inflation has chewed a good bit of that up. Go try and write a bill. Then we were told, shift \$4 billion of that from wherever in the bill you want, wherever you can, to the food stamp program, the social nutrition program, the feeding programs.

Okay. We worked for months. But as things have gone along, the process has changed. Now, instead of \$4 billion, then it was \$6 billion, then it was \$8 billion. Now I understand we are at \$10.6 billion in new social nutrition spending.

I don't disagree with that. But when you are not given any new money to start with, when you are placed under a \$10 billion mandate, it makes it hard to do all of the things that need to be done with the few precious resources you have.

Now we have worked in the most creative way to come up with additional revenue, to reallocate resources to meet that \$10 billion mandate from senior leadership in the majority. And along the way we have come up with \$4 billion extra for conservation, half of that money going to EQIP, the basic cost share program that everyone has an opportunity to apply for to try and justify the benefits that will be gen-

erated from it to have the resources to meet those needs.

My friends, I know my colleagues are well-intended. I sincerely believe that. But a farm bill, first and foremost, should be about making sure that every American has access to the safest, highest quality, yes, most affordable food and fiber in the world. Then we can target all of these other programs. Then we can meet all these other needs.

Let's don't lose sight of why we have farm bills. Let's not lose sight of who they help, and that is every American that eats, and a good part of the world that depends on us for their food suppliers also.

The budget times are tough. The circumstances are difficult. It has been a long and arduous conference. We have yet to produce a final report, which we will all then be able to debate and discuss. But don't direct us in a way that makes the process more complicated when it comes to meeting all of those needs. Don't tie our hands in a fashion that will lead, I am afraid, to a net reduction in the ultimate benefit of those taxpayer dollars, so hard for the taxpayers to come by, that need to be spent so carefully to maximize their return.

Let us pursue the agenda of meeting our needs.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I reserve what time I might have left.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate the comments of my good friend from Oklahoma and the hard work that he has done. But these are two individuals who serve on the Agriculture Committee. In fact, my friend from Pennsylvania is the Chair of the subcommittee in charge of this conservation title. My friend from Oklahoma is the ranking member of the subcommittee in charge of the conservation title.

All we are asking them and the conferees from the House to do is to protect their programs and to protect their funding level, that which was contained in the House-passed version of the farm bill last year. That is a simple request, and it received good support in the House when it left last year.

But there is an additional wrinkle that was just introduced, to my knowledge, within the last 24 hours, and that is the consideration to start capping payments under the conservation title. I think that would result in bad policy. I think it is going to result in a lot of unintended consequences, because these conservation practices aren't marketable, unlike the subsidies going to commodity crop producers, where they grow something and they can sell it in the marketplace.

To get a farmer to have a good manure management system in place or to have buffer strips and that, they can't take that outside then and sell it to the private marketplace. So these in-

centives are important to partner with the individual landowner to get them to do the right thing on their own land. And they want to do the right thing on their own land.

That is why two out of every three of them are being denied funding right now, because of the inadequacy of funds. The demand is exceeding the supply. We are saying let's try to catch up to that demand right now, which brings huge societal benefits at the same time, to enhance quality water supply throughout our country. And I still believe that is going to be one of the major challenges we face, not only in this country, but throughout the world in this century. How are we going to maintain a quality water supply? And if we can't partner to the level they expect in farm country, it is going to make that challenge all the more difficult.

So I would hope the conferees in their discussion and last minute deliberations of where they are going to find a nickel or dime in order to pay for things don't go down that road of trying to cap these conservation payments, like many of us have been proposing under the commodity title.

□ 1530

I think we can pay for what we are requesting in this motion through some more commonsense reasonable reforms under the title I commodity program, starting at another look at these so-called direct payments. They are slated to go for another \$25 billion over the next 5 years alone. In fact, unfortunately Mr. FLAKE's motion to instruct failed a little bit earlier, but all he was asking is, let's just keeping those direct payments at the current funding level, a maximum of \$40,000 instead of increasing it at a time of high commodity prices. Not an unreasonable request.

