Minge
Molinari
Montgomery
Moorhead
Moran
Morella
Myers
Myrick
Nethercutt
Neumann
Ney
Norwood
Nussle
Orton
Oxley
Packard
Parker
Pastor
Paxon
Payne (VA)
Peterson (MN)
Petri
Pickett
Pombo
Porter
Portman
Poshard
Pryce
Quillen
Quinn
Radanovich
Ramstad
Regula
Riggs
Roberts
Rogers
Rohrabacher
Rose
Roth
Royce
Salmon
Sanford
Saxton
Scarborough
Schaefer
Schiff
Seastrand
Sensenbrenner
Shadegg
Shaw
Shays
Shuster
Sisisky
Skeen
Smith (MI)
Smith (NJ)
Solomon
Souder
Spence
Stearns
Stenholm
Stockman
Studds
Stump
Talent
Tanner
Tate
Tauzin
Taylor (MS)
Taylor (NC)
Thomas
Thornberry
Thornton
Tiahrt
Torkildsen
Traficant
Upton
Vucanovich
Waldholtz
Walker
Walsh
Wamp
Watts (OK)
Weldon (FL)
Weller
White
Whitfield
Wicker
Wolf
Young (AK)
Young (FL)
Zeliff
Zimmer

NAYS—151

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Andrews
Baldacci
Barrett (WI)
Becerra
Beilenson
Bentsen
Berman
Bevill
Bishop
Bonior
Borski
Boucher
Brown (CA)
Brown (FL)
Brown (OH)
Cardin
Chapman
Clay
Clayton
Clyburn
Coleman
Collins (MI)
Conyers
Costello
Coyne
DeFazio
DeLauro
Dellums
Deutsch
Dicks
Dingell
Dixon
Doggett
Doyle
Durbin
Edwards
Engel
Evans
Farr
Fattah
Fazio
Filner
Flake
Foglietta
Ford
Frank (MA)
Frost
Furse
Gejdenson
Gephardt
Gibbons
Gonzalez
Green
Gutierrez
Hastings (FL)
Hilliard
Hinchey
Hoyer
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Johnson (SD)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnston
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy (MA)
Kennedy (RI)
Kennelly
Kildee
Kleczka
Klink
LaFalce
Lantos
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lipinski
Lofgren
Lowey
Luther
Maloney
Manton
Markey
Martinez
Mascara
Matsui
McCarthy
McDermott
McKinney
Meehan
Meek
Menendez
Miller (CA)
Mink
Moakley
Mollohan
Murtha
Nadler
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Owens
Pallone
Payne (NJ)
Pelosi
Peterson (FL)
Pomeroy
Rahall
Rangel
Reed
Richardson
Rivers
Roemer
Roukema
Roybal-Allard
Rush
Sabo
Sanders
Sawyer
Schroeder
Schumer
Scott
Serrano
Skaggs
Slaughter
Spratt
Stark
Stupak
Tejeda
Thompson
Thurman
Torres
Torricelli
Towns
Velazquez
Vento
Visclosky
Volkmer
Ward
Waters
Watt (NC)
Waxman
Williams
Wilson
Wise
Woolsey
Wynn
Yates

NOT VOTING—14

Bryant (TX)
Collins (IL)
Dornan
Eshoo
Fields (LA)
Fowler
McNulty
Neal
Ros-Lehtinen
Skelton
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Stokes
Weldon (PA)

□ 2305

Mr. KENNEDY of Massachusetts and Mr. FOGLIETTA changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 106, Passage of the Health Coverage Availability and Affordability Act, I was just outside the main door discussing a compromise with appropriators. Unfortunately, I missed the vote. Had I been present, I would have voted ''yea.''

RESIGNATION AS CONFEREE AND APPOINTMENT OF REPLACEMENT CONFEREE ON H.R. 3019, BALANCED BUDGET DOWNPAYMENT ACT, II

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation as a conferee:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, March 28, 1996.

Hon. NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives, H232, The Capitol, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Effective immediately, I hereby resign from the conference of H.R. 3019, the Omnibus Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 1996, Conference Report.

Sincerely,

LOUIS STOKES,
Member of Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignation is accepted and without objection, the Chair appoints the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. HOYER] to fill the resulting vacancy among the primary panel of conferees.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The clerk will notify the Senate of the change in conferees.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRIES

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, I have a parliamentary inquiry. I have a question about the rule that is about to be brought before us on the farm bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, I would ask, is there a waiver in this rule of the unfunded mandate provision?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. When the rule is read, the gentleman will under stand it. There is a waiver of all points of order in the resolution.

Mr. FAZIO of California. Among all those points of order that were waived, is one of them the unfunded mandate provision, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will understand when the resolution is read.

Mr. FAZIO of California. Further parliamentary inquiry, Mr.Speaker. Is there an analysis available to the Members from the Congressional Budget Office that would inform us as to whether this was in fact an unfunded mandate that would require——

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, yes there is.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman should address that question to the Committee on Rules.

Mr. SOLOMON. Yes, there is.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2854, FEDERAL AGRICULTURE IMPROVEMENT AND REFORM ACT OF 1996

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on rules, I call up House Resolution 393 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H.RES. 393

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 2854) to modify the operation of certain agricultural programs. All points of order against the conference report and against its consideration are waived.

SEC. 2. Senate Concurrent Resolution 49 is hereby agreed to.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York [Mr. SOLOMON] is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, for purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman form Ohio [Mr. HALL], pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

(Mr. SOLOMON asked and was given permission to extend his remarks and include extraneous matter.)

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I would say to the Members, if I could just have their attention, we will dispose of this rule in 10 minutes, at the most, with no vote necessary, since it is not controversial. So let us get on with it.

Mr. Speaker, the rule before the House today is necessary to permit the House to consider the conference report on the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act, or FAIR Act.

The rule waives all points of order against the conference report and against its consideration. The waivers are necessary in large part because the Senate passed a much broader bill than the House.

For example, the Senate bill and the conference report contain an extension of the Food Stamp Program, while there was no such provision in the original House bill.

The rule also provides for the adoption of a Senate concurrent Resolution which directs the enrolling clerk to correct an error in the conference report as filed.

Mr. Speaker, this conference report represents the culmination of a long effort to change the way farming is done in America.

Instead of having farmers produce to meet the requirements of Government programs, this bill is designed to move the Government out of the farming business, and let farmers start producing to meet the needs of consumers.

In the long run this will result in lower cost to the taxpayers, and more efficient production of food for the market.

Were it not for the dogged determination and strong leadership of the chairman of the Agriculture Committee, the gentleman from Kansas [Mr. ROBERTS], this bill might never have materialized in its present form.

Because this bill represents a change in 60 years of Federal farming policy, it has been one of the toughest farm bills ever in the history of this House to manage.

The distinguished gentleman from Kansas, who used to serve in the U.S. Marines, I will note, has demonstrated the guts to get it through. We are all in your debt, Mr. Chairman.

I would also like to commend the ranking minority member of the Agriculture Committee, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. DE LA GARZA], and the other members of the committee for the long hours of work they have put into working out this final product.

We have ended up with a bill that the President has said he is going to sign, and this is an indication of the degree to which concerns on both sides of the aisle have been taken into consideration.

Putting this all together required not only bipartisan cooperation, but also a willingness to work out differences between the House and the Senate.

Senator LUGAR, the chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, proved an able Representative of the other body during long negotiations.

Finally I would like to thank the staff members on both sides of the hill who worked on this conference agreement. Much of their work is not seen on the outside, but we who know how hard they work appreciate their efforts.

Mr. Speaker, as many of you know the dairy provisions in this conference agreement have been of particular concern to me, since I represent one of the largest milk producing districts in the Nation. We have ended up with a fair and workable dairy program, one that ends Government subsidies to processors of milk products, like butter, powder, and cheese, but continues a non-taxpaying funded liquid milk price stabilization program that will guarantee small dairy farmers a fair and reasonable price for their milk.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, we need to remember that the planting season is about to begin in some parts of the country, and that means that farmers need to know what the Government's farm policy is going to be. This bill provides the answer to that question. And in order to consider this conference report, it is necessary to adopt this rule. Therefore, I ask for a ''yes'' vote on the rule and a ''yes'' vote on the conference report.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. HALL of Ohio asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, this resolution, House Resolution 393, makes in order to consider the conference report on H.R. 2854, the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act, and it waives all points of order against the conference report.

The conference report on H.R. 2854 reauthorizes farm programs for 7 years. It replaces the current Federal programs for major crops with a new system of fixed annual cash payments that would eventually be phased out. The measure is a dramatic overhaul of our Nation's farm laws, and if successful, it will cut Federal spending on agriculture, at the same time giving farmers greater flexibility in choosing which crops to plant.

The conference report also reauthorizes various overseas food assistance and export programs of the Department of Agriculture. This includes a 7-year reauthorization of the Food for Peace Program, which is known as Public Law 480.

□ 2315

This is a very important program that feeds millions of people around the world. I have seen the food being delivered, I have seen it being used, and I have seen it save lives.

During House consideration of the bill, I worked to include an amendment to make useful changes in the Public Law 480 program, and most of those changes were adopted by the conferees.

Mr. Speaker, I do regret that the technical change in the conference report made by the rule might reduce the ability to implement the program in the period near the end of the fiscal year, and I hope that Congress will monitor the effect of this change and be prepared to make any additional changes to ensure the smooth operation of the program.

The conference report sets payments for farmers for the next 7 years, but I also regret that it only reauthorizes the food stamp program for 2 years. The food stamp program is a lifeline to the hungry in America and one of our most successful antipoverty programs. I believe that they should be given the same kind of long-term assurance that the farmers receive.

Mr. Speaker, it is essential that Congress approve a farm bill quickly before the spring planting season begins, and I urge the adoption of the rule.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to the Members on this side, we are going to ask them not to speak. We are going to have one unanimous consent statement and 1 minute to the distinguished Chairman of the Committee on the Budget, and that is going to be it. We are going to roll this thing.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Florida [Mr. GOSS], of the Committee on Rules.

(Mr. GOSS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this brilliant, fair rule.

I thank the gentleman from Glens Falls for yielding me this time, and I rise in support of the rule for the farm bill conference report. This is a fair rule, and it follows standard House procedure for the consideration of conference reports while fixing an important technical mistake. However, Mr. Speaker, I do have some concerns with the underlying bill. It is clearly a mixed bag for southwest Florida. On the one hand, we have seen a real breakthrough in Federal efforts to restore the Everglades—the $200 million in this conference report, in conjunction with the additional land swap authority added in conference, provides a jump start to the joint efforts by the State, the Federal Government, and the south Florida water management district to restore the everglades. This is a serious commitment, and a necessary one. We have not been good stewards of the Everglades and Florida Bay—a series of actions by the State, the federal government, agricultural interests and others has transformed a unique 50-mile wide freshwater river and its surrounding ecosystem—and not for the better. The periodic sheetflow of fresh water has been reduced, rechannelled and regulated for the convenience of agricultural interests and residential developments—causing a rapid loss of habitat necessary to sustain fisheries, waterfowl, and other wildlife. The nutrient pollution of this water has further degraded what habitat is left. Downstream, Florida Bay is dying. These situations have damaged resources that are vital to the economy and quality of life in Florida. We now understand that the once prevalent view that the Everglades is just a swamp is somewhat akin to looking at the grand canyon as just a big pothole.

There has been a renewed interest in the Everglades system over the past few years, and we've seen several smaller-scale efforts toward restoration, but it is time to get the ball rolling on a comprehensive, coordinated plan to save what remains of this national treasure. And $200 million is a responsible sum to allocate. I do wish that we were more specific in identifying a funding source or sources for this money. Some of my Florida colleagues have suggested an assessment on agricultural interests that have benefited from the changes in the Everglades, and I think this idea should be given serious consideration. The taxpayers in southwest Florida are already paying more than their fair share in State taxes and extra water fees. The State has agreed to match Federal funds 50–50. Still, while I think we have some work to do in finding an offset, I strongly support the Everglades provision in this bill and I congratulate the conferees for their hard work.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, I cannot support other aspects of this bill. For instance, the continuation of many large subsidy and price support programs concerns me. I recognize the difficulty involved in making significant changes in these programs. And there are some victories here—for instance, under this bill the dairy subsidy will be phased out over a 5 year period. But, the minor reforms in

most of the price support and subsidy programs just aren't enough. I am disappointed that Congress has missed this opportunity to remove the heavy hand of Government from the agricultural marketplace. I do not believe it makes much sense to lock in place these special benefit programs over the next 7 years when we are committed to phasing out unnecessary Government spending and involvement in private enterprise.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Ohio [Mr. KASICH], chairman of the Committee on the Budget, to give some accolades to somebody we know.

Mr. KASICH. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman, and I think the Members here tonight should realize that, even though the hour is late, we are about to do something that is truly historic. That is to have the most sweeping change in the farm bill in over 40 years.

Basically, when people across this country say they could never understand why we pay people not to do anything, not to plant anything, this will make such a major reform of the crops that they will not ever have to ask that question again at the end of the day.

I think that the move towards the free market is where we ought to go; I think we could have saved a few more dollars; I think we could have reformed a few more crops, but I want to recommend that the freedom to farm act is a very positive step. The New York Times just the other day commended the committee for the most sweeping reform based on the free market that we have seen. I think it is an appropriate bill as we head into the 21st century. I want to congratulate the distinguished Chairman of the Committee on Agriculture [Mr. ROBERTS] who has done a yeoman's job and walked over an awful lot of hot coals in order to see this day actually happen. So I want to congratulate him, congratulate Members on both sides of the aisle and to say I think the American people, when they understand what is in this bill, are going to give accolades to this Congress for having the courage to move the farm bill into the 21st century.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, the majority is prepared to yield back all of its time and ask for a nonrecorded vote as soon as the minority yields back their time.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California [Mr. FAZIO].

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, I know that the hour is late, and I do not oppose this bill. My point in speaking at this late hour is simple. Earlier today when the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. BONIOR] made a motion which would address the issue of a minimum wage for the American worker, the majority decided to invoke a rule that would strike that motion on the premise that it somehow was an unfunded mandate.

CBO has now ruled of course that that motion did not constitute an unfunded mandate. But in this bill, there is an unfunded mandate, and of course the rule waives that. Now, that is not the first time. I am sure the majority will use its power whenever it so wishes to deem something an unfunded mandate and then ignore another unfunded mandate and present the Members with a fait accompli.

This was also typical of the three-fifths rule on tax increases. I cannot remember how many times we have waived that rule which we so proudly adopted on the opening day of this session.

My reason for speaking is not to the substance of this bill but a constant attention to the majority's propensity to constitute whatever rules it wishes in violation of whatever standards it has adopted, even in this Congress where it took so much credit for changing the way we do our business here. Many Members on both sides of the aisle, the gentleman from California [Mr. CONDIT], certainly the leader, decided that the unfunded mandate issue needed to be addressed.

Well, here, once again, we get the headline, and then when it comes down to implementation, we reject taking any action on this unfunded mandate. Yet we use it as an excuse when we do not want to deal with an issue that is unpopular for the majority but overwhelmingly popular in the country.

So, Mr. Speaker, I simply have to rise in protest over the continuing misuse of the rules by the majority.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in reluctant support of the conference report to the bill H.R. 2854, the Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform Act, better known as the 1996 farm bill.

In considering this legislation today, it is important to put it in some perspective, because as we all know, this was supposed to have been the 1995 farm bill.

Since 1965, we have passed multiyear farm bills to reauthorize a wide variety of commodity, trade, research, conservation, rural development and nutrition programs.

We passed farm bills in 1965, 1970, 1973, 1977, 1981, 1985, and 1990. The most recent two farm bills were passed with overwhelming bipartisan majorities.

But when 1995 came and the Republicans took over control of the House and Senate, they decided to adopt a different tact. They abandoned what in past years was a broad-based, bipartisan bill based on open debate about our national agriculture policies and priorities.

You might say that in their first year behind the plow, the GOP leadership used a new kind of fertilizer: partisan politics—to cultivate their favorite crop—political points.

Instead of debating this legislation in a systematic fashion throughout the year, the Republicans waited until late in the year when appropriations bills, continuing resolutions, and debt ceilings held center stage. Then and only then, in a budget-driven exercise, GOP leaders decided to tie the farm bill's fate to controversial budget reconciliation legislation about which Democrats and President Clinton had expressed severe reservations.

The chairman of the Agriculture Committee could not even muster a majority of votes within his committee and was forced to use special procedures to have the Budget Committee report the so-called farm bill as part of the reconciliation bill.

Once the reconciliation bill was vetoed and the GOP strategy was shown to be flawed, farmers and consumers across the country watched the important authorizations for these programs expire. Farm fill consideration was forced to start from ground zero.

This is not the way to make national agriculture policy.

This is not the way to treat our largest industry, the United States' biggest employer, and our biggest export earner.

In short, this is not the way to treat American farmers and the millions of Americans who depend upon them.

These legislative tactics caused needless anxiety across the country, and to what end?

The end is the conference report we consider today—a bill in better balance—similar to those we have always brought forward in the past—that will move agriculture production forward in the years to come. But it is a bill we should have considered and passed into law many months ago.

The conference report contains all the traditional titles included in the farm bill in the farm bill in addition to the commodity titles—rural development, export promotion, foreign food assistance, domestic nutrition programs, and conservation.

I think the GOP leadership needs to ask itself what might have happened last year if they had approached this crucial legislation in the same spirit as reflected by the conference report today. My sense is you would have a very similar product but you would have avoided the specter of partisanship. Better yet, you would have saved our farmers months of needless anxiety.

Perhaps the GOP leadership considered the freedom to farm concept to be too controversial for any but heavy-handed and partisan tactics.

