

**Amendment to be offered by Senator Johnson.**

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SECTION \_\_\_\_ . SENSE OF THE SENATE ON funding for increased acreage under the Conservation Reserve Program and the Wetlands Reserve Program.

(a) FINDINGS -- The Senate finds that --

- (1) The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) have been successful, voluntary, incentive-based endeavors that over the last decade and a half have turned millions of acres of marginal crop land into reserves that protect wildlife in the United States, provide meaningful income to farmers and ranchers (especially in periods of collapsed commodity prices), and combat soil and water erosion. CRP and WRP also provide increased opportunities for hunting, fishing, and other recreational activities;
- (2) CRP provides landowners with technical and financial assistance, including annual rental payments, in exchange for removing environmentally sensitive farm land from production and implementing conservation practices. Currently, CRP includes around 31.3 million acres in the United States;
- (3) Similarly, WRP offers technical and financial assistance to land owners who select to restore wetlands. Currently, WRP includes 785,000 acres nationwide;
- (4) Furthermore, bipartisan legislation has been introduced in the 106th Congress to increase the acreage permitted under both CRP and WRP. The Administration also supports raising the acreage limitations in both programs; and
- (5) Unfortunately, both CRP and WRP may soon become victims of their own success and their respective statutory acreage limitations unless Congress acts. Given the popularity and demand for these conservation programs, the statutory acreage limitations will likely exhaust resources available to producers who want to participate in CRP or WRP. As currently authorized, CRP has an enrollment cap of 36.4 million acres and WRP is limited at 975,000 acres. As of October 1, 1999, enrollment in CRP stood at approximately 31.3 million acres and enrollment in WRP at just over 785,000 acres.

(b) SENSE OF THE SENATE -- It is the sense of the Senate that Congress and the Administration should take steps to raise the acreage limits of the CRP and WRP in order to make these programs available to aid the preservation and conservation of sensitive natural soil and water resources without negatively effecting rural communities. Further, such actions should help improve farm income for agricultural producers and restore prosperity and growth to rural sectors of the United States.

VOTE ON: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**YEA**

**NAY**

*by voice vote*

**GRASSLEY**

**NICKLES**

**GRAMM**

**BOND**

**GORTON**

**GREGG**

**MS SNOWE**

**ABRAHAM**

**FRIST**

**GRAMS**

**SMITH**

**LAUTENBERG**

**HOLLINGS**

**CONRAD**

**SARBANES**

**Mrs BOXER**

**Mrs MURRAY**

**WYDEN**

**FEINGOLD**

**JOHNSON**

**DURBIN**

**CHAIRMAN**