But what is being considered now going from \$40,000 up to \$50,000 for these direct payments and having dual entities on the same farm to qualify for it.

I also believe it is reasonable to take another look, as the President and the administration is asking, for us to have a stricter means test under the commodity programs. Let's face it, a \$950,000 adjusted gross income cutoff is in the stratosphere for most individuals in this country. We are talking adjusted gross now, not just gross income. This is after you back out your expenses and all the costs of operating that farm. That is close to \$1 million of profit we are talking about that an individual would receive, and still receive these commodity subsidy payments under what is being proposed in the conference.

So I think there is plenty of savings that can still be had without cutting the legs off of our producers while maintaining an important safety net in case things do turn bad in farm country. And Lord knows we have seen that cycle come and go in the past. But let's

do it in a more fiscally responsible manner and maximize the scarce resources that we have for the benefit of the community at large, and that includes funding under the conservation title.

A few groups have already weighed in on this motion to instruct and have expressed their support, from the Environmental Defense Fund, National Wildlife Federation, the World Wildlife Fund, Defenders of Wildlife, Environmental Working Group, American Rivers, those who have been actively engaged in participating and trying to shape this next farm bill. We still have an opportunity because the conference has not closed, no report has been filed yet. There is going to be some last-minute negotiations. But ultimately, at the end of the day, if my colleagues are serious about having a farm bill concluded and implemented into law, the President has to be comfortable in doing it, and clearly he is not there yet, the administration is not there. And they are pressing the conference to do more in reforming these commodity programs.

We can choose to ignore that, but at the end of the day the President has got to sign something into law, or we have to try to override a veto, which I think is going to be very, very difficult. So I think there is still a way of working with the administration, trying to produce a product that they feel comfortable with, that the President feels comfortable with. And one of the ways to do it is more reform under commodity, and have a strong conservation title at the end of the day. The President has consistently expressed his support for a strong conservation title. I don't think they would object to the requests that we are making here in this motion to instruct.

And let's remind ourselves, this is another way of providing help and assistance to those who are working the land in our country. This isn't separate from the help in other areas that we try to provide to family farmers; it is in addition to it, it is a supplement. And it is something that benefits every farmer in every region, and including all people throughout the country, instead of the concentrated payments that we see under the current title I commodity program.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

For my colleagues' information, I have no further speakers. I believe I have the right to close. I am prepared to do that if they are ready to close, too.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is correct.

Mr. HOLDEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

My friend from Oregon has left the Chamber, but I appreciate him looking out after the farmers in Pennsylvania. But I would just like to remind him that Pennsylvania leads the country in farmland preservation, and we have

doubled the investment for farmland preservation in this conference report as we are working it through.

I also would like to remind my friend that not only have we preserved the dairy safety net, and dairy being the number one agriculture industry in Pennsylvania, that is very important; we have a new program that we are working on in the conference to have a feed cost adjustment as the cost of feed goes up, and that will be a great benefit to the farmers in Pennsylvania and in Wisconsin for that as the cost of feed goes up.

Also, we have for specialty crops, the first time, a \$1.3 billion investment that will help farmers all across the country, but they will help them in Pennsylvania as well. So I appreciate my friend trying to help me out.

And I would just say to my friend from Wisconsin again, and repeating ourselves, that we are restrained. We were working with \$13.6 billion; we now are working with \$10 billion. The commodity title has been cut by tens of billions of dollars from the last farm bill. There is significant reform that we are going to accomplish. And the gentleman knows, because he served on the committee, that we have regional differences, and it is difficult to get consensus because of the geographical makeup of the committee.