But farmers in California understand that we must move to a market-based farm economy. In fact, agriculture producers across the country have been positioning themselves, as we have in California, to take advantage of increased trade opportunities from NAFTA and GATT. Agribusiness has been making the investments necessary to respond to a growing, yet demanding and sophisticated world market.

However, for my part, I believe there are two flaws in this bill that require attention, even if they are not sufficient to require a ''no'' vote today.

First, the Senate voted down and the conference turned its back on a simple requirement that farmers plant a crop in order to qualify for a freedom to farm payment. Certainly, most farmers will continue their historic pattern of farming while using the expanded flexibility in this bill to boost production and pursue new marketing opportunities. But there will be many marginal farmers who will view payments not linked to planting as a one-time opportunity to take the money and run. The horror stories of farm welfare in the years to come are easy to anticipate, and they will represent a black eye for American agriculture, which is already not well understood by many Americans. It is a black eye that easily could have been avoided.

Second, in moving to a market-oriented economy, we effectively have eliminated a

safety net program for our program crop farmers that is linked to prices. Prices are high now, and trade is booming. But not every future year will turn out that way, and there are always special problems that arise affecting individual commodities. I am concerned that trade wars or other unpredictable events in future years will wash away farmers who otherwise might have weathered the storm if a safety net program were in place.

The conference has wisely included various conservation, export, research, credit, and promotion programs. These agriculture programs often receive less attention than commodity programs, but they are at the heart of American agriculture's success. Leaving them out of the House bill was a major mistake—one of the reasons I opposed the House version of this bill—and I'm pleased the conference has put them back in.

In the final analysis, this bill is not perfect, and lacking perfection, it is a bill we could have arrived at many months ago. Ultimately, the GOP leadership must ask themselves if their partisan tactics have produced an improved product—I think the answer is a resounding no.

Has the GOP leadership positioned Congress well to weather the charges of welfare for farmers that are likely to arise?

Could the GOP's quest for budget savings have been accomplished much more easily by providing price-based safety net programs and being far more generous to research and trade promotion programs?

Only time will answer these questions as we watch the effects of the bill we consider today in the years to come.

While I cast a reserved ''yes'' vote for the farm bill conference report today, I unreservedly reaffirm my commitment to a strengthened American agriculture in the years to come. Congress must monitor the effects of this legislation carefully and be prepared to act again if necessary to ensure that American agriculture retains its preeminent position in the world.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. FRANK].

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by not apologizing at all for speaking on a major piece of legislation in the House of Representatives. The majority's manipulation of the schedule is outrageous enough, but now to say that this major piece of legislation, which the House majority leader a few years ago described I think aptly, he predicted welfare for farmers as he said in his Heritage Foundation piece. And I would not necessarily mind welfare for farmers, but they get 7 years of welfare, the AFDC recipients get 5, and of course there is no work requirements.

But for the House to spend so much time doing so little for so long, and then take up a major piece of legislation, and the leadership decides it will come up late at night and then to say oh, well, it is late at night, you cannot debate it. That is like the kid who kills his parents and say, have mercy, I am an orphan.

As the gentleman from California pointed out, before we were told that something is not an unfunded mandate, could not even be debated, the minimum wage, but this bill, according to CBO, has five unfunded mandates. And when it came before us as a bill, the Committee on Rules waived it. They would not even vote on that. So we get a bill with a lot of unfunded mandates.

The first test of the new rule on unfunded mandates, they do not pay any attention to. They now are trying to browbeat the House into ignoring all of these important substantive issues, give the farmers welfare, spend billions of dollars, let us have some unfunded mandates, but it is 11:30, let us go home. Well, if my colleagues do not want to debate things at 11:30, they control the House, schedule them at a reasonable hour. But to take a major piece of legislation like this and then so manipulate the schedule that they want to sneak it through without adequate debate is unworthy of the House.

Mr. Speaker, we ought to debate these unfunded mandates. We ought to debate the fact that farmers get billions of dollars for years for doing absolutely nothing whatsoever. I hope that the House will in fact repudiate these tactics.

Let us debate this. My colleagues have waited a very long time. We could pick an appropriate time of the day and debate it honestly and fairly, and do not come here, deliberately work the schedule this way and then say, oh, but we want to be nice to everybody, let us go home. If Members want to go home, let them go home and let the rest of us stay here and do the business that we are paid to do.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I just want to tell the gentleman from Boston that this bill guarantees the people of Boston are going to have fresh milk for the next 7 years.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

The text of Senate Concurrent Resolution concurred in pursuant to House Resolution 393 is as follows:

S. CON. RES. 49

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That the Clerk of the House of Representatives, in the enrollment of the bill (H.R. 2854) to modify the operation of certain agricultural programs, shall make the following corrections:

In section 215—

(1) in paragraph (1), insert ''and'' at the end;

(2) in paragraph (2), strike ''; and'' at the end and insert a period; and

(3) strike paragraph (3).

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 393, I call up the conference report on the bill (H.R. 2854) to modify the operation of certain agricultural programs.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OXLEY). Pursuant to House Resolution 393, the conference report is considered as having been read.

(For conference report and statement, see proceedings of the House of March 25, 1996, at page H2716.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Kansas [Mr. ROBERTS] and the gentleman from Texas [Mr. DE LA GARZA] each will control 30 minutes.

Mr. VOLKMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the conference report. It is my understanding that the gentleman from Kansas [Mr. ROBERTS] and the gentleman from Texas [Mr. DE LA GARZA] are both proponents of it, and I would like to claim time in opposition.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentleman from Texas opposed?

Mr. DE LA GARZA. I am not opposed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is not opposed. If the gentleman from Texas is not opposed, the gentlemen from Kansas and Texas and Missouri will each be recognized for 20 minutes. The gentleman from Kansas [Mr. ROBERTS] will be recognized for 20 minutes, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. DE LA GARZA] will be recognized for 20 minutes, and the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. VOLKMER] will be recognized for 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kansas [Mr. ROBERTS].

(Mr. ROBERTS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

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

The House has before it today a historic conference report, H.R. 2854, the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996. I call it historic because the Committees on Agriculture have produced a farm bill that represent a major departure from the past and a bold plan in regard to the future.

Mr. Speaker, I have some 16 pages of very pertinent comments in regard to the Freedom to Farm concept that we have passed, but I am going to revise and extend my remarks and we are going to hope to try to conclude this.

The Senate has passed the similar conference report 74 to 26, and the reason that we are trying to expedite this bill is to get it to the President as fast as possible. We have assurance from the Secretary of Agriculture that the President will sign it, and farmers have been waiting and waiting and waiting. And so as soon as we conclude this debate, we will try to make it just as short as possible to accommodate not only every farmer and rancher of America, but my colleagues here who I know wish to go home.

Mr. Speaker, the House has before it today an historic conference report—H.R. 2854—the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996. I call it historic because the Agriculture Committees have produced a farm bill that represents a major departure from the past and a bold plan for the future.

Embodied in the Conference Report before us today is what is commonly referred to as the Freedom to Farm concept that I, along with Congressman Barrett of Nebraska, introduced

last August. Freedom to Farm was developed after the Committee conducted 19 field hearings and traveled over 60,000 miles last spring listening to over 10,000 farmers, ranchers, and the agribusiness community.

The original New Deal farm programs, over 60 years, ago were based on the principal of supply management. Control supply and raise prices. Over the last 20 years the principal justification for the programs has been that farmers receive federal assistance in return for setting aside a portion of their acreage. That assistance was largely in the form of deficiency payments to compensate farmers for prices below a government-set target price for their production.

Today that system has collapsed as an effective way to deliver assistance to farmers. Worldwide agricultural competition usurps markets when we reduce production. World demand (along with the Conservation Reserve Program) has tightened supplies so that there have been no set-asides in wheat for five years—and none are projected in the foreseeable future, eliminating that justification for the programs. In short, the supply management rationale not only fails under close scrutiny by the many critics of agriculture policy, it has enabled our competitors to simply increase their production by more than we ''set aside,'' thereby causing significant impact on American farmers through lost market shares.

The budget cuts of the last ten years have produced greater and greater bureaucratic controls on farmers. In fact, decoupling of the payments from production actually occurred ten years ago when Congress froze payment yields to save money. In 1990 the concept of ''unpaid flex acres'' was introduced to further weaken and devalue the programs in a budget-cutting move. For the last ten years, in effect, Congressional farm policy has been driven almost completely by budget reduction, and the 1995 debate reaffirmed the budget as the driving force for program policy.

Most in the agricultural community have come to the realization that annual set-asides are counter-productive and only encourage our competitors to plant more and steal market share. However, to eliminate the Secretary of Agriculture's reliance on set-asides would cost either the taxpayers or the farmers $6.6 billion under the present farm program according to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO).

The Freedom to Farm Act [FFA] was born of an effort to create a new farm policy from an entirely new perspective. Acknowledging that budget cuts were inevitable, FFA sets up a new set of goals and criteria for farm policy; Get the government out of the farmers' fields; return to farmers the ability to produce for the markets, not government programs; provide a predictable and guaranteed phasing down of federal financial assistance.

By removing government controls on land use, FFA effectively eliminates the No. 1 complaint of farmers about the programs: Bureaucratic redtape and government interference. Complaints about endless waits at the county office would end. Hassles over field sizes and whether the right crop was planted to the correct amount of acres would be a thing of the past. Environmentalists should be pleased that the government will no longer force planting of surplus crops and monoculture agriculture. Producers who want to introduce a rotation on their farm for agronomic reasons will be free of current restrictions. Allowing farmers to rotate their crops will allow them to reduce the use of pesticides, herbicides and fertilizer. This sample fact makes this bill the most ''green'' or environmentally friendly farm bill in my memory.

Under FFA, farmers can plant or idle all of their acres at their discretion. The restrictions on what they can plant are greatly reduced. Response to the market would assume a larger role in farmer planning. Divorcing payments from production (a process already begun when yields were frozen in 1985) will end any pressure from the government in choosing crops to pursue. All production incentives in the future should come from the marketplace.

The guarantee of a fixed (albeit declining) payment for seven years will provide the predictability that farmers have wanted and provide certainty to creditors as a basis for lending. The current situation in wheat, corn and cotton under which prices are very high, but large numbers of producers have lost their crops to weather or pests would be corrected by FFA. Those producers last year could not access the high prices without crops, and instead of getting help when they need it most, the old system cuts off their deficiency payments and even demands that they repay advance deficiency payments. FFA insures that whatever government financial assistance is available will be delivered, regardless of the circumstances, because the producer signs a binding contract with the Federal government for the next seven years.

Some of my colleagues have expressed reservations about making high payments during period of high prices. First, the payments will not be high. You can't cut the amount of money we have cut out of agriculture spending over the last 20 years and still have ''high'' payments. No farmer is likely to take his market transition payment and retire. Farmers will continue to farm.

Second, under FFA, the payments made to producers must be looked at from a new perspective. It is a transition to full farmer responsibility for his economic life. Just as farmers will need to look to the market for production and marketing signals, the FFA will require that farmers manage their finances to meet price swings. It is true that when prices are high, farmers will receive a full market transition payment. It is equally true that if prices decline, farmers will receive no more than the fixed market transition payment. That means the farmer must manage all his income, both market and government, to account for weather and price fluctuations.

In short, the FFP authorizes Transition Payments to farmers—as opposed to the current program's deficiency payments—to serve as a form of compensation as we move U.S. agriculture from an economy heavily influenced by the federal government to one in which the government's role is substantially reduced and the primary influence is the market place.

The old program provided market insulation for each bushel of production, but that system is collapsing under the weight of budget cuts. The FFA enhances the farmer's total economic situation—in fact, FFA results in the highest net farm income over the next 7 years of any of the proposals before Congress. This allows the farmer to become accustomed to saving when times are good and using those savings when times are tough. With government assistance declining, it is imperative that producers assume total responsibility for their economic futures. In the years that prices are strong and the farmer receives a payment, it will be his personal responsibility to save that money for the bad year or pay off debt so he can weather the bad years.

The severest critics of farm programs at the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Economist, and a host of regional newspapers have hailed FFA as the most significant reform in ag policy since the 30's. Many congressional critics have also decided that FFA represents the kind of reform they can support. If the ''welfare'' charge was to be leveled, it should have come from this corner. Instead, they believe FFA is the kind of reform that is needed. Nearly every agricultural economist who has commented on FFA has supported it structure and its probable effect on farmers and the agricultural sector.

The only people who are worried about it being classed as ''welfare'' are those populists who want to keep the status quo, some farm groups and others who are supportive of the old farm programs. Agriculture is now at a crossroads. It can either sink deeper into government controls and rapidly sagging government support, or it can strike out in a new direction that at least holds out the prospect of an assisted transition to the private marketplace. H.R. 2854 and the Freedom to Farm Act is that new direction and Congress needs to seize it.

Never before has a farm program proposal enjoyed such broad and diverse support as this one. From the Ivory Towers of academia and the think tanks to the editorial board rooms of our nation's newspapers to a broad

spectrum of farm, commodity and agribusiness groups, support for this proposal is strong. Most importantly, Freedom to Farm enjoys widespread support among individual farmers across the country who are fed up with convoluted government programs, and exploding government debt.

The following groups or individuals have endorsed either the Freedom to Farm Act or that concept as contained in H.R. 2854. I ask unanimous consent to insert in the record at this point a list of groups, organizations, and newspapers who have endorsed the Freedom to Farm concept:

FARM AND TRADE ORGANIZATIONS

American Farm Bureau Federation, National Corn Growers Association, National Grain Trade Council, National Grain & Feed Association, American Cotton Shippers, Iowa Farm Bureau Federation, Iowa Corn Growers Association, Iowa Cattleman's Association, Kansas Farm Bureau, Kansas Association of Wheat Growers, Kansas Bankers Association, Kansas Grain & Feed Association, Kansas Fertilizer & Chemical Association, North Dakota Grain Growers Association, the Minnesota Association of Wheat Growers, the National Turkey Federation, the National Sunflower Association, National Food Processors' Association, Agricultural Retailers Association, American Feed Industry Association, American Frozen Food Institute, Biscuit & Cracker Manufacturers' Association, National Oilseed Processors Association, Millers' National Federation, and the Coalition for a Competitive Food and Agricultural System (representing 126 members).

PUBLIC INTEREST ORGANIZATIONS AND REPRESENTATIVES

U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Citizens Against Government Waste; John Frydenlund—The Heritage Foundation; Paul Beckner—Citizens for a Sound Economy; David Keating—National Taxpayers Union; Grover Norquist—Americans for Tax Reform; Fran Smith—Consumer Alert; Ed Hudgins—The Cato Institute; Jonathan Tolman—Competitive Enterprise Institute.

A SAMPLING OF NEWSPAPER ENDORSEMENTS

Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Washington Post, Des Moines Register, USA Today, Dallas Morning News, Chicago Tribune, Minneapolis Star Tribune, Denver Post, Kansas City Star, Wisconsin State Journal, The Daily Oklahoman, The Wichita Eagle, The Indianapolis News, The Hartford Courant, The Louisville Courier Journal, Washington Times, The Garden City Telegram, The Manhattan (KS) Mercury. Also, Feedstuffs, Farm Journal, New England Farmer.

ECONOMISTS

Prof. Willard W. Cochrane, University of Minnesota, Director Agricultural Economics, USDA, Kennedy Administration; Dr. Lynn Daft, Abel, Daft, Earley & Ward International, Agricultural Counselor, White House, Carter Administration; Dr. Bruce Gardner, University of Maryland, Assistant Secretary for Economics, USDA, Bush Administration; Dr. Dale Hathaway, National Center for Food & Agricultural Policy, Under Secretary for Economics, USDA, Carter Administration; Dr. Robert Innes, University of Arizona, Council of Economic Advisors, Clinton Administration; Dr. D. Gale Johnson, University of Chicago; Dr. William Lesher, Russell and Lesher, Assistant Secretary for Economics, USDA, Reagan Administration; Dr. Lawrence W. Libby, University of Florida; Dr. Don Paarlburg, Purdue University, Special Assistant, President Eisenhower, Director of Agriculture Economics, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture, USDA, Nixon-Ford Administrations; Dr. Robert Paarlburg, Wellesley College and Harvard University; Dr. C. Ford Runge, University of Minnesota; Dr. John Schnittker, Schnittker Associates, Under Secretary of Agriculture, USDA, Johnson Administration; Mr. Daniel A. Sumner, University of California—Davis, Assistant Secretary for Economics, USDA, Council of Economic Advisers, Bush Administration; Dr. Robert L. Thompson, Winrock International, Assistant Secretary for Economics, USDA—Reagan Administration; Dr. Luther Tweeten, The Ohio State University; and Dr. Barry Flinchbaugh, Kansas State University.

Clearly the support for the concept of Freedom to Farm is widespread. But this bill is more than just Freedom To Farm. There are other major reforms contained in this package. This bill reforms the dairy industry. It instructs the Secretary to reduce the number of milk marketing orders in the nation. It phases out the price support. This bill provides regulatory relief for farmers in terms of conservation compliance and wetlands by injecting a little common sense into the process.

This bill has a very strong trade title. It has strong embargo protection language that reminds the President we can't have a market-oriented farm policy and allow the State Department to destroy those markets through foreign policy embargoes. The American farmer remembers the Soviet Grain Embargo of 1980—that nearly wiped out a generation of farmers. We can't go down that road again and this bill makes it more difficult for a President to choose that path.

This bill also contains the Commission on 21st Century Agriculture. As I have alluded to, this is a transition bill. But many farmers have raised the question of a transition of what? This bill charges the Commission to look at where we have been and where we should head and report to Congress on the appropriate role of the Federal government in production agriculture after 2002.

This bill also authorizes existing research programs for two years while Congress can undertake an extensive review of the $1.7 billion we spend on agricultural research. The House Agriculture Committee has sent out 57 questions to the research community stakeholders asking them for their guidance and input. On Wednesday, we began the hearing process that will hopefully lead to reform legislation that moves agricultural research in the direction of helping our farmers compete in a global marketplace against very tough competitors.