So we are going to get there and we are going to fund conservation, but I would like to make one last point to the gentleman's comments about capping on conservation programs. We have noticed and discovered recently that there have been significant abuses in the conservation title, where wealthy people have purchased farms with no intention of farming and have become eligible to the tune of millions of dollars for conservation programs. That was not the intent, I don't believe, in any farm bill I ever voted for or the gentleman from Wisconsin voted for or the gentleman from Oklahoma. We never intended that. So the way to get around that is to have caps on that. And not only will you stop the abuses if you put caps on it from millionaires taking advantage of it, you will have more dollars to spread around to more people who are on those waiting lists right now.

My friend, we all wish we could do more. The gentleman from Oklahoma chaired the subcommittee when we began having hearings on it. With the last election, I became the chairman and he is now the ranking member. We are working very closely together. But we have limited resources. We are going to do the best we can, but we need a bill that we can get out of committee, get passed on this floor, passed in the Senate, and sent down to the President. And we are working very hard on that. I believe we are going to get a product that will get the majority of support significantly in this body.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, might I inquire how much time, if any, I have left.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Oklahoma has 9½ minutes remaining.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

I would simply note, one of the challenges of any farm bill, certainly every farm bill since the 1960s, has been the payment limitation issue. Every farm bill we tighten the definition, every farm bill we attempt to reflect the will of this body. We will do that again this time.

The question about payment limitations on the conservation programs, that is an inevitable outcome, simply the fact that there will never, ever be enough money to do everything we all want to do. And in a year and a bill when we put 10 billion additional dollars in the nutritional program, no doubt justified, but that was a decision made on high, that makes funding for all these other programs even more challenging. \$4 billion in additional conservation spending is an impressive accomplishment in the circumstances we work, but those payment limitations are a necessary thing, just as in conservation as in every other part of the bill to make sure that everyone has a fair and equitable chance at those resources.

When you apply for an EQIP program, you have to demonstrate the benefits of that program. And the more beneficial your efforts are, the greater your chances are, the farther up the list you are to be funded. It is a competitive kind of a process. And that is good. But those payment limitations will make sure that more people have an opportunity to step into the process to utilize those funds. We are dealing with the money that has been given to us. We are working under the circumstances that have been laid out, and we are doing the best we can.

I urge my colleagues to reject the motion to instruct.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Just to wrap up my remarks, let me just reiterate. I truly do appreciate the hard work my colleagues here today on the Agriculture Committee have been doing to try to craft a farm bill that can get accomplished yet this year. It is one of the most difficult things that Members are asked to do in any Congress, is to piece together the parochial and the different interests that span this great country to find an acceptable farm bill that can get signed into law. But we still have a little ways to go.

And I say to my friend from Pennsylvania, as far as the feed factor with dairy production, there is no question that fixed costs are going up right now in agricultural production driven by a variety of factors, not the least of which is the energy debacle that we find ourselves in right now.

But I think once we start going down to that feed route, we are going to get a lot of other groups now chiming in saying: What about us? What about us? How come dairy is being taken care of? What about poultry? What about beef? What about the others that are experiencing the same type of cost increases? And then you are really talking about blowing the lid off of some of these other programs.

But all that I and others who are in support of this motion to instruct are asking is for the members of the committee to defend their work, defend the programs that passed the House last year, defend the funding level that came out of the House last year because of the vital importance that these programs have, not only to the individual land producers, but to the resources that are so precious to all of us in this country.

Now we see disturbing trends; because of the high commodity prices, great pressure to bring more highly erodible sensitive land back into production. And there will be adverse consequences from that, unless we can maintain a viable incentive based system with these conservation programs to deal with that additional pressure that producers are facing throughout the Nation.

I think there is a better way of dealing with the abuses that my friend from Pennsylvania highlighted under the conservation program. Certainly we can do more oversight and get more information with regards to whether individuals are milking the system. No one is in support of that. We want to clamp down on it. But let's work with USDA and NRCS and those agencies in charge of implementing it, rather than calling for a blanket payment limitation cap with crucial conservation funding. Because, again, I am afraid that without these incentives in place, I don't care how wealthy you are, there won't be much incentive for you to engage in these type of programs, which just doesn't benefit the landowner but the community and the watershed area and the wildlife at large. So we need to be careful what road we are going to go down.