This bill takes a small stab at reforming the way USDA goes about buying its computers. In the past, the USDA through the Commodity Credit Corporation has spent hundreds of millions of dollars on computers and information systems, often without very much Congressional oversight. The result has been the various agencies of the USDA all have different computer systems with little ability to communicate. Several years ago the USDA embarked upon Infoshare supposedly to better manage its computer and information systems. The Clinton administration abandoned that and is proposing to spend $175 million next year on yet another computer purchasing extravaganza. This bill attempts to get a Congressional grip on those purchases and make them subject to greater Congressional review and accountability.

This bill reforms and streamlines the current rural development system by establishing the Rural Community Advancement Program [RCAP], which authorizes the Secretary to provide grants, direct and guaranteed loans and other assistance to meet rural development needs across the country. The new program provides greater flexibility, state and local decision making and a simplified, uniform application process.

In summary, this bill is truly reform. It moves agricultural program policy into the 21st Century. I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. GUNDERSON].

(Mr. GUNDERSON asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GUNDERSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this conference agreement.

Mr. Speaker, I say to my colleagues that we bring them the most difficult title of this conference report, the dairy title. It has been the most acrimonious, but I think we bring a consensus package today which represents the most comprehensive reform of dairy policy in the last 50 years.

What it does is first and foremost prepares us to deal with the inequities of dairy pricing across this country over the next 3-year period; and secondly, it allows us over the next 4 years to prepare for the American dairy farmer to successfully participate in the post-GATT world dairy economy.

This is significant legislation, and I would encourage everyone to support it.

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to take just a few moments go through the dairy chapter of the conference report section by section to describe the improvements the conference report has made in the House-passed bill.

Section 141 retains the dairy price support program for 4 years, but eliminates the budget assessment on producers immediately. The support price will be set at $10.35/cwt in 1996, $10.20/cwt in 1997, $10.05/cwt in 1998, and $9.90/cwt in 1999. This level of support is higher than that provided by the Solomon-Dooley language in the House-passed bill, thereby assuring producers a higher income in those years.

During this period, the Secretary is authorized to alter how the support price is allocated between butter and nonfat dry milk in an effort to minimize price support program purchases and maximize exports of those commodities.

This section also terminates the dairy price support program on December 31, 1999, rather than on December 31, 2000, as the House-

passed bill would have done. This will allow the U.S. dairy industry to become competitive in the world market a full year before Solomon-Dooley would have. This is absolutely critical to the future of the industry because the Uruguay Round will free up about 25 percent of the world market for butter, nonfat dry milk, and cheese from subsidies by the end of the century.

Section 142 replaces the dairy price support program with a recourse loan program for processors of cheddar cheese, butter, and nonfat dry milk at a rate of $9.90/cwt of milk equivalent on a 3.67 butterfat basis. This marketing tool will be an important stabilizing tool as it enters the world market. It also serves a secondary purpose of maintaining a budget baseline for dairy commodity program outlays in the last 3 years of our 7 year budget cycle.

Section 143 provides for milk marketing order consolidation and pricing reform to be completed by USDA during the 3 years that follow the enactment of the bill. This is 2 years faster than the 5-year period proposed by the Solomon-Dooley language in the House-passed bill.

In completing the consolidation of the current 33 Federal milk marketing orders into not less than 10 nor more than 14 orders, the Secretary will have to redesign the entire price surface for milk in this country from the basic formula price for manufacturing milk to any differential for fluid (beverage) milk. Uniform component pricing for milk is specifically mentioned.

The bill language also specifically prohibits the Secretary from using the current fluid milk differentials in any way to achieve that new price surface. Rather, it suggests that he review utilization rates and multiple basing points, among other issues, when designing that new fluid milk pricing system. This will undoubtedly result in a flatter price surface for fluid milk and a more level playing field nationally.

All of the issues related to consolidation and pricing reform will be addressed through the information rulemaking process, assuring their completion within 3 years of the enactment of the legislation. There is a further safeguard to assure the timely completion of this reform in that, if the Secretary fails to complete these tasks within the allotted period of time, he will lose his authority to assess producers and handlers for marketing order services and administrative costs until those reforms are, indeed, completed.

Section 144 is offered in an attempt to exempt California from existing Federal standards for the solids not fact content in Class I (fluid) milk. Regrettably, this section is drafted in such a way that the State standards would become a barrier to interstate commerce in fluid milk and, as a result, will likely spawn years of additional lawsuits on this issue.

Section 145 resolves the so-called ''section 102''—(California make allowance—issue which has, similarly, been the subject matter of frequent, contentious litigation. Specifically, section 102 of the 1990 farm bill is repealed and replaced, for a 4-year period, with a ceiling on State manufacturing allowances of $1.65/cwt for butter/nonfat dry milk and $1.80/cwt for cheese.

The section further clarifies that these ceilings are the numbers which result from a State's yield and product price formulas, not the numbers which are plugged into and, then, adjusted by these formulas. If a manufacturing allowance resulting from the yield and pricing formulas of a State milk marketing order exceed these ceilings, processors in that State are precluded from selling surplus commodities to the Commodity Credit Corporation under the dairy price support program.

Section 146 extends the fluid milk promotion program through the year 2002. The House reluctantly accepted this provision even though we have not had hearings on this reauthorization to date. We will, in fact, have those hearings later this spring.

Section 147 relates to the Northeast Interstate Dairy compact. While this interstate agreement has little support on the House side, we were confronted with a situation in conference that threatened the entire farm bill process if the Northeast compact were not among the provisions of the conference report. Given the delay that the Reconciliation process already imposed on a new farm bill and the prospect of farmers beginning their planting season without a farm bill, the House conferees reluctantly agreed to include the Northeast compact among the other farm bill provisions only after its proponents had agreed to the following limitations.

First of all, consent is granted to the compact only if the Secretary of Agriculture finds that there is a compelling public interest for the compact in the region. Second, any consent will be terminated when the Secretary implements the consolidation and pricing reforms required by section 143.

Further, the compact over-order price would be applicable only to fluid milk, and the CCC would have to be reimbursed for any additional purchases of milk and the products of milk resulting from any increased milk production in the compact region in excess of the increase in milk production nationally.

Most importantly, the compact and its over-order price are not allowed to create a domestic trade barrier to milk and milk products coming into the compact region from other production areas around the country. While the mere establishment of an over-order price by the Compact Commission for use within the region itself will not be considered a prohibition or limitation on interstate commerce or the imposition of a compensatory payment, the Commission cannot require handlers bringing fluid milk into the region, either in bulk, packaged, or producer form, to add a compensatory payment or other up-charge to that milk.

In this regard, the language in condition number seven is clear and unambiguous—the Compact Commission cannot prohibit or otherwise limit milk or milk products from other regions of the country from entering the region, it must abide by the rules and regulations that Federal orders have set up with respect to the classification of milk and the allocation of the proceeds from inter-order sales of milk, and it cannot use compensatory payments under section 10(6) of the compact.

In short, Mr. Speaker, the legislation prevents the Northeast to use its compact in any way that could lead to the economic disadvantage or detriment of producers and processors in other regions of the country.

Section 148 requires the full funding of the Dairy Export Incentive Program [DEIP] to Uruguay Round limits and gives the Secretary of Agriculture the sole discretion over the program to eliminate interagency disputes over the use of this program in the future.

Sections 149 and 150 authorize the Secretary to assist the American dairy industry in establishing one or more export trading companies autonomous of the U.S. government and to find sources of funding for their activities. These entities would, then, assist U.S. companies in entering and remaining competitive in the world market.

Section 151 requires the Secretary to study and report to the Congress on the impact that the new access cheese that our negotiators agreed to during the Uruguay Round proceedings will have on producer income and government purchases of cheese under the price support program.

Finally, section 152 re-emphasizes the authority the National Dairy Board already has to use a portion of its annual budget to promote American dairy products internationally.

As you can see, Mr. Speaker, this is a good dairy bill. Not only does it get us into the world market for dairy faster and provide greater marketing tools for the dairy industry than the Solomon-Dooley provisions, but is also kinder to producer income and gets us order reform and a more level domestic playing field faster than those Solomon-Dooley provisions. Accordingly, I recommend its adoption by my colleagues.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. WALKER].

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to engage in a colloquy with the gentleman from Kansas regarding Section 892 of H.R. 2854, currently entitled ''Use of Remote Sensing Data and Other Data to Anticipate Potential Food, Feed, and Fiber Shortages or Excesses and to Provide Timely Information to Assist Farmers with Planting Decisions.'' The gentleman from Michigan, Mr. Smith, and I worked out some language on how we can encourage the use of remote sensing data to aid farmers across this country, but the language contained in Section 892 of H.R. 2854 differs from what we agreed on and might be interpreted differently than is intended.

First of all, the title of the section conveys a different meaning than intended. It should indicate that the federal government's role in this area is to assist farmers in using remote sensing data, not to provide the data directly. Subparagraph (b) of Section 892 directs the NASA Administrator and Secretary of Agriculture to work with the private sector to provide information, through remote sensing, on crop conditions, fertilization and irrigation needs, pest infiltration, soil conditions, projected food, feed, and fiber production, and any other information available through remote sensing. Some might interpret that to mean that NASA should provide data directly to farmers, even if private remote sensing firms can already meet those needs. That is not what is intended by this paragraph.

Mr. ROBERTS. You are correct. That is not the intention of this language. There are excellent capabilities within NASA and the private sector to use remote sensing data for crop forecasting, precision agriculture, and projecting

food yield. We do want to find innovative ways of bringing these capabilities to the benefit of the American farmer. Under Subparagraph (b), NASA and the Secretary of Agriculture should work with the private sector to teach farmers how to obtain and use remote sensing data from commercial data providers for the purposes you mentioned. The NASA Administrator or the Secretary of Agriculture should not interpret this to mean that they are to provide farmers with remote sensing data that the private sector is making available on the market.

Mr. WALKER. The NASA Administrator and the Secretary of Agriculture, then will not be allowed to compete with the private sector in providing earth remote sensing data, interpretation services, or tools to the agricultural community. It is also intended that NASA's efforts under this provision be managed by the Earth Observation for Commercial Application Program [EOCAP], based the Stennis Space Center in Mississippi.

Mr. ROBERTS. Well, the gentleman is absolutely correct. The intention of this subparagraph is for the NASA Administrator and the Secretary of Agriculture to help the commercial remote sensing industry better meet the needs of the agricultural community through development of new pre-commercial remote sensing technologies and interpretive tools. That way, we will ensure a steady steam of services and products that benefit American agriculture without adding to government expenditures or making American farmers dependent on the provision of government services. The EOCAP (E–OH–CAP) program has the most expertise in bringing these diverse requirements and capabilities together.

Mr. WALKER. Subparagraph (c) also calls on the Secretary of Agriculture and the NADA Administrator to jointly develop a proposal to provide farmers and other prospective users with supply and demand information about food and fibers. We do not intend that this section shall require or direct the NASA Administrator to conduct a program within NASA that does crop forecasting.

Mr. ROBERTS. The gentleman has hit the nail on the head again. This subparagraph is intended to urge the NASA Administrator to provide to the Secretary of Agriculture remote sensing data or interpretative tools that it develops under its normal activities, if and when such data and tools may be helpful in understanding the supply and demand for food and fibers. This is not intended to place any requirements for programs or research efforts on the NASA Administrator that add to NASA's current responsibilities.

□ 2330

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Before I yield to the gentleman, I would just like to observe that the little Mutt and Jeff or whatever kind of show that went on was quite a joke, and this bill is quite a joke.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from North Dakota [Mr. POMEROY].

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

I would observe I have never heard my colleagues more eloquent.

I want to tell you at the outset that I feel badly all of you have to remain tonight for the debate preceding the vote. We asked the chairman to roll the vote. We are going to be here tomorrow. We might have had an extended debate, not inconveniencing you, but a full debate before the vote tomorrow.

The chairman refused the request to roll the vote, and that is why you will participate in the debate. We will not be rushed in our effort to get on the record our reservations about this bill. And I do not care what tactics they use to put us in an awkward situation debating the bill at 11:30 at night.

You are going to hear tonight a lot of thumping of the chests, a lot of patting on the back. We are passing a farm bill. You know, it is as though they did not realize the last farm bill expired at the end of 1995. We have had farmers all across the country considering very difficult decisions in terms of what to plant, what financing to get in place, not just the farmers but lenders, agribusiness men, all wondering about the actions of this Congress. As far as I am concerned, the House Ag Committee had one thing and one thing only to do in 1995, and that is get a farm bill passed. And the House Committee on Agriculture failed to do it.

Come 1996 January came and went, come February, against a vote that all of us opposed on this side of the aisle. The House voted to adjourn and went home, leaving several opportune weeks to get a farm bill in place wasted, as Members went back to their districts. Come March, the weeks start to toll, and now here, on March 28, and the chairman says we have to remain in session until sometime near midnight so we get a farm program in place for farmers.

I think it has been an absolutely shameful debacle of a process that has brought this bill that left the last farm bill expiring before we had a new program in place for our farmers, and that is just the start of my reservations about this particular farm bill before us.

I do not deny for a minute that the guaranteed payments, especially in the early going under the so-called freedom to farm bill we will be passing tonight, will be helpful to the farmers of North Dakota and across the country. It is what the farmers have been asked to give up for these early upfront payments that give me the most heartburn about this bill.

For decades we have preserved the safety net for family farmers, recognizing that they expose enormous amounts of capital, but have their fate turning largely upon market prices over which they have no control whatsoever.

We have provided a backstop when prices collapsed. We have given farmers a floor so that we do not drive them off their land, and this bill eliminates that hallmark of traditional family farm programs maintained by past Congresses.

What makes this bill even more troubling is that American farmers were assured in exchange for giving up this long-term safety net they would have regulatory relief. Well, there is a good deal in there about planting flexibility, and I think those are positive components of this bill. But if falls far short of regulatory relief. In conference committee the conference adopted an amendment proposed by the gentleman from South Dakota [Mr. JOHNSON] and myself to reform the swampbuster legislation. I think more reform was needed here. And yet, without question, farmers will find the increased flexibility somewhat helpful. More should have been done. The promise of regulatory relief really, I think falls short in delivery than what was promised. In many other ways, this bill is still superior to the freedom to the farm package that was before the House at the end of February. It contains an oilseed marketing loan and a fund for rural America, both provisions that we offered in the House agriculture committee, but they were defeated by the Republican majority Members. Now they are in the final report. It makes it a better bill. It does not make it a bill worthy of passage.

The debate on this bill has been long and contentious. It is unfortunate we did not have more of an opportunity for honest give-and-take in the terms of trying to resolve our differences. I think once the farmers of our Nation get a good look at this program, they will see that at the end of 7 years, they are left without a safety net, they are left without the freedom to farm payments, and they will realize that this deal has been a bad deal for rural America.

My sincere hope is that the Congress will have the chance to review and correct the grievous mistakes it is making in passing this legislation before the last family farmers in America are finally run out of business.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Nebraska [Mr. BARRETT], the coauthor of the Freedom to Farm Act.

(Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, I thank my chairman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I do rise tonight in support of the conference report on H.R. 2854. I want to thank the chairman of the full ag committee for yielding to me and for his leadership in bringing

this historic piece of legislation to this point.

I am pleased that Congress will pass the conference report tonight. It will unleash agriculture, the Nation's single largest industry, from antiquated programs, and excessive Federal control.

As the largest newspaper in Nebraska said on yesterday, it will allow farmers to, and here I quote, ''throw away the crutch of government subsidies and break free from the unending flow of dictates from Washington.''

Mr. Speaker, in the interest of time and because of the lateness of the hour, I will conclude my remarks at this time and insert a longer statement in the RECORD.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the conference agreement on the Federal Agricultural Improvement Act.

As chairman of the General Farm Commodities Subcommittee, I traveled across the country last spring to receive testimony on our Nation's farm policy. I chaired a total of eight different hearings. The full committee held many more. Farmers, bankers, producer groups, and agribusinesses all had a chance to be heard.

Mr. Speaker, there was a common theme running through that testimony the theme was give farmers the freedom to plant what they need to plant for the market, and give them the tools to do it. I'm pleased and even excited, that the 1996 farm bill does just that.

As I travelled my district this past weekend, listening to the excitement in farmer's voices as they discussed their planting options, I couldn't help but think of all the changes that have occurred in agriculture in America over the past few decades, and wonder why it ever took so long to reform farm policy.

Today, on farms across the country, computers and cellular phones are almost as common as tractors. Satellites, once used only at the Department of Defense, are now used to forecast weather, and track crop conditions. On the other hand, federal farm programs have not changed. They have not adapted to changing markets and advances in technology.

Since the Great Depression, the federal government has attempted to maintain a federally determined income standard for farmers. The government offered loans, price supports, cash payments, and even placed restrictions on the use of agricultural land.

Our economy is based on risk taking and competition—with few restrictions. These programs have made American agriculture run counter to most other sectors of our economy. Unfortunately, agriculture in America has not been market oriented.

I'm pleased that the House has before it today, a Farm Bill conference report that would allow producers to plant for the market, to make choices, to weigh risk, and to be in charge of their future. The FAIR Act reforms agriculture the American way, and I urge my colleagues to support the conference report.

Mr. VOLKMER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York [Mrs. LOWEY].

(Mrs. LOWEY asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this conference report. Proponents of H.R. 2854 say that it represents reform of our antiquated federal agriculture policy. But I say it is business as usual.

Proponents of the bill say it reforms the peanut program—one of the most glaring examples of misguided agriculture policy. But that is simply not true. The cosmetic reforms included in this bill do not sufficiently address my concerns with this program.

The peanut program supports peanut quota holders at the expense of 250 million American consumers and taxpayers. The GAO has estimated that this program passes on $500 million per year in higher peanut prices to consumers.

The bill also lacks real reform of the sugar program. Like the peanut subsidy, the sugar program artificially inflates the price of sugar in America for the benefit of a handful of sugar growers. American consumers pay $1.4 billion more each year for products with sugar in them as a result of this program. That is a total consumer price tag of almost $2 billion for these two programs.

This conference report also includes a provision that was placed in the bill during conference without having been debated or amended on the floor. The bill creates the mis-named Safe Meat and Poultry Inspection Panel to review and evaluate food safety procedures, adding another hurdle to the Food Safety and Inspection Service's efforts to protect the U.S. food supply.

Mr. Speaker, this is an outrage. There are 4,000 deaths and 5 million illnesses annually in the U.S. as a result of food-borne pathogens. FSIS is trying to cut down this number, but they have been facing opposition every step of the way. This provision is another in a series of attempts to hinder their efforts. It was not in the House or Senate versions of the Farm Bill. It was not debated. It was not amended. Yet here it is in the conference report. This is no way to legislate.

Just last week Mike Taylor, the Undersecretary of Agriculture for Food Safety, came before the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee and told us how difficult it is for his agency to accomplish its goals of protecting our food supply with the limited budget it has been given. Now we are going to shoulder them with the fiscal burden of this panel. Unacceptable!

Mr. Speaker, this conference report is filled with provisions that send our agriculture policy in the wrong direction. We can do much, much better. I urge my colleagues to defeat this bill.

Mr. DE LA GARZA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. POSHARD], our distinguished colleague.

(Mr. POSHARD asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. POSHARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform Act conference report, because I believe this legislation is good for our farmers, environment, and rural communities. The bill also moves us closer toward our goal of balancing the Nation's budget while allowing our farmers to provide consumers with high quality and low-cost food products.

This conference agreement provides our farmers with the flexibility they need to meet growing and changing market demands. Under the bill, farmers can plant most any crop on acreage subject to a production flexibility contract. In addition, these new production contracts will greatly lessen the amount of paperwork and time required of farmers who enrolled in farm programs of years past.

The conference report provides for continued marketing assistance loans to producers of program crops, as well as soybeans. In fact, the agreement includes an increase in the loan rate for soybeans that I am proud to say was added to the Senate bill by my Illinois colleague, Senator CAROL MOSELEY-BRAUN. The bill also reauthorizes the farm lending program, which has assisted many farmers and their families in my congressional district.

The conference agreement reauthorizes two very important programs that assist our Nation's farmers in continuing to be good stewards of our environment and lands, the Conservation and Wetlands Reserve Programs. These two programs have been very successful in making it cost-effective for farmers to set aside environmentally sensitive lands. While the conference report caps enrollment in the programs, it allows new acreage to be enrolled as idle land is taken out of the programs. The bill also provides $200 million annually for a new Environmental Quality Incentives Program which will provide technical and financial assistance to livestock producers and farmers to improve water quality.

The bill authorizes a new USDA Rural Community Advancement Program to provide grants, loans and loan guarantees to meet the rural development needs of our local communities. The agreement provides $300 million over 3 years for a fund for rural America which will be available for rural development and competitive research activities. In addition, the conference report reauthorizes USDA's rural water programs.

I am pleased the agreement reauthorizes various Federal agricultural research, extension, and education programs. These programs are essential to the future of our Nation's agricultural community and its future in the global marketplace. In Illinois, research and extension programs have played a major role in the Illinois agricultural community's success as a domestic producer and exporter of farm commodities.

I thank the conferees for working swiftly on the conference report so that our farmers can begin planning and planting this year's crops. This bill provides our farmers with flexibility,

our environment with effective and reasonable protections, and rural communities with new and expanded ways to invest in needed infrastructure and economic development. I truly believe this legislation is a step in the right direction for our agricultural and rural communities, and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this agreement.

Mr. VOLKMER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Mississippi [Mr. TAYLOR], who is an outstanding legislator and knows a little bit about agriculture, quite a bit.

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, gentlemen and ladies, last year, during the welfare debate, I heard speaker after speaker come to this floor and say that we had to end the practice of paying people to do nothing, that we should no longer pay people not to work.

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Something remarkable happened that day. Every single Member of this body voted to no longer pay people for not working. Many of us supported the coalition plan, the rest of the folks supported the Republican plan, but everyone supported at least one plan that would stop paying people for doing nothing. And it was remarkable, and it was a good thing.

Unfortunately, in this bill there is a plan to pay people up to $80,000 a year per individual for 7 years to do nothing. You do not have to plant a crop, you do not have to work a field, you do not have to work fences, you do not have to start the tractor, you do not have to do anything. You do not even have to try to farm, and you get $80,000 a year.

Earlier today this body by a majority voted to raise the debt limit up to $5.5 trillion. We are spending $2 million every 4 minutes on interest on the national debt. Where do we stop?

I am not going to criticize the whole bill, but I can tell you, freedom to farm is a bad idea, because you can never wean people off Government dependence by paying them to do nothing, whether they are a welfare mother or whether they are a father who happens to be a farmer. It does not work. It does not work with welfare, and it will not work with farming.

Please vote against this bill.

Mr. VOLKMER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. I yield to the gentleman from Missouri.

Mr. VOLKMER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out to the House it is not just $80,000 to big investors that do not even live on the farm, they are in New York and Chicago and other places, they are getting the $80,000. They have not even been to the farm, and they are going to get the $80,000. But it is $36 billion, $36 billion over 7 years, to people that do not want to farm. That is right. Not $80,000; $36 billion. That is how much you are talking about, folks. Let us get the real numbers, Yes, $36 billion.

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, the new majority came to town promising to balance the budget, and yet this year's budget according to the Congressional Budget Office, will spend $270 billion more than we collect in taxes. If we can cut out anything, let us start with a program that pays people up to $80,000 a year not to go to work. Please vote against this bill.

Mr. VOLKMER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. FRANK].

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I was sorry the gentleman from New York would not yield to me. He said there was a glass of milk here from Massachusetts. Yes, there is a dairy compact from New England, which I opposed, which I think will hurt the consumers which was not in the House bill or the Senate bill. As I understand it, it shows up in the conference report. Typical. If people want to know what contempt of Congress means, it is the way the House has been treated recently on major issues, with the minimum debate the rules of the House allow. And now I can understand why they do not want to debate this.

The gentleman from Mississippi talked about this program. This is the biggest welfare program we have left. It will be bigger than AFDC from the Federal dollar standpoint. What we are saying is, farmers will get welfare payments. There is a difference, however.

By the way, I am not the only one who first thought of this. I must give credit where credit was due. In 1990, RICHARD ARMEY, writing in the Heritage Foundation, said ''If the goal of our farm programs is to help needy farmers, we should do so directly with welfare payments rather than with the complex and costly system of price supports. That would only cost $4 billion a year, rather than $12 billion.''

Mr. ARMEY was a prophet, and that is what we are doing. We are giving to welfare to farmers because they are in need, rather than costly price supports. But the majority leader Mr. ARMEY is a little more expansive than the critic Mr. ARMEY, because we are going to do $35 billion over 7 years, so it is $5 billion a year rather than $4 billion.

Note it is 7 years. If you are a 3-year-old whose mother has not done everything she should have done, you get cut off after 2 years, as I understand it, in the bill. So the farmer's welfare lasts for 7 years.

Also if you are a 3-year-old, your parent has a work requirement. There is no work requirement in here for the farmers. There is not even, as I understand, it is a life requirement. If I am correct, under this bill a farmer who dies may pass on his share of these billions of dollars to his or her heirs.

So at the same time we talk about how tough we are going to be on the dependent children, we are going to cut them off after 2 years. We are going to have a work requirement. Very late at night, in the hopes there will be no debate, we are going to give $35 billion to able-bodied working people. As the majority leader said, ''let's give them welfare instead of requirements,'' and they will simply get that $35 billion.

The inconsistency between the toughness that is meted out to the poor and the lavish and gentle treatment that goes to the favored political few is outrageous. What right do people have morally to condemn the poorest people in this country, to not even allow them to debate the minimum wage, to cut welfare, to cut Medicaid, to cut everything else. But the farmers, apparently free enterprise has no real meaning here.

Let us take $35 billion of deficit spending and simply give it to farmers because they happen to be farmers over the next 7 years. That is what is in the majority's bill, and that is why they are trying to burp this discussion and have it late at night and hit and run, and not have it talked about.

Mr. VOLKMER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. I yield to the gentleman from Missouri.

Mr. VOLKMER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out to the House that to get this money, all you have to do was be in the program 1 year out of the last 5 years. If anybody would come to this House and say that I have been on welfare, I have been on AFDC, or on food stamps once in the last 5 years, and therefore I am entitled to 7 more years of it, we would say they are crazy, they are lunatic, that is crazy. But that is what this is. That is identical to what this is.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, let me just say, of course there is no foolishness in here about States rights. This is a pure, 100 percent unadulterated Federal entitlement. So we have fiscal discipline and toughness and harshness and work requirements and strict time limits for the very poor, but for those who can vote and those whose support politically is important to the majority, all of these hifalutin principles go out the window, and they are treated with a degree of consideration and care that the poor never get.

Mr. DE LA GARZA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds.

Mr. Speaker, we spend over $26 billion a year for food stamps, we provide additional monies for school lunch, for school breakfast, for temporary emergency food assistance, and for other assistance programs for migrants. No one can say that we are not attempting to care for the poor. Yet even as we try to provide assistance to the poor, we have managed to reduce expenditures in Agriculture programs in order to balance the budget.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas [Mr. STENHOLM].

(Mr. STENHOLM asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2854

Mr. Speaker, it is with some considerable reservation that I stand here tonight encouraging my colleagues to vote ''yes'' for the 1996 [FAIR] Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform Act. However, I suggest to you all that we must put philosophical differences aside and think clearly and with conscientious conviction about who, not what we are supporting. Today's vote is for American farmers and the communities with families who sustain them. If this were March 1995 and we were debating future farm policy, but had functional farm laws in place, I would be adamant in my opposition to this legislation because it removes the safety net from under these peoples' lives. Unfortunately, we don't have that luxury today. At this stage in the game, with planting and credit decisions still in limbo, we must believe that any further delay only imperils the livelihoods of millions of people. Even with all it's potential shortcomings and pitfalls, I have to accept this legislation as the best we can provide at this time. I would not have authored it, but the majority's views prevailed. Although I believe many of the aspects of this bill will come back and haunt us, our debate, limited as it was, is over for now. We must move forward and provide some degree of predictability and assurance to our agricultural producers.

If we force ourselves to stand back, remove emotion, and objectively view farm programs and their overall effects on society, it's apparent to me that the level of stability offered to markets by our support has allowed the American farmer to become the envy of the world. No farm programs that exist today are perfect; they never will be. From a long view though, they have been successful. It may be the time to embark on new social experiments but we cannot ignore or forget what has worked in the past.

The current leadership believes in a textbook free market, but this completely ignores the role of other governments that don't practice free trade. The recent GATT accord has not changed this. The European Union, for example, over the past 5 years outspent the United States 6 to 1 in terms of export subsidies, $10.6 billion versus less than $2 billion by the United States, and will be able to maintain its historical advantage under the GATT Agreement. American farmers cannot unilaterally disarm in an international marketplace. I don't know of a single farmer who wouldn't rather receive his income from the marketplace, but the real world is subsidized agriculture. This is one of the areas where our Government must stand shoulder to shoulder with us. We must use all our tools to boost commodity export: first, programs to help U.S. exporters compete in terms of price; second, programs to help importers obtain credit needed to purchase U.S. commodities; and third, programs to provide U.S. farm products as food aid.

All our efforts will be wasted however, if we neglect the infrastructure of rural America. We must continue to provide critical resources for rural communities as they work to address unmet needs at the local level. Water and sewer requirements alone cannot be met with the money that have been authorized. Research, education, extension, and seed money to develop value added programs are essential too, for rural economies to diversify and position themselves to compete in a rapidly changing global economy. Without public investment in stabilizing agriculture, you will witness further declines in rural America's security and strength.

The provisions of the FAIR Act will result in dramatic adjustments in U.S. policy and continues cuts in spending. Overall, numerous challenges confront U.S. agriculture—challenges of first, responding to competition in the global marketplace; second, ensuring a profitable, sustainable food and agriculture sector; third, safeguarding natural resources and the environment; fourth, ensuring balanced nutrition and a high-quality food supply; and revitalizing rural America. The stakes are high, but the opportunities and rewards are unlimited. Whether the agriculture industry continues its move forward or falls behind is largely dependent upon the vision and imagination of its participants. More importantly, we cannot be afraid to re-examine any policy as it relates to the vitality and stability of the sector it is meant to serve. With that in mind, I urge you to vote ''yes'' and put our farmers back to work.

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

Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment to the ones yelling ''vote,'' I am the one that tried to get the chairman to roll the vote so you would not have to be here.

Mr. Speaker, I first would like to point out to the House, as the gentleman who started this debate on our side from North Dakota pointed out, that we are here tonight in a hurry to do something that should have been done last year in regular time, but it was not done, and it is not the fault of those of us on this side. It is the fault, no question about it, of those that are in the majority that did not do their job.

Now, the next thing, the decoupling that has taken place between asking farmers to do things to help provide a food supply for this country is gone. It is no longer in this bill. The farmer does not have to plan at all, and in some parts of this country this year you are going to see less planting, you are going to see less rice, I will guarantee you, than we have ever had for years, and you are going to see other things happen.

I talked to some agricultural economists about this problem. Mr. Speaker, what you are going to see in the future, right now we have shortages, so you have good prices, so you are going to see production. You are going to see all-out production. In about 2 years, with good crops, we are going to have overproduction, we are going to have oversupply. The price is going to drop, and the loan rate is capped in this bill, which means a lot of farmers out there are not going to make money.

All farmers do not get this payment. Let me remind you of that. In my district, 60 percent of the farmers get nothing from this bill. The gentleman from Kansas, the chairman of the committee, in his district 85 percent of the farmers get $30,000 a year, on average. My farmers, even those 40 percent, only get $3,500. Down in parts of Texas, cotton country, you get up to $80,000. In parts of rice country, you get around $60,000 to $70,000.

There is no longer going to be a Federal crop program. It is gone, as good as gone. So when you look at that adequate food supply, you are going to see fewer farmers, you are going to see shortages, you are going to go back to the time, it is all history, you are going to go back to the time when there were no Government programs basically, and the big cycle starts, not only in prices, but in food supply. Yes, in food supply. You are going to have ups and downs. And when you have the down, you understand, then you are going to have problems with people having food.

That is what you are getting out of this program. In the meantime, yes, big investors, bit people, 22 percent of that $36 billion is going to go to 2 percent of the farmers, and most of those people have never been on a farm. They are investors, most of them. Investors own farmers. They are going to get the big bucks.

I do not know why we cannot learn from history. I do not know why we have to go back to the days of old and go through the same problems with agriculture, but that is basically where this program leads you. In 7 years, they say we are going to wean them off after 7 years. I do not believe so. But there is going to be no incentives in this program for farmers to produce, as we do in our regular programs when we had the safety net.

We also have mechanisms to get people to produce certain crops so we can have additional crops if we need those crops. That is no longer here. That is gone. We have completely decoupled the programs of even what we call supply management from this bill completely. That is gone, folks. It is not in here anymore.

And this all is not new, this whole program is not brand new. But what is really interesting to me is to find that when this freedom to farm, they call it, I call it freedom not to farm, first surfaced last summer, overwhelmingly rejected by most people, especially on this side.

Well, I will say this to you, the gentleman from Kansas, Mr. Chairman, you have been persistent. You have wore them down. You have not worn me down. I said then and I will say now it is the wrong way for agriculture, it is a disaster for this country, and I say vote against H.R. 2854.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. GOODLATTE].

(Mr. GOODLATTE asked and was give permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding me time. I rise in strong support for this conference report, the most comprehensive reform of agriculture in my lifetime, the Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform Act.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this conference report and would like to congratulate my full committee chairman, Mr. ROBERTS and subcommittee chairman Mr. GUNDERSON for all their time and hard work.

For the first time Washington has seen fit to give producers the flexibility they have been demanding for years. The Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform [FAIR] Act finally allows our farmers and ranchers to produce for the market instead of the Government.

The FAIR Act accomplishes the three goals that were set for this legislation: it transitions our agriculture sector towards the 21st century global economy; it saves the taxpayers billions of dollars; and it protects the environment.

The FAIR Act represents the most sweeping reform in agriculture policy in 60 years. It puts farmers, not the Government in charge of planting decisions. Farmers are no longer required to plant the same crops year after year to receive assistance, allowing greater crop rotation and less dependence on synthetic fertilizers and pesticides.

In addition to this the FAIR Act targets $1.2 billion over 7 years to assist crop and livestock producers with environmental and conservation improvements on the farm. Assistance can be used for animal waste management facilities, terraces, waterways, filterstrips, or other structural and management practices to protect water, soil, and related resources.

Producers, the first and best stewards of the land, are given enhanced flexibility to modify conservation practices if they can demonstrate that the new practices achieve equal or greater erosion control. It also takes measures to ensure the protection of the Florida Everglades, a national treasure.

This is the most environmentally friendly farm bill in history. We enhance the protection of the environment without new mandates, regulations, requirements and redtape. It makes the Federal Government a partner with producers in addressing environmental challenges, rather than an adversary. It is voluntary and incentive-based. Most importantly, it works.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Florida [Mr. FOLEY].

(Mr. FOLEY asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I give strong compliments to the chairman, Mr. ROBERTS, and Senator DOLE for their leadership on this excellent farm bill we are about to pass.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the conference report to accompany H.R. 2854, the Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform Act, historic legislation to completely overhaul this Nation's farm policy. Yet, as we move toward a more market-oriented agricultural policy in this Nation, one fact is easily overlooked in this entire farm bill debate—and that is Congress is about to pass the most environmentally sensitive farm bill ever. All of this is done without any new mandates, regulations, requirements or bureaucratic redtape. It makes the Federal Government a partner with agricultural producers in addressing agricultural changes, rather than an adversary.