And, hopefully, this isn't just a response to some of us who have been asking for meaningful payment limitations and means testing under the commodity program just to get back at those who have been very supportive of conservation funding.

I think there are reasonable means tests we can apply to the commodity title. The fact that LDP and counter-cyclical payments aren't going up today I think is a good thing. That means farm income is up and commodity prices are up.

Back home in Wisconsin, in the agriculture district that I represent, farmers for years have come up to me and said: You know, I'm not a big fan of these subsidy programs, but I just wish the market would give us a decent price so we wouldn't have to rely on

them. Well, that day has come. Now today I have got producers in corn and soybean coming up to me and saying: RON, why are we still receiving these direct subsidy payments when we are getting such a good price in the marketplace? And they are right. Farmers know how these programs are working.

I think we can be a little bolder and more courageous in the reforms that some of us have been advocating, find those savings, so we can deal with conservation, nutrition, world development, speciality crops, and having a good energy title to this farm bill, too. This can happen, and it can happen in a way that the President feels comfortable in signing. And that will truly be a good bipartisan day then in the United States Congress. I encourage my friends to support this motion to instruct the conferees.

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Kind motion to instruct conferees and the need for increased conservation funding in the farm bill.

Our farmers are eager to share in the cost of protecting our environment, but currently two out of three farmers are turned away by the USDA due to insufficient funding when they apply to participate in conservation programs. As a result, we continue to lose thousands of acres of valuable farmland, grasslands, wetlands, and private forest lands. We also fall further behind schedule in our efforts to clean up rivers, lakes and streams.

We cannot and should not ask farmers to choose between their bottom line and smart, sensible preservation of the land they protect. The House-passed version of the farm bill contained a landmark increase of \$5.7 billion in authorized conservation funding. This money supports programs that protect our most sensitive and ecologically important lands, keeps soil and nutrient pollution out of our rivers, lakes and streams, and safeguards wetlands.

Since the conference committee is weighing various priorities as they try to bring the farm bill process to a close, it is important they know that Members of this House feel that conservation should be at the top of the priority list and that we maintain what the House has already passed.

I strongly encourage my colleagues to support this motion and to support the inclusion of the necessary conservation funding in this farm bill.

Mr. KIND. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to instruct.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to instruct offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND).

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

APPOINTMENT OF HON. STENY HOYER AND HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN TO ACT AS SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE TO SIGN ENROLLED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS THROUGH MAY 5, 2008

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CUELLAR) laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,

May 1, 2008.

I hereby appoint the Honorable STENY H. HOYER and the Honorable CHRIS VAN HOLLEN to act as Speaker pro tempore to sign enrolled bills and joint resolutions through May 5, 2008.

NANCY PELOSI,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the appointment is approved.

There was no objection.

BLOCKING PROPERTY AND PROHIBITING CERTAIN TRANSACTIONS RELATED TO BURMA—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 110-107)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, without objection, referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) (IEEPA), I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order (the "order") that takes additional steps with respect to the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13047 of May 20, 1997, and expanded in Executive Order 13448 of October 18, 2007.

In 1997, the United States put in place a prohibition on new investment in Burma in response to the Government of Burma's large scale repression of the democratic opposition in that country. On July 28, 2003, those sanctions were expanded by steps taken in Executive Order 13310, which contained prohibitions implementing sections 3 and 4 of the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003 (Public Law 108-61) (the "Act") and supplemented that Act with additional restrictions. On October 18, 2007, I determined that the Government of Burma's continued repression of the democratic opposition in Burma, manifested at the time in the violent response to peaceful demonstrations, the commission of human rights abuses related to political repression, and engagement in public corruption, including by diverting or misusing Burmese public assets or by misusing public authority, warranted an expansion of the then-existing sanctions. Executive Order 13448, issued on that date, incorporated existing designation criteria set forth in Executive