In particular, I am especially pleased that this conference report contains $200 million for funding of land acquisition and environmental restoration activities in one of our true national treasures—the Florida Everglades. Additionally, the bill does something that we should be all proud to support. It allows the Federal Government to dispose of surplus lands, up to $100 million, within the State of Florida for the purpose of acquiring additional environmentally sensitive lands in the Everglades.

As the author of this provision in the House, I would like to take this time to thank those Members of Congress who worked so hard on finalizing this issue. First of all, I would like to thank Representative RICHARD POMBO from California, who was thrust into the role of attempting to reshape the legislation in conference and did an outstanding job in that role. Second, many thanks go to the House and Senate majority leadership—in particular Speaker NEWT GINGRICH who was especially instrumental in the role of discussing the idea of surplus land disposal for the purpose of environmental restoration. Senator BOB DOLE played a vital role in inserting this language in the Senate bill when it was originally considered earlier this year. Special thanks go to my colleagues from Florida, especially the State's two outstanding Senators, MACK and GRAHAM—both who worked in a bipartisan fashion to craft an acceptable provision to work on behalf of the Florida Everglades. Finally, thanks to my 299 Members of Congress who originally gave their stamp of approval to my amendment on February 29, 1996.

Since there is no report language accompanying the Everglades provisions, I would like to further take this opportunity as the author of the House provision to explain in greater detail some of the background behind this measure.

The Everglades ecosystem is a unique national treasure that includes the Kissimmee River, the Everglades, and Florida Bay. Its long-term viability is critical to tourism, fishing, recreational activities, and agricultural industries as well as to the water supply, economy and quality of life for south Florida's population of more than six million people. Additionally, the restoration of the Everglades will have direct benefits to the Federal Government in that the Everglades ecosystem includes the Loxahatchee Wildlife Refuge, and two National Parks, Everglades National Park and Biscayne Bay National Park.

The State of Florida, in particular the State legislature has a long standing commitment to address the complex problems of the region and to restore this precious resource. Additionally, the agricultural industry south of Lake Okechobbee has committed up to $320 million for Everglades restoration as part of the 1993 Everglades Forever Act. While many would seek to find a single scapegoat for problems in the Everglades, I find this to be lacking in commitment to acting to preserve this precious resource. Therefore, today, it is important to remember that because south Florida is home to 7 of the 10 fastest-growing metropolitan areas in the country, restoration is clearly on a critical path.

It is clearly understood by all who are involved in the efforts to restore the Everglades that there is a significant gap in or scientific knowledge about ultimate ecological and water management needs of south Florida, and this necessitates continued detailed study. Yet, the framework for restoration and the design of major projects for land acquisition, water storage and restored hydrology is clear.

Restoration of one of the largest functioning ecosystems in the world is a massive undertaking, and success will depend upon the Federal Government, the State of Florida, and all local, regional, and tribal interests working in tandem. As the author of this language in the House, it is not my intent that these funds supplant any previous funds committed to south Florida for the purpose of Everglades restoration. However, it is my intent that the purchasing agents give the absolute highest priority to those lands owned by willing sellers but taxpayer dollars should not be wasted by paying more than fair market value for lands purchased with these funds. This underscores importance of the annual report to Congress by the Secretary of Interior describing all activities associated with the expenditure of these funds.

Mr. Speaker, this is a historic day for the Hose of Representatives, and a historic day for the Everglades. I'm proud to be the sponsor of this original language, and I now would encourage my colleague to support the final passage of this bill and urge the President to quickly sign this bill into law.

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Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the distinguished gentleman from New York [Mr. BOEHLERT], who has been such a help to us on the environmental section of the bill.

(Mr. BOEHLERT asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BOEHLERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the conference report.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this farm bill—a bill that is good for farmers, good for consumers, good for taxpayers, and good for environmentalists—categories that, I hasten to add, are hardly mutually exclusive.

I want to focus on two aspects of the bill, in particular—first, the dairy provisions. This bill eliminates the assessments farmers pay, phases out price supports, funds export promotion, and consolidates milk marketing orders. The bill, in short, saves farmers and taxpayers money without imposing new burdens on consumers or creating chaos for Northeast dairy farmers. I want to thank the farmers in my district and throughout our region for their patience, their time, and most of all their critical guidance during this protracted debate. They worked closely with my colleagues and me in the Northeast ag caucus, which I am privileged to cochair, and together we fashioned responsible legislation.

Now, let me turn to the conservation title of this bill, which is another cause for celebration.

This week the Washington Post has run a series of spirited editorials critical of Republican environmental initiatives. I hope the Post

and others take notice of the revolutionary conservation measures included in the 1996 farm bill.

The 1996 farm bill is not only the greenest farm bill in the history of the Republic, it is the most significant environmental legislation passed in this Congress or the previous Congress, which by the way was Democrat controlled.

The over $3 billion provided in the farm bill for the Wetlands Reserve Program, the Conservation Reserve Program, the Environmental Quality Improvement Program, and the restoration of the Everglades will do more to improve water quality and wildlife habitat in this country than any bill proposed by the Clinton administration in the past 4 years. Millions of acres of environmentally sensitive lands across the nation will be protected.

Two weeks ago a conservation amendment to the farm bill, an amendment I authored, was adopted on the House floor by a vote of 372 to 37. A Republican amendment on the environment involving millions of acres of land and billions of dollars was approved with resounding bipartisan support.

Republicans have gotten the message on the environment, and unlike many in this town, we are responding with sensible, proenvironment, legislation like the 1996 farm bill.

The Republican Party is returning to its roots, as the party of conservation and sensible environmental protection. Teddy Roosevelt would be proud of the conservation initiatives being advanced in the 1996 farm bill.

I urge all my colleagues to support this proenvironment, profarmer legislation.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Colorado [Mr. ALLARD], a valued member of the committee.

(Mr. ALLARD asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2854. This is the most market-oriented environmental farmer friendly bill we have ever passed.

It balances the needs of producers and the needs of the environment, while providing significant regulatory relief to producers.

We reauthorize the Conservation Reserve Program which provides incentives to producers to idle environmentally sensitive land. The new CRP takes into account water quality needs important to midwestern states and soil erosion and wildlife habitat concerns of the Great Plains. The conference committee did a remarkable job of balancing the needs of different regions so we can all claim to be winners.

The conference report also provides money for the restoration of the Everglades. The provisions that we included will protect the Everglades and hopefully provide a model for restoration of other environmentally sensitive areas.

The conference report also establishes a new account that will provide mandatory money for cost share practices to reduce soil erosion and protect water quality. This program incorporates provisions from the legislation I introduced earlier this year, but expands it to include more money and more practices. It is an important program that will provide tremendous environmental benefits in rural and urban areas.

Also, the conference committee included language that will place a moratorium on actions by the Forest Service that have the effect of denying owners of water the use of that water through regulatory action. During the time this moratorium is in effect experts in the fields of public land law and Western water law will study this issue and issue a report on how to avoid the illegal taking of water from agricultural and municipal users. I am happy to have this provision in law, but want to make clear that it in no way recognizes the legality of recent Forest Service actions. The language in the conference report is an attempt to stop the Forest Service from taking actions that run counter to law and allow them to find alternatives to imposing by-pass flows and avoid law suites they would surely lose.

Finally, this legislation incorporates other important reforms that we can be proud of, such as; making the USDA loan process more responsible and allowing the Department to more quickly release inventory property. Reform of Conservation Compliance that will allow the Department and the producer to work in a more cooperative manner while reducing regulatory burdens on the producer.

This is groundbreaking legislation that I hope all of my colleagues can support.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. EWING], chairman of the Subcommittee on Risk Management and Specialty Crops.

(Mr. EWING asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. EWING. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for a job well done.

I would just like to say a couple things about the peanut and sugar program, which were under my subcommittee. First, these programs will not cost the taxpayer one dollar. Yes, without these programs, you might have a lot more cost to the consumers in this country. I would remind the gentlewoman from New York, who was so critical of these programs, that these programs were so bureaucratic after decades of being controlled on that side of the aisle in farm programs that it would have truly been unfair to the people who farm and grow peanuts and sugar in America, a lot of little people, had we cut their legs off at the knees and expected them to go out of these programs immediately. These are a good transition to the marketplace.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Vermont [Mr. SANDERS].

(Mr. SANDERS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, all over this country, family farms have been disappearing in great numbers as a result of the failure of our current agricultural policy. In Vermont, in 1977, we had 3,300 farms. Today we have less than 2,000. All over the country this is happening. This is an American tragedy.

In 1989, some people in New England got together to figure out how we could save the family farm in our region, and they came up with a concept called the Northeast Dairy Compact. This compact could provide dairy farmers in New England finally with a fair price for their product, a fair price which they are not getting today. It is an opportunity to save the family farm. All six legislatures in New England overwhelmingly approved the compact; all six Governors, liberal and conservatives, approved the compact.

Mr. Speaker, originally when we voted on the bill, the compact was not in the farm bill, but today it is in the farm bill as a result of the work the conferees did. Mr. Speaker, the Northeast Dairy Compact could become a model for farms all over this country for regions all over this country. It is good for New England. It is good for America.

There is a lot in this bill that I do not support, but I certainly fervently support the Northeast Dairy Compact section.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Iowa [Mr. GANSKE].

(Mr. GANSKE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GANSKE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill, the origins of which are partly in the Iowa plan.

Whether we call it the Fair Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act, the Agricultural Market Transition Act, or my favorite, the freedom to farm act, this is truly an evolutionary piece of legislation.

For the first time since the 1930's when Federal farm policy took shape, we will begin to remove the inside-the-beltway, Washington bureaucrat from the backs of the American farmer.

Although we had to wait until 1996, nearly an entire lifetime, I am pleased that this body has come to the realization that farmers, out in the fields, actually know more about farming than the bureaucrats in Washington do. In no small part do we owe our thanks to Chairman ROBERTS for bringing us to this enlightened state.

This is a good bill. It saves taxpayers money. It provides long needed flexibility. It makes good free-market sense. It is proenvironment. And it stops paying farmers not to plant.

Under the freedom to farm approach in this bill, we provide flexibility and develop a true safety net for our farmers. That is why the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation, the Iowa Corn Growers Association, the Iowa Soybean Association, the Iowa Pork Producers, the Iowa Cattlemen Association, and the Iowa Agribusiness Association all support this bill.

Those in opposition to this legislation will say that it either ends the safety net for our farmers or its is a free handout just like welfare. This is simply not true.

Opponents of this bill have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo. They want to continue to force the agricultural community to come to Washington, hat in hand. They want to continue the micromanagement of the farm. They want to continue to hamper development of robust export markets with top-down we-know-best policies.

A vote for this bill is a refjection of those failed policies of the past. A vote for this bill

is a vote for reform. A vote for this bill shows the farmers of this country that this Congress truly cares about bringing agriculture policy into the 21st century. I commend Chairman ROBERTS for his efforts and I strongly urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. ROTH].

Mr. ROTH. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, taken as a whole, this is a good bill. There are a number of essential programs. For example, one-fifth of all the $210 billion global trade in agriculture belongs to the United States, and we have to protect ourselves. But our leadership in this area is under assault from all our competitors, whether it is Asia, Europe, wherever it might be. We must fight these unfair trade practices in agriculture and this bill does that.

This bill makes the first real reform in dairy policy in over a decade. This legislation is long overdue, and the reforms in here are long overdue, especially in the milk marketing order. The current milk marketing order is totally out of date. It is a relic of a bygone era when raw milk had to be transported great distances for processing. Today our dairy industry is highly efficient.

Mr. Speaker, while I support the overall bill, I must register my serious concerns about the provisions which establish a special dairy system for the New England region. In essence, this is Government-mandated protectionism for one segment of our Nation's dairy industry. When this bill is going toward a free market system, this particular provision takes us in the totally different direction.

Nevertheless, this is a good bill. Overall, it is a good bill. It makes major reforms that will help our farmers and our exporters. It will contribute to a stronger, more competitive and expanding agricultural sector, and it will help the United States remain the world's leader in agriculture in the 1990's and the 21st century. Remember, of the $210 billion export market in agriculture, one-fifth belongs to the United States, and we want to make sure we continue in that direction and this bill does that.

Mr. Speaker, taken as a whole, this farm bill is good legislation and should be passed. Let me address three provisions of the bill which I have worked on. Title 2 reflects the amendment which I offered along with Mr. BEREUTER, Mr. HAMILTON and Mr. HALL on February 29. This title reauthorizes and strengthens our agricultural trade programs.

These programs are essential to the competitive position of American agriculture in world markets.

Currently the United States has one-fifth of the $210 billion global trade in agricultural goods.

But our leadership is under assault, by our competitors in Europe, and Asia and Latin America.

In my Subcommittee on International Economic Policy and Trade, we carefully examined the competition in world agriculture.

The reality is, every major trading nation has programs to help their exporters take sales away from Americans.

We have to meet this competition. The amendment I offered, which is now part of this final bill, reflects the recommendations of every major farm group in the country.

This title extends our export credit programs for farm goods.

These programs support $3 billion in farm exports.

This title also improves our programs to combat unfair trading practices in agriculture.

Without these programs, we would have no defenses against the predatory financial inducements that other countries use to undercut American farmers and exporters.

This title also reauthorizes and reforms our food assistance programs, which are vital to the relief of starvation and suffering around the globe.

In our domestic farm programs, this bill makes the first real reforms in U.S. dairy policy for more than a decade. In particular, this bill requires long-overdue reforms in the milk marketing order system.

The bill incorporates the approach I recommended in legislation which I have sponsored for a number of years. The current milk marketing order system is an out-of-date artifact of a bye-gone era when raw milk had to be transported great distances for processing.

Today, our dairy industry is highly efficient, but the old pricing system remains. Efficient dairy farmers in Wisconsin and other Great Lakes States are penalized under this unfair system.

This legislation is a major step toward reform.

While I support this bill overall, I must register my serious concern about the provisions which establish a special dairy system for New England regions.

In essence, this is Government-mandated protectionism for one segment of the Nation's dairy industry.

It goes against the rest of the bill, which moves American agriculture toward a more market-oriented system.

Nevertheless, this is a good bill overall.

It makes major reforms that will help our farmers and our exporters.

It will contribute to a stronger, more competitive and expanding agriculture sector.

And it will help the United States remain the world's leader in agriculture into the 21st century.

Therefore, I urge my colleagues to join me in voting for this landmark legislation.

Mr. DE LA GARZA. Mr. Speaker I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from North Carolina [Mrs. CLAYTON].

(Mrs. CLAYTON asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I voted against this bill the first time it came before the House of Representatives and voted against it in committee. I had serious reservations then and still I have some reservations now. But, I will take comfort in the fact that this conference report is the best legislation for our farmers and ranchers that we can achieve at this point in time. I am certain though that we will revisit this topic in the near future.

It is obvious that this legislation is greatly improved from when it left the House. Cognizant of that fact, I will reluctantly support this bill. The conference report now includes funds for nutrition programs that were not present in the House version, funds for environmental improvement programs, and conservation programs and funds for rural development; however, I do not believe that the rural development funds are sufficient to meet the existing needs in our communities.

I believe so strongly in funding rural development properly that I introduced an amendment in the Agriculture Committee that asked for $3.5 billion for the Fund for Rural America. However, the amendment was defeated in committee by a party-line vote. It was then reintroduced as an en bloc amendment by the ranking minority member KIKA DE LA GARZA during floor consideration. Even though the amendment was again defeated in a roll call vote, the Senate version of the bill included the $3.5 billion for Rural Economic Development. Ultimately, the final figure was wheedled down to $300 million during the conference deliberations—only a drop in the bucket. But, I do think that these limited funds are a step in the right direction and will be well spent on the infrastructure and research needs of rural America.

I realize that small family farmers still need help while many of the traditional safety nets are being removed. After lengthy deliberation I have decided that farmers must have some protection and ability to farm their land.

We are fast approaching the planting season and need to begin to identify ways in which we can help our farmers put their crops in the ground.

I was also heartened that the conference report retains permanent agricultural authorization law, thereby reducing the chances that farmer programs would end altogether after the year 2002, when the authorization for the production flexibility contracts expires.

In addition, I was pleased to see that the peanut program was not abolished outright, but instead reformed substantially.

The conference report was also stengthened as it retained the Senate language for the new Environmental Quality Program [EQIP], which would provide payments to livestock producers and farmers for nutrient and manure management to improve water quality.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this conference report.

Mr. DE LA GARZA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California [Mr. FARR],

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening in support of this farm bill. It is not perfect. Freedom to farm certainly deserves a lot of debate. But this bill is better than no bill. California farmers in my district are the most productive specialty crop growers in the world. They produce $2.5 billion worth of fresh vegetables a year without any Federal price supports or even Federal water. But even market-driven agriculture needs a national farm policy and a vision toward the future. Conservation, research, rural development and market promotion are areas that need a Federal partner.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy that this farm bill is a major step in building this new national agriculture policy. This bill begins to draw the line, the green line, to stop urban sprawl from paving over prime ag lands, and I am particularly happy that this bill makes the Federal Government a partner with the States in efforts to protect prime farm land from urban sprawl.

I am also glad that this bill allows the Secretary to provide seed money grants to private food programs that bring fresh, healthy food to low-income communities. I urge the support of this bill.

Mr. DE LA GARZA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this is not perfect legislation, but I feel that we should approve it because it addresses all of the areas of concern to rural America; from feeding the poor to making affordable improvements out in the rural areas.

Mr. Speaker, let me say that in 1981, I managed my first farm bill. This is the fourth time that I rise to support a farm bill and it will be my last time that I do so. I stated then that it was a long, long way from the banks of the Rio Grande to Washington, DC. A poor boy shining shoes in the streets of Mission, TX, to managing a farm bill. It is with great pride now that I do so. This will be the fourth time I have managed a farm bill, this is the greatest number of anyone who has served in this House.

I ask you to support this legislation, not because of myself or what I have done, but because it is the art of the possible. Legislating is the art of the possible. What is possible now may not be possible 1 hour from now. It addresses human needs. It addresses the issues of the poor.

We are the best fed people in the world, in the history of the world, for the best amount of disposable income per family. We have the best quality food in the world. A lot of the costs that people complain about are for the many other areas in agriculture such as meat inspection and poultry inspection. That is not to say that agriculture programs are perfect. Now and then you have a fault, but the intent is to help farmers provide reasonable, safe, and affordable food. We have gone, I think, Mr. Speaker, a long, long way in helping ensure that we are the best fed people in the world in the history of the world.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the chairman for his kindness to me; his working with me. This is not perfect legislation. I have never said that any bill that I brought to the floor was perfect legislation. If there are flaws in this bill, they may yet be corrected in the future. We have reduced the budget deficit. Agriculture has reduced the deficit over $60 billion in the past 10 years. If every committee in the House had done that, we would not be worried about a balanced budget. We have reduced that, but we have done it quietly. We have done it with a scalpel, not with a meat ax. You should be proud of what agriculture has done and what we have worked for and what we will continue to work for. But for me today, this is my last hurrah.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Kansas [Mr. ROBERTS], my chairman.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman emeritus of the Committee on Agriculture for yielding to me.

Note for my colleagues in the House, I know the hour is late, but note that I said the chairman emeritus of the House Committee on Agriculture. The gentleman from Texas, Mr. KIKA DE LA GARZA, is not the ranking member. He has been our leader, and in words that I cannot describe, the real chairman emeritus of the committee.

The fourth farm bill. He has seen us through the despair and the farm crisis days of the 1980's. He has seen us during unprecedented good times in the modern miracle of agriculture. He is without question the international secretary of state of agriculture. He has led the committee with comity, with leadership, with decency and always with a revering institutional memory of our committee. I think it is time that the House of Representatives rise and a thank you and a tribute to KIKA DE LA GARZA.

Mr. DE LA GARZA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman very much.

Mr. Speaker, I accept your ovation on behalf of all of those who were the wind beneath my wings when we flew.

Mr. Speaker, let me say that I thank all of my colleagues, and one final time, let me say that a long time ago I went on a submarine. I asked the commander how long he could keep that submarine underwater. We knew that the other side knew where our troops were, where our ships were, where our planes were. The only thing the other side did not know was where that submarine was under the ice cap. Because of this deterrent peace and democracy came out the winner throughout the world.

When I asked the commander how long, he said, ''As long as I have food for my crew.''

Mr. Speaker, it was farmers and ranchers of America for whom we worked tonight that brought the peace, that brought democracy, that made us the leader in the world we are today, and I dedicate this, my last words, to them who have kept us fed—the best fed people in the world.

Mr. Speaker, I support the conference report on H.R. 2854. I do this with the recognition that this conference report is not perfect. Most legislation that we pass in Congress is not perfect.

As I have said before, legislation is the art of the possible, and what is possible at this moment may not be possible 1 hour from now. However, as with any legislation, we as elected representatives must evaluate and decide whether or not, in its entirety, a specific piece of legislation addresses the concerns of our constituents. I have decided that this bill does just that.

When the Agriculture Committee started the legislative process on H.R. 2854 we were very much divided, not only along regional lines, as most farm legislation is, but also along partisan lines. I am glad to report that the partisan differences have disappeared and we were able to come together as a body to do what is best for American agriculture.

When we started this process, I had three major areas of concern. First was the lack of recognition that agriculture has contributed more to deficit reduction than any other major entitlement program—and continues to do so. Yet, we were being asked to cut more than any other sector. This bill saves over $2 billion from the December baseline, and we are proud of the fact that agriculture is the only entitlement program to enact real budget deficit reduction this Congress.

Clearly, agriculture has more than met its responsibility to budget deficit reduction. Indeed, with this bill, agriculture—once again—continues to contribute more than its fair share to budget deficit reduction. Once again, agriculture leads the way to a balanced budget.

My second concern was centered on the lack of a safety net for farmers and therefore for consumers. Let everyone understand, to the extent that there is volatility in commodity prices, consumers will pay. We tried to design agricultural programs in the past that would ameliorate wide fluctuations. Were the programs perfect? No. Is this program perfect. No. However, this bill does go a long way in addressing flexibility and commodity distortions. Still, I am concerned that the loan rates may be too rigid in times of low prices.

We are able to maintain the 1949 Act as permanent law. Although most would not advocate implementing the 1949 Act, it is important in that it reaffirms our future commitment to farmers and it will give us the impetus needed in 7 years to actively address agricultural programs.

Frankly, I am concerned about the political ability to maintain these guaranteed contracts in times of high prices or record farm income. However, I must trust that future Congresses will have the wisdom to do what is best for agriculture.

My third concern was that the House bill failed to address the totality of circumstances in rural America. Gone is the time when we as policymakers could rely on farm programs alone to provide rural development. The country is much more complex than that today. People need telecommunications and business and industrial development in addition to the very basic infrastructure development of water and waste water facilities.

The Fund for Rural America goes a long way in addressing these rural development needs. By providing additional money for research it provides resources for the future of agriculture. It is through research that we will maintain our status as the premier food production system in the world.

In addition, by reauthorizing the nutrition programs we ensure that our less fortunate neighbors are not left out. To those who want welfare reform, reauthorizing the programs for 2 years still allows us to do what we need to do to get people to self-sufficiency while at the same time providing certainty to the beneficiaries of the continuation of the programs.

Once again, I support this bill. On the whole, it addresses my concerns regarding rural America, and I am hopeful that it will

meet the needs of American agriculture and our Nation as we move into the 21st century. To the extent that problems arise during the next 7 years, I am confident that corrective action can be taken to address any such problems.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

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

I would like to entertain a colloquy with the distinguished chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. HYDE]. I would ask the sponsor of the just-passed Congressional Review Act of 1996, the gentleman from Illinois and chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary [Mr. HYDE], whether the bill, if signed by the President this week will apply to the Department of Agriculture's rules that will be promulgated under the Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform Act.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. ROBERTS. I yield to the gentleman from Illinois.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, yes, I will inform my colleagues that all Federal agency rules will be subject to congressional review upon enactment of the Congress Review Act.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. Speaker, obviously the rules implementing the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act will have a large economic impact on the agricultural community and farmers. I ask the distinguished chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary, if the Department of Agriculture were to issue major rules under the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act, will they be held up for 60 calendar days by the Congressional Review Act?

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield, yes, my colleague is correct. If any Federal agency issues what the Congressional Review Act defines as major rules, those rules would not be allowed to go into effect for at least 60 calendar days. However, I advise my colleague that the President, by executive order, may declare a health, safety or other emergency, and that particular major rule would be exempt from the 60-day delay. I would add that the President's determination of whether there is an emergency is not subject to judicial review.

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Mr. ROBERTS. As the chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary may know, we in the conference on H.R. 2854 did not contemplate such prompt enactment of the congressional review bill. I would inform the chairman that H.R. 2854 requires that the Secretary of Agriculture, within 45 days of enactment, offer market transition contracts available to eligible producers. These contracts must not be further delayed, or they will not be effective for the 1996 planting season. Moreover, these contracts are worth billions of dollars, and they are certainly going to qualify as major rules under the Congressional Review Act.

Would the chairman agree that these major rules are the type that are contemplated by his committee as qualifying for the emergency exemption available to the President?

Mr. HYDE. Yes, I agree with the chairman of the committee that the other emergency exception from the 60-day delay of major rules was included for this kind of circumstance. Certainly, it would be totally appropriate for the President to determine by Executive order that the market transition contract rules promulgated this spring under the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act are emergency rules that would not be subject to the automatic 60-day delay.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. HYDE].

Mr. Speaker, I yield 30 seconds to the distinguished gentleman from Ohio [Mr. BOEHNER], a valued member of the committee.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, we are here, and over the last year I think all my colleagues know that none of us at any time thought we would ever get here, but I want to congratulate the chairman of the committee, Mr. ROBERTS, for the work that he has done to guide this bill throughout the last year. He has done a marvelous job, along with the members of our committee.

Let me also say to the gentleman from Texas [Mr. DE LA GARZA] and to the gentleman from Texas [Mr. STENHOLM], who were great partners along the way, sometimes difficult moments, but they were a great help to us in the conference. This is an effort that was a team effort, and all of us are to be congratulated for the job we have done on behalf of American agriculture.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 30 seconds to the distinguished gentleman from Missouri [Mr. EMERSON].

(Mr. EMERSON asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished chairman of the committee for yielding this time to me, and I first want to commend him for the outstanding job of leadership that he has provided us during this most difficult year as we have undertaken agricultural restructuring in a legislative sense. He is to be highly commended for his patience and his many enduring qualities including his patience with me.

I finally want to say hail and farewell in just this momentary sense to our dear friend, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. DE LA GARZA]. I would like to associate myself with his remarks here this evening. Our chairman emeritus has always spoken with the most deeply felt passion about America's No. 1 industry, agriculture, and his voice will continue to be heard, I am sure, even though after this year he will no longer be speaking from this Chamber.

So, I say to the gentleman, ''KIKA, God bless you, and thank you for all the great efforts that you have made over the years. You have been truly an inspiration.''

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the measure before the House.

Mr. SPEAKER, I rise in support of H.R. 2854, the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996. This conference agreement will provide American farm producers with a definitive farm program plan as they begin planting the 1996 crop and prepare for a new crop marketing year. This bill gives farmers the direction they need while also delivering the U.S. taxpayer a program that represents budgetary savings over the next 7 years.

For many years now, the American consumer has enjoyed the most abundant and affordable supply of food and fiber in the world. Our Nation's Federal agricultural policy is responsible, in part, for this success and it is on that foundation that we must work toward the future.

The world around us has evolved over the past 6 years and now our agricultural livelihood must evolve in response to those changes. As we prepare for the next millennium of American agriculture, we will look to the future and see a global market that is more critical to the American producer than ever before. Moreover, in some reaches of the globe, the outlook has never looked so promising.

This conference agreement before us today is a step forward in the evolution of farm policy. H.R. 2854, the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act, includes budgetary saving provisions contained in the Balanced Budget Act of 1995. It represents sweeping change in farm policy by presenting farm producers with greater flexibility to pursue profits from the marketplace, but retains elements of the policy that has served us so well over the years such as the nonrecourse marketing loans.

This measure also contains improvements to the widely supported Food for Peace Program, which build on the successful aspects of the program by making modifications to refine and update the existing structure.

The Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform Act represents compromises made to help ensure that producers in all regions of the country will make a smooth transition to a more market-oriented program. Most importantly, it offers the regulatory reform and flexibility that farmers have been seeking to help them plant for the world market rather than the U.S. Government. Moreover, H.R. 2854 moves future farming generations toward a more secure financial future by helping attain our responsible balanced Federal budget goals.

Today, we have the opportunity to get our Federal fiscal policy and farm legislation back on the right track through the passage of this conference report—I strongly urge its adoption.

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

(Mr. ROBERTS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. Speaker, I say to the gentleman from Missouri, ''Mr. EMERSON, we love you, man.''

And to Mr. POMEROY and Mr. TAYLOR and Mr. VOLKMER, good friends of mine all, I have a lengthy, lengthy refutation as to why freedom to farm is not

welfare, and how we have halved the budget in regards to agriculture and saved $10 billion. But I am just going to autograph what I have down here, and turn it in, and revise and extend.

THE MARKET TRANSITION PAYMENT AND THE WELFARE MYTH

The political rhetoric: Currently within the agricultural community there are some who seem to be concerned with the appropriateness of federal payments—''market transition payments'' under the Agricultural Market Transition Act—for farmers during periods of high prices. Some even liken market transition payments to welfare. Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman, in recommending a Presidential veto of the Balanced Budget Act, restated this position:

. . . As we move to balance the budget, farmers should not receive windfall payments when market conditions are good. They should receive assistance when in greatest need—when prices are low, as provided for by the current structure of programs. . . .

I have highlighted ''market conditions'' and ''low prices.'' This statement may reflect the Secretary's thinking, but is the statement accurate in the real world of agriculture? First, farm programs are not welfare and partisan statements equating farm programs with welfare do a disservice to farmers and ranchers.

Check Webster's—Agriculture doesn't fit the definition of welfare: One of the most unfair arguments against farmers is to say that agriculture payments—of any kind—are welfare payments. Under current law, to receive ''welfare,'' whether it's food stamps or Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), an individual simply meets the definition of ''disadvantaged'' to receive government assistance. In total contrast, farmers work on their land, and receive a payment for agreeing to a variety of conditions. FIRST, farmers must adhere to environmental mandates—conservation compliance and wetlands requirements—in return for a federal payment. There is a clear exchange of beneficial environmental practices for benefits received by farmers in the program. Second, the federal payment helps to offset unfair trading practices under which farmers live. Farmers are at the mercy of many trade restrictions. Major markets in the Middle East such as Iran and Iraq are under export embargoes. Threats to continued trade with China also pose significant concern in American agriculture. And finally, due to federal assistance, U.S. farmers can ensure a stable and affordable food supply for American consumers. A federal payment is a small price for a national food supply that guarantees the basic staples of bread, meat and milk at the lowest prices in the world.

What about ''high and low prices'' and farm income: Those who call a market transition payment ''welfare'' follow the basic proposition that Congress cannot justify paying farmers when prices are high because they would get an enormous ''windfall.'' For this scenario to work, farmers must be selling above average quantities of commodities at very high prices. But, does that often happen? The answer is no.

Here's how it really works: Think of the basics of supply and demand: When supplies are tight, prices go up; when supplies are excessive, prices drop. Supply—tight or excessive—usually determines a windfall profit. Farmers receiving a windfall through a market transition payment during periods of high commodity prices, as Secretary Glickman indicates, depends upon whether farmers actually have a commodity to sell.

Follow this example: Consider the two following scenarios that a wheat farmer could face:

High prices: Wheat: $5.00 per bushel; average production: 15/bu./acre; Gross Revenue acre: $75/acre.

Low Prices: Wheat: $3.00 per bushel; Average Production: 40 bu./acre; Gross Revenue/Acre: $120/acre.

Who's right?: Under the current government program in the situation outlined above, the farmer should receive a payment in the year of relative low prices even though his income is higher. In fact, those who complain about giving a payment when prices are high cannot justify their view when you compare farmers' gross revenues. When you actually look at the real world facts, the rhetorically-popular ''welfare'' argument no longer hold up.

Market transition payments allow farmers to manage their own destinies: A market transition payment gives the farmer responsibility for his own economic life. Just as farmers will need to look to the market for production and market signals, the Agricultural Market Transition Program will require farmers to manage their own finances to meet market swings. Government is out of the business of running the farm.

Don't believe us—check with the economists: The economic consulting firm of Abel, Daft, Earley and Ward looked at the calculations and agreed. They said, ''variations in production more than offset variations in market price, usually in the opposite direction. While market prices typically are lower with a larger crop, the positive impact of an increase in crop size on crop value more than offsets the negative impact of a lower market price. And, the reverse is true as well. The increase in market price associated with a small crop is typically not sufficient to offset the negative effect a small crop has on crop value.''

How to avoid a $2 billion payback disaster: The facts prove that the market transition payment is NOT welfare for farmers. Indeed, it actually corrects a major flaw in the present target price system. High prices, but no crop, means farmers have to pay back their advance deficiency payments. Without a crop or federal payment, farmers have repeatedly called for disaster assistance in the past—which costs billions of dollars. That's why the market transition payment is a sound basis for the transition out of a 60-year-old government-run farm program. The key in looking at the policy options is to consider farm income, not high price.

What about ''market conditions'': Market conditions involve much more than price. One ''market condition'' could be the circumstance of weather-related factors. The market transition contract will provide payments in lean years as well as in a year such as this when production is down in various regions of the country, but prices are strong. One thing is very clear: The market transition payment is not a welfare payment.

THE FEDERAL AGRICULTURAL IMPROVEMENT AND REFORM ACT IS RESPONSIBLE TO TAXPAYERS

1. Average expenditures for commodity and export programs in this farm bill are significantly less than previous farm bills.

Average expenditures for commodity and export programs (CCC expenditures): 1985 Act–$15.5 billion per year; 1990 Act–$10.6 billion per year; HR 2854–$6.7 billion per year.

2. Budget Certainty. Expenditures are capped so that ag program spending is no longer an open-ended entitlement.

CBO is the 1985 farm bill would cost $55 billion over 5 years—it cost nearly $80 billion.

The 1990 farm bill was supposed to cost about $41 billion—instead it cost $56 billion.

Under this bill there is budget certainty—expenditures will not exceed $47 billion on farm programs and ag. export promotion programs.

3. Payment limitation is reduced by 20 percent, to $40,000 from the current level of $50,000.

4. Part of the payments are really to compensate producers for the fact that deficiency payments have been capitalized in land values. The transition payments will buffer any shocks to land values that may come about as we move to a more market-oriented agriculture.

5. The Market Transition Payment recognizes the fact that high prices do not translate into high income levels. Often the reason prices are high is because farmers didn't have a crop and a high price times no crops does not equal high income.

6. Payments are based on 85 percent of each farm's former base acres and program yield multiplied by the per bushel payment. Estimated average payments are corn: 36 cents per bushel, wheat: 63 cents per bushel, upland cotton: 7.3 cents per pound and rice: $2.43 per cwt.

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES,
Washington, DC, March 20, 1996.

Hon. PAT ROBERTS,
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Although the Speaker declined to name members from the Committee on Resources as conferees on the House and Senate farm bills, both measures do contain provisions which fall within the Committee on Resources' jurisdiction. I am sending this letter to confirm our continued jurisdictional interest in these provisions and hope that you will take our views into consideration during the conference on S. 1541 and H.R. 2854.

Senate bill (S. 1541)

Section 313, Wetlands Reserve Program. Section 313 of the Senate bill amends the wetlands reserve program of the Food Security Act. As the primary successor in interest to the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee, the Resources Committee received its jurisdiction over ''fisheries and wildlife, including restoration and conservation''. The Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee has successfully argued that the crucial role that wetlands serve as habitat for migratory waterfowl, their contribution to the nutrient base and habitat for many species of fish and wildlife (including endangered species) at critical stages in their development and their function in shoreline protection and flood protection all gave that Committee a strong jurisdictional interest in legislation affecting wetlands. The Merchant Marine Committee's jurisdiction over bills affecting wetlands, including those amending or affecting the Food Security Act, have long been recognized, with the Committee receiving sequential referrals on the wetlands provisions of the farm bills in both 1985 and 1990. The 1985 Food Security Act report (H. Rept. 99–272, Part II) states ''(t)he Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee's jurisdiction over fish and wildlife, including habitat, provides the basis for Committee jurisdiction over legislation affecting wetlands''. Most recently, the Merchant Marine Committee was also represented on the 1990 conference on the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act. Finally, the Resources Committee itself has received referrals of wetlands bills in the past (see H.R. 1203, a bill to promote the conservation of migratory waterfowl and to offset or prevent the serious loss of wetlands by the acquisition of wetlands and other essential habitat, referred to the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs in the 99th Congress).

The changes proposed to the wetlands reserve program in section 313 of the Senate bill will enhance benefits for fish and wildlife

while also recognizing landowner rights. We have no objection to including the measure in the conference report as long as our jurisdictional interests in this matter continue to be recognized.

Section 545. Cooperative Work for Protection, Management, and Improvement of the National Forest System. The Committee on Resources has jurisdiction over ''forest reserves . . . created from the public domain''. This provision would affect the operation of these forests. With this understanding of our jurisdictional interest, however, we have no objection to having the provision included in the conference report.

Section 554, Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program. This section establishes a $50 million Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program overseen by the Secretary of Agriculture. The program will provide payments to landowners to develop ''upland wildlife, wetland wildlife, threatened and endangered species, fisheries and other types of wildlife habitat approved by the Secretary.''

We are sympathetic to the policy underlying this measure, which is similar to provisions included in H.R. 2275, reauthorizing the Endangered Species Act of 1972, However, we also believe that, based on the arguments outlined above, the Committee on Resources would be the primary committee of jurisdiction should this provision be introduced as a separate bill. We have no objection to its inclusion in the conference report, but will fully exercise our jurisdiction over the implementation of the program in the future.

Section 557, Clarification of Effect of Resource Planning on Allocation or Use of Water. Section 557 amends the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act to ensure that private property rights, including water rights, will be recognized and protected in the course of special use permitting decisions. The Committee on Resources shares jurisdiction over these laws based on its jurisdiction over ''forest reserves and national parks created from the public domain''. Section 557 would affect the management of National Forests created from the public domain.

We agree with the policy underlying these amendments and would have no objection to including the provision in the conference report with this recognition of our shared jurisdiction.

Section 824, Aquaculture Assistance Programs. The Committee on Resources enjoys jurisdiction over aquaculture, as outlined in the discussion below. The amendments made by this section to the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 implement the National Aquaculture Act referenced below for the Department of Agriculture. Although we prefer that all aquaculture activities take place as part of the larger aquaculture plan developed under the National Aquaculture Act, the amendments made by this section are acceptable and we have no objection to including this provision in the final conference report.

Section 872, Stuttgart National Aquaculture Research Center. This provision is a slightly modified version of H.R. 33, a bill introduced in the 104th Congress by Congresswoman Lincoln to transfer a fish laboratory in Arkansas from the Department of the Interior to the Department of Agriculture. The bill was referred solely to the Committee on Resources, and passed by the House of Representatives on December 18, 1995, by voice vote under Suspension of the Rules.

With this understanding of our jurisdiction, we have no objection to including this measure in the conference report, with one change. We noticed after passage in the House that the bill contains a typographical error: it refers to ''station and stations''; it should be ''station or stations'' to execute properly.

Section 873, National Aquaculture Policy, Planning and Development. This section amends the National Aquaculture Act of 1980. The bill creating that Act (H.R. 20, 96th Congress) was referred originally to the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee. I was an original cosponsor of the measure. After it was reported, it was sequentially referred to the Committee on Agriculture. The reauthorization of the law in 1984 was provided for in H.R. 2676 (98th Congress); the referral pattern is the same. The law was again reauthorized in 1985 as part of the Food Security Act of 1985, which incorporated the National Aquaculture Act reauthorization measure H.R. 1544, a bill referred originally to Merchant Marine and sequentially to Agriculture. Finally, the Act was reauthorized in 1990 in the Food Security Act of 1990. As stated earlier, the Merchant Marine Committee received a sequential referral of the 1990 and 1985 farm bills, including a referral of sections of the bills dealing with aquaculture.

In addition, in the 103rd Congress, Congressman Studds introduced H.R. 4853, which amended the National Sea Grant College Program Act and the Coastal Zone Management Act to enhance marine aquaculture in the United States. This bill was referred solely to the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee. Mr. Studds also introduced H.R. 4854, which amended the National Aquaculture Act of 1980; that bill was jointly referred to the Merchant Marine and Agriculture Committees. Finally, in the 103rd Congress, Congresswoman Lambert introduced H.R. 4676, a bill which looks remarkably similar to Section 873. This bill was also jointly referred to Merchant Marine and Agriculture Committees. It is very clear that the Committee on Resources has a substantial jurisdictional interest in aquaculture.

Section 873 makes radical changes to the National Aquaculture Act, including changing the definition of ''aquaculture'' to exclude private ocean ranching of Pacific salmon in a State where such salmon is prohibited by law. In addition, the section adds a definition of ''private aquaculture'' to include the activities of ''the Federal Government, any State or local government, or any Indian tribe recognized by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.'' Most importantly, the amendments to the National Aquaculture Act strips the co-equal decision making authority of the Secretaries of Interior, Commerce and Agriculture in developing Federal aquaculture policy, and gives this authority to the Secretary of Agriculture, with a mere consultative role for the other Secretaries. In short, if adopted, these proposed amendments would cede authority for all forms of aquaculture, both onshore and offshore, to the Department of Agriculture.

This is a major policy departure from the original Act, In the 1980 law, it is clear that all three Departments will have equal status in developing policy, regulations and the continuing assessment of aquaculture in the United States. In fact, the Act authorizes equal funding for the three Departments for Fiscal Years 1991, 1992 and 1993.

While changes to the National Aquaculture Act may be warranted, we have not addressed this issue during the 104th Congress. Therefore, until the Committee on Resources has had an opportunity to examine the need for change in United States aquaculture policy and these specific changes, we ask that you drop this provision from any conference agreement at this time.

HOUSE BILL (H.R. 2854)

Section 507, Everglades Agricultural Area. Section 507, as added on the House Floor, provides $210 million to the Secretary of the Interior for restoration of the Florida Everglades. Even under a very restrictive view of the Rules of the House, the Committee on Resources would have primary jurisdiction over this provision as it affects the Everglades National Park, several National Wildlife Refuges, the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary and the restoration of the Everglades for the benefit of fish and wildlife.

One of the House conferees on this section, Congressman Richard Pombo has been working extensively with me and my staff to see that protections for the Everglades are effective, reasonable and in the public interest. Therefore, I would support the inclusion of an Everglades acquisition provision in the final conference report IF the provision is acceptable to Congressman Pombo.

New Provision. We understand that the conference committee may include a measure similar to section 872 of the Senate bill which transfers a fish culture laboratory in Marion, Alabama, from the Department of the Interior to the Department of Agriculture. This provision is taken from H.R. 1205, the Marion National Aquaculture Research Center Act of 1995, introduced by Congressman Hilliard. The bill was referred to both resources and Agriculture Committees.

Although we do not have the benefit of a hearing record on this measure (as with the Stuttgart fish laboratory transfer), we know of no reason why the laboratory should not be transferred between the departments. Therefore, with this recognition of our jurisdiction, we have no objection to this discretionary measure being included in the conference report.

I appreciate your consideration of these recommendations (which affect what I hope are noncontroversial provisions in the historic Agricultural Market Transition Act) and ask that you include this letter in the conference report on the bills. You and your staff should be congratulated on the reforms you are trying to accomplish in the text of these bills.

Sincerely,

DON YOUNG,
Chairman.

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE,
Washington, DC, March 27, 1996.

Hon. PAT ROBERTS,
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ROBERTS: I am writing to clarify the legislative history associated with the termination of the Agricultural Weather Service which you reference in the Joint Explanatory Statement of the Committee of Conference on H.R. 2854, the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996. As you are aware, under Rule X (n)(11) of the House of Representatives, the National Weather Service (NWS) and all its programs are within the jurisdiction of the Science Committee.

Last year, during consideration of the fiscal year (FY) 1996 authorization of the NWS' programs, the Science Committee amended the NWS Organic Act to forbid the NWS from continuing specialized weather services that can be provided by the private sector including the Agricultural Weather Service. The Committee also included report language which specifically addressed the issue of the Agricultural Weather Service. Report 104–237 (Part 1) reads:

''* * * The Committee supports terminating the National Weather Service Agricultural and Fruit Frost specialized weather forecast programs in fiscal year 1996. The Committee notes that concerns have been raised about terminating the programs on

October 1, 1995. The Committee believes that the Secretary of Commerce should have flexibility to continue the programs beyond October 1, 1995 if he finds that the private sector is unwilling or unable to provide replacement services. Under no circumstances should such an extension last beyond April 1, 1996.

''* * * No additional money has been authorized for the continuation of existing Agricultural and Fruit Frost services and any expenses associated with these services, if necessary, should come from National Weather Service's operating budget * * *''

The Committee's NWS authorization passed the House on October 12, 1995 as part of H.R. 2405, the Omnibus Civilian Science Authorization Act of 1995. On March 4, 1996, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) printed notice of its intent to terminate specialized weather services including the Agricultural Weather Service on April 1, 1996 in the Federal Register.

The Science Committee continues to support the privatization of specialized weather services such as the Agricultural Weather Service. The Committee expects the service to be terminated on April 1, 1996. Further, the Committee has not authorized appropriations for Agricultural Weather Service for FY 1996 or FY 1997, and no money should be appropriated for its continuation.

I hope this letter helps clarify the legislative history associated with the Agricultural Weather Service. Please let me know if I can provide you with any additional information on the subject.

Cordially,

ROBERT S. WALKER,
Chairman.

Hon. ROBERT S. WALKER,
Chairman, Committee on Science,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your letter. As you indicate, under Rule X of the House of Representatives, the National Weather Service and all its programs fall under the primary jurisdiction of the Committee on Science. The statement of the Joint Explanatory Statement of the Committee of Conference on H.R. 2854, the ''Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996'', was intended as an expression of support for a program within the Science Committee's jurisdiction and this Committee's concern that weather service be provided to rural areas and that those involved in agriculture continue to have adequate collection and dissemination of weather data.

Thank you for providing me with the historical context under which the Department of Commerce has recommended terminating the agricultural weather service.

Sincerely,

PAT ROBERTS,
Chairman.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill which will move the Federal Government out of planting decisions while providing some support during the shift to a market driven agricultural economy. However, I must express my strong opposition to language inserted in the bill during the conference which will severely impact our ability to move to a modern science-based meat and poultry inspection system.

Section 918 of this bill establishes a permanent advisory committee to evaluate and review meat and poultry inspection programs. This proposal is similar in effect to the proposal made last summer in the Appropriations Committee to slow meat and poultry inspection reform by forcing USDA to undertake negotiated rulemaking at a late point in the regulatory process.

Section 918 was never subject to public hearings and was not included in the Senate or House passed bills.

This advisory committee would review every decision made by the Food Safety Inspection Service, including inspection procedures, labor relations, employee work rules, food safety practices in meat and poultry plants and approval of new technologies. This could delay the implementation of the new Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points [HACCP] inspection system, a science-based system endorsed by both industry and consumers.

Further, this panel will be able to meet in secret and conduct its deliberations outside of public scrutiny because it is specifically exempt from the requirements of Federal Advisory Committee Act.

Mr. Speaker, last year there were five million foodborne illnesses and 4,000 deaths in our Nation. Section 918 has no place in this bill and we should take no actions which will decrease public confidence in the healthfulness and safety of our meat and poultry products. Have we learned nothing from the recent British experience?

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, the conference report of the farm bill, which is before us today, will benefit farmers, rural communities, and taxpayers. I congratulate the members of the conference committee for their diligence in crafting an innovative bill that will continue to provide Americans with an affordable food supply.

I am particularly pleased that the final report contains a provision that will provide Federal funding for State farmland protection efforts. This provision will make the Federal Government a partner in State efforts to gain long-term protection of important agricultural resources. The measure will help to counter the loss of millions of acres of productive farmland to urbanization.

It has come to my attention, however, that a provision has been added to the bill in conference that threatens consumer confidence in the safety of meat and poultry in the United States. Constituents have advised me that language has been included in the conference report to establish a meat and poultry inspection panel to review every decision made by the Food Safety and Inspection Service [FSIS]. This panel could delay the implementation of the new Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points [HACCP] inspection system and undermine the authority of the FSIS.

The language calls for two new Federal Register publication steps in the decision process which would add delays to the existing decision-making process. Moreover, the provision was not subject to hearings or public debate, and it has been my experience over the years that meat and poultry inspection issues have been considered separately, not as part of past farm bills.

It is my understanding that FSIS is underfunded, and that both meat and poultry producers have complained about the shortage of inspectors. The agency simply cannot afford to pay for another advisory panel.

The Centers for Disease Control and the Department of Agriculture point out that contaminated meat and poultry cause five million illnesses and four thousand deaths every year. The purpose of the meat and poultry inspection program is to protect human health. If this provision is implemented, public confidence in the safety of meat and poultry products could erode, which will not be beneficial to either consumers or the industry.

I appreciate the opportunity to add my comments regarding this innovative and important farm bill.

Mr. LATHAM. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the conferees agreed to include a provision in the bill that I originally sponsored in the House regarding revenue insurance. I believe, as do farmers in Iowa's 5th District, that revenue-based risk management tools are a vital resource for today's and tomorrow's American farmer as the weather, market, and global trading patterns continue to fluctuate and pose often unpredictable risks for farmers worldwide.

The FAIR Act would require the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation to offer pilot revenue insurance programs for a number of crops for crop years 1997 through 2000 so that by 2002—when the production flexibility contracts expire—we will have well-tested revenue based risk management products available for farmers.

It is very important to note, however, that it was never my intent to restrict the authority of the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation as it currently exists under law to conduct pilot programs. There are two revenue insurance pilot programs currently operating for crop year 1996. I don't, and I don't believe the Conferees, intend for this new language in any way to interfere with the operation or expansion of these existing programs to other crops under the same terms and conditions under which they are currently operating—for example, on a whole state basis. Rather, my intent was to encourage the Corporation to expand current efforts to other crops and speed the development of such products for the American farmer.

I strongly urge the Corporation to further experiment with revenue-based insurance products and to do so under similar terms and conditions represented by the 1996 crop year revenue insurance programs.

I wish to state for the RECORD that I fully agree with Representative LATHAM that the FAIR Act is not intended to restrict the existing authority of the FCIC to approve pilot programs under similar terms as the 1996 revenue pilot programs. The language agreed to by the Conferees is intended to be liberating, not restricting, in terms of FCIC authority.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, the Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform Act [FAIR] is truly an historic opportunity for farmers and for rural communities. This legislation seeks to reform Federal agriculture programs that begin to wean farmers off government subsidies and move them toward more market oriented principles. In addition, it consolidates existing grant and loan authorities and places primary administrative responsibility with the states and is the most environmentally friendly farm bill in 60 years. This legislation is a giant step in the right direction and I enthusiastically support it.

Hoosier farmers will be the beneficiary of such incremental steps to move the farmer into the next century and be able to plant for the market. Washington bureaucrats have told farmers for far too long what to plant, when to plant, and where to plant. The result has been ineffective farm policy.

The weaning of farmers off government subsidies is important to our country's financial health. Government should not be in the business of subsidizing inefficient operations.

Technology is ever so important to farmers. If Indiana farmers are to successfully move into the next century and compete in the world marketplace, we must continue the public/private research initiatives. This legislation will aid in the transition into the market-oriented farm policy of the future.

Furthermore, this legislation reduces the regulatory burden on farmers. Every time I meet with Hoosier farmers, the discussion quickly turns to regulatory relief. The regulatory demands on time and resources upon the family farmer is too great. This bill is the beginning of the end of needless, overbearing regulations.

The FAIR Act continues our commitment to rural communities. Indiana, and particularly the Fifth District, have benefited tremendously over the years from rural development programs. Many rural communities throughout Indiana need assistance to meet needs which include rural housing, rural water supply and wastewater infrastructure, and rural economic development.

There are several Federal programs to assist rural communities in meeting their needs through a combination of loan and grant funds. It is this position that streamlines and consolidates a variety of existing rural development programs, in order to provide a more focused federal effort and encourage additional decision-making at the state level.

It is important that we address rural programs that: First, provide assistance to attain basic human amenities; second, alleviate health hazards; third, promote stability of rural areas by meeting the need for new and improved rural water and waste disposal systems; fourth, meet national safe drinking water and clean water standards. Most very small systems have no credit history and have never raised capital in financial markets. Increasingly, many small communities are being forced to install or remodel water and wastewater systems in order to meet state and federal water quality standards. It is these smaller, mostly rural communities that have the most difficulty in complying with drinking water regulations and securing the financial resources to meet their needs.

This legislation seeks to authorize a new delivery system for rural development programs called the Rural Community Advancement Program. It would consolidate existing grant and loan authorities and place primary administrative responsibility with the state directors of USDA's RECD offices. Existing rural housing, development, and research programs would receive $300 million in mandatory funding.

The demand by local communities in Indiana's 5th Congressional District facing these funding concerns during my three years in office have included, Medaryville, Francesville, Goodland, Bass Lake, Lake of the Woods, Monticello, Buffalo, New London, Lowell, Cedar Lake, Cayuga, Wheatfield, DeMotte, Kewanna and Fowler. All of these communities are small towns with limited resources. Municipal water supplies and wastewater treatment facilities not only help protect the environmental resources of these communities, but they also form the infrastructure framework necessary to attract economic development.

Rural development is an integral part of the farm bill. Rural America must have access to the economic infrastructure to enable it to compete, including clean water, adequate housing, and good/low cost sewage infrastructure; all of which are prominent issues to Hoosiers in rural America.

The FAIR Act marks the most environmentally friendly farm bill in 60 years. It lifts the requirements that tie farmers to the same crop year after year, which will allow them to maintain soil health and fertility through crop rotation. Thus, farmers will rely less on chemical fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides to maintain yields.

The FAIR Act promotes soil conservation and wetlands protection by requiring all regulations of such, to be met in order for farmers to qualify for payments. Additionally, it reauthorizes for seven years two successful programs, the Conservation Reserve Program and the Wetlands Reserve Programs, creates the Quality Incentives Program, and protects wetlands, water quality, and fights erosion.

Hoosiers will be the beneficiary of this legislation. Weaning farmers off government subsidies and lessening government involvement will provide America's agri-businesses the opportunity to continue to be the most productive and the most cost effective in the world.

Mr. Speaker, the Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform Act is an historic opportunity for farmers and for rural communities. The FAIR Act reforms programs designed in the depression area and moves them into the next century. This bill gives Hoosier farmers the opportunity to do what they do best—farm the land with minimal government control and provide the resources to improve the quality of life in rural communities. I strongly support the FAIR Act.

Mr. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, farmers in my district are in desperate need of some type of farm legislation now.

Although I am not totally sold on the freedom to farm concept, I fully support this conference report which will provide our nation's producers with some direction immediately.

I think the House and Senate Agriculture Committees have done a good job of shaping a bill with peanut program reforms that will make it no-net costs.

I believe the conservation programs contained in this bill are the strongest that we have ever reported out in a farm bill. This bill retains our commitment to help farmers as the stewards of America's land.

I am also pleased to see that the conference committee chose to include the fund for rural America. This fund will give small towns in rural America the tools through research and economic development activities to provide their citizens with safewater and sewer systems and the basic infrastructure to survive.

When we talk about reforming agriculture policies we must also talk about the needs of rural communities whose economies rely heavily on agriculture production.

Mr. Speaker it is time to send the President this agreement on farm policy.

Mr. SKAGGS. Mr. Speaker, I want to focus briefly on one section of this conference report that's particularly important for Colorado and other western States where municipal water supply facilities are located on or above National Forest lands.

During its consideration of this bill, the Senate adopted an amendment by Colorado's senior Senator that would have amended existing laws applicable to the National Forest System. The amendment was explained as a response to Forest Service proposals that renewal of permits for water facilities serving several Colorado municipalities be accompanied by changes in the management of those facilities that would result in smaller diversions from streams on National Forest lands.

In arid States like Colorado, Mr. Speaker, no issues are more sensitive and important than those relating to water. So, even though I had very serious concerns about how his amendment would affect management of the National Forests, I understood why Senator BROWN attached such importance to this matter.

But I was disappointed to note that in his explanation of the amendment, the Senator referred to Boulder, a city located in my congressional district. It seems to me that this could have lead some to mistakenly think there's a need for new legislation to resolve a dispute between that city and the Forest Service. In fact, however, that is not the case. It's true that the city of Boulder wants to replace a water supply pipeline that now brings water across National Forest lands. But the city and the Forest Service are not in deadlock. Rather, they are both acting in accordance with agreements, worked out with my direct participation, establishing the terms and conditions of an easement for the pipeline and the procedure to be followed in determining its route. Furthermore, Boulder has reached an agreement with the State of Colorado regarding continued in-stream flows, and the Forest Service has determined that this meets relevant requirements, so that there is no need for the city to take further steps to maintain bypass flows.

So, in addition to other serious reservations about Senator BROWN's amendment, I was concerned that its enactment might undermine the progress that Boulder and the Forest Service had made in connection with the pipeline project.

I also was concerned that a letter from Boulder's city manager to Senator BROWN regarding the amendment might have the inadvertent effect of creating confusion about the Boulder pipeline project. To clarify matters, I've both met and corresponded with the city manager, who confirmed that the city was continuing to work toward a successful outcome to the pipeline project. For reference, I am attaching my letter to the city manager and his reply as part of this statement.

For all these reasons, I'm glad that the conference report drops the original language of the Brown amendment and instead provides for an 18-month moratorium on certain Forest Service decisions while a special task force develops recommendations for possible ways to address this subject in the future.

I also am very pleased to note that the conferees, in the statement of managers regarding section 389, make it clear that ''the moratorium imposed by this section is not intended to interfere with the ability of the Forest Service to negotiate or comply with the requirements of voluntary agreements concerning the use of National Forest land for water supply facilities.''

In other words, Mr. Speaker, enactment of section 389 of this conference report will neither rewrite the laws applicable to management of the National Forests nor interfere with continued progress in connection with Boulder's pipeline. The Forest Service will be able

to proceed with issuance of a draft environmental impact statement concerning possible routes, and the terms and conditions of an easement across National Forest lands will be as provided in the existing agreement between the Forest Service and the city of Boulder.

Therefore, I can support this part of the conference report.

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
March 26, 1996.

Mr. STEPHEN T. HONEY,
City Manager, City of Boulder, Boulder, CO.

DEAR TIM: I'm glad to have had the chance to briefly discuss with you the status of Boulder's application or renewal of the permit for the Lakewood Pipeline. I also appreciate your providing me a copy of your February 16 letter to Senator Brown expressing support for his amendment to the farm bill dealing with water facilities on national forest land.

Your letter repeats some of the city's previously expressed complaints about the U.S. Forest Service's approach to permitting renewal for the Lakewood Pipeline, and it provides a separate historical outline that includes description of more recent negotiations, agreements, and environmental reviews in which the city and the Forest Service are engaged.

Frankly, I was a little surprised by the letter's emphasis on problems the city feels it has had in the past with this process since I had believed that, through negotiations I was pleased to sponsor, most of those problems had been resolved or set aside.

In particular, the city and the Forest Service agreed to language for a water conveyance facility easement for the pipeline. That language does not, as I understand it, negate the city's claim to a permanent right-of-way for the pipeline, but rather postpones an assertion of that right while the negotiated easement is in place.

I was also pleased that we were able to secure in the easement negotiated with the Forest Service its acknowledgement that the city's instream-flow agreement with the State of Colorado is sufficient for forest management purposes.

Also, as you know, the city and the Forest Service have entered into a memorandum of understanding that is now guiding formal and public consideration and comparison, under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), of alternate locations for the rebuilt pipeline. While these agreements are described in the background paper attached to the letter, the letter itself seems to suggest that there has been a lack of cooperation and effort on the part of the Forest Service toward fulfillment of these agreements.

The letter, for example, speaks of the city's difficulty with another provision in the easement language agreement, relating to compliance with Forest Management Plan standards and guidelines. Is there some chance that the city intends to withdraw from that portion of the agreements? If so, I'd like to know more about that.

The letter also includes a discussion of projected problems with alternatives being considered in the NEPA review, including statements that I would have expected to be made in the form of comments on the imminently forthcoming draft Environmental Impact Statement.

As you know, I have believed that issues surrounding the Lakewood Pipeline permitting process can and should be settled locally through negotiations and without resorting to the expense and trouble of litigation or to legislation that would revise one or more of the laws applicable to the National Forest System. Because I believed that the Forest Service and the City of Boulder were making progress along those lines, I found it surprising that Senator Brown cited Boulder's experience in connection with the Lakewood Pipeline as demonstrating the need for new legislation.

I assume the city hasn't changed its position regarding the desirability of resolving this matter through the existing agreement with the Forest Service. And, if the city believes that the Forest Service is failing to fulfill its obligations under the memorandum of understanding or other agreements, I would like to know more about that failure and what steps I could take to assist to rectify the situation. In any case I'd appreciate an update about progress made and work completed under the framework of the existing agreements.

Thanks again for your continuing efforts to keep me informed and, where I can be useful, involved on this matter. I look forward to continuing to do what I can toward a successful outcome.

Sincerely yours,

DAVID E. SKAGGS.

CITY OF BOULDER, OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER,
March 26, 1996.

Hon. DAVID SKAGGS, LONGWORTH H.O.B., WASHINGTON, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN SKAGGS, I am pleased to respond to your March 26th letter and your request for clarification on specific issues surrounding the Lakewood Pipeline Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Please keep in mind that as of today, March 26th, a draft EIS has not been released by the Forest Service. Although we have been working with the Forest Service staff in supplying information for them to review and possibly use in the EIS, we have not received any final, written documents from the Forest Service as to their assessment of the issues. Their preliminary assessment will be included in the draft EIS and their record of decision is scheduled to be implemented in November, 1996. As such, perhaps my February 16th letter was more an expression of the frustration about the timeliness for this project than the integrity of the project. If so, I apologize for that.

You are correct that the language for the water conveyance facility easement does not negate the City's claim to a permanent right-of-way, but rather postpones a decision on that right while the easement is in place. If the EIS contains all this information and an easement is executed, then this concern will be resolved.

With regards to the City's in-stream flow agreement with the State of Colorado, I did not mean to imply that the Forest Service doesn't recognize and support this program. In fact, it is our understanding that the Forest Service has evaluated and determined that the in-stream flow program does meet the Forest Management Plan standards and guidelines and no additional bypass flows will be required, and I expect that the draft EIS will reflect this.

With respect to compliance with the Forest Management Plan, the MOU indicates that the EIS will analyze the information in compliance with the National Forest Management Act of 1976, as well as other applicable statutes, regulations and Forest Service Manual direction. In addition, the MOU says the Forest Service will assure compliance with all federal and state laws and regulations. There is not specific statement about the Forest Management Plan standards and guidelines. At this point, we don't know if there will be any difficulty in complying with the Forest Management Plan until the draft EIS is released and the Forest Service's analysis is reviewed by the public. Between the time I signed the MOU and the decision is implemented, more than 2 years will have passed, and some changes to the Forest Management Plan may have occurred. At this point, I just don't know what the impacts of these changes may mean.

My previous letter included a discussion about some of the alternatives. We do intend to fully and carefully comment on the draft EIS when it is released, but the comments may change depending upon the content of the draft EIS. I believe it is important for the City to discuss the issues throughout the process, but I apologize for any confusion which may have resulted from our concerns about what may appear in the draft EIS.

The City continues to work toward a successful outcome for this project. Your assistance and leadership in this project has been essential, and the City greatly appreciates your commitment to achieving the goals set forward in our joint MOU with the Forest Service.

Sincerely,

STEPHEN T. HONEY,
City Manager.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my opposition to the safe meat and poultry inspection panel provision which was added at the last minute, with no hearings or public debate, to the farm bill. Although its title suggests otherwise, the safe meat and poultry inspection panel will actually hamper consumer protection efforts by delaying meat and poultry inspection reform.

The seven-member panel, consisting primarily of meat scientists, poultry scientists, and food scientists, would be responsible for reviewing every decision made by the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service [FSIS]. This industry-friendly panel would have broad authority over USDA decision making in such matters as inspection procedures, labor relations, employee work rules, food safety standards, food safety practices in meat and poultry plants, and approval of new technologies. Such broad authority gives tremendous power to a part-time panel that does not necessarily include public health doctors. Yet, even if the panel met full time year round, it could not meaningfully address the large volume of decisions made regularly by the USDA's FSIS. It is obvious that the safe meat and poultry inspection panel would quickly cause a bottleneck in the FSIS decision making process. The FSIS food safety reform agenda would be substantially delayed, if not entirely blocked, by this panel.

In fact, the safe meat and poultry inspection panel is actually an attempt at back door regulatory reform. It puts additional regulatory review power in the hands of industry-friendly panel members. This panel provision also adds two new Federal Register publication steps to the existing decision process. In other words, it creates another regulatory hurdle to delay implementation of additional safeguards. However, each delay in the reform process further undermines the public's confidence in the meat and poultry inspection system and food supply.

In these times of severe budget constraints, the Food Safety Inspection Service is struggling to simultaneously meet its current inspection responsibilities and make needed

food safety reforms. The agency certainly cannot afford to pay for another advisory panel; yet, this provision provides no new funds to finance the panel. I cannot believe that at a time when Americans want less Government, the Congress is creating an unfinanced panel that actually duplicates the work of the existing National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Food [NACMCE], which has a diverse membership and has worked closely with the FSIS since 1987.

The safe meat and poultry inspection panel is not needed and would actually work against the consumer protection mission of the FSIS. It has no place in this otherwise fine farm bill compromise. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to express my opposition and greatly urge my colleagues to join me in opposition to the safe meat and poultry inspection panel.

Mrs. KENNELLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the conference report on the farm bill. I voted against this legislation when it was first addressed by the House, because I was concerned that the legislation did not address reauthorization of nutrition programs and did not include the northeast dairy compact. I am pleased that the conference committee saw fit to include these provisions in the conference report.

The northeast dairy compact was approved by all six New England and will play a significant role in boosting farm income and stabilizing the dairy industry in the northeast through interstate cooperation. It is my hope that this compact will serve as a model partnership between farmers and consumers to maintain stable milk prices.

I am also pleased that in reauthorizing many nutrition programs, the conference committee included the Community Food Security Act which will provide a one-time infusion of funds for projects designed to meet the food needs of low-income people. This vital assistance will help to make good quality, and reasonably priced food available to many low-income communities like those in my home city of Hartford.

While I believe that this farm bill conference report is greatly improved, I remain concerned about the seven year market transition, which would make payments to farmers without requiring them to farm at all. But I believe that the reauthorization of nutrition programs, strong conservation provisions, and the inclusion of the Community Food Security Act and the northeast dairy compact has greatly improved this legislation and I urge my colleagues to support passage of this legislation.

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased the House and Senate conferees for S. 1541, the Agricultural Market Transition Act of 1996, included a provision to protect horses during transport to slaughterhouses. In particular, I would like to thank Congressman STEVE GUNDERSON and Chairman PAT ROBERTS for their support.

Last year, I introduced H.R. 2433, the Safe Commercial Transportation of Horses for Slaughter Act, intended to improve the handling, care, and equipment requirement for the safe transportation of horses to slaughterhouse facilities. My colleague, Senator MITCH MCCONNELL, introduced similar legislation in the Senate. Since then, my office has received tremendous support for introducing this legislation from the public and Members of Congress who have large horseman populations in their congressional districts.

Two years ago, I sent a dear colleague to Members bringing their attention to an article I read in ''equidae,'' the National Horseman's Inc. publication, that exposed the inhumane treatment of horses transported for slaughter. Two constituents in my district visited a horse auction in New Holland, PA and described the horrible conditions to which these horses are subjected. Imagine injured, pregnant, and ill horses crammed into cattle cars with combative stallions and other horses to be shipped on long journeys to slaughterhouses with no dividers separating them. Often, these horses travel for days without food or water. As a thoroughbred owner, I find this appalling.

While Americans traditionally view horses as pets or companions, the reality is that many of our beloved friends are sent to slaughterhouses for consumption in European, Asian, and Latin countries. Horses have a unique, trusting relationship with people and deserve to have a humane and dignified end to their lives as other household pets.

Fortunately, through the hard work of Senator MITCH MCCONNELL, Congressman GUNDERSON and other Members of the House and Senate Agriculture Committee, the conference committee was able to come to a compromise on language that will ensure the safe transportation of horses for slaughter while protecting other livestock and poultry for slaughter from regulation. The language provides authority to the Secretary of Agriculture to authorize guidelines for the regulation of persons engaged in the commercial transportation of horses for slaughter. The Secretary shall consider in carrying out this section of the bill food, water, rest, and the segregation of stallions from other horses during transportation.

I am hopeful these guidelines will be issued in timely manner to protect the thousands of horses sent to slaughter each year. I would suggest the Secretary consider requiring horses be rested and provided food and water after traveling no longer than 10 hours, vehicles be required to be in sanitary condition and provide at least 7 feet, 6 inches of headroom, and provide for the separation of stallions from other horses.

This legislation has the full support of the horse industry and animal feed industry including the American Horse Council, the American Horse Protection Association, the Humane Society of the United States, the American Association of Equine Practitioners, American Horse Shows Association, American Veterinary Medical Association, Pennsylvania Horse Breeders Association, the American Feed Industry Association, and the National Pork Producers.

Once again, I would like to thank the Members of the House and Senate conference committee for their compassion and hardwork. I am sure this legislation will go a long way in protecting horses transported for slaughter and provide incentive for those in the industry to treat horses with greater care and respect.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the conference report.

The previous question was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OXLEY). The question is on the conference report.

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

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. VOLKMER. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 318, noes 89, not voting 24, as follows:

[Roll No. 107]

AYES—318

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Allard
Archer
Armey
Bachus
Baker (CA)
Baker (LA)
Baldacci
Ballenger
Barcia
Barr
Barrett (NE)
Bartlett
Barton
Bass
Bateman
Bentsen
Bereuter
Berman
Bevill
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop
Bliley
Boehlert
Boehner
Bonilla
Bono
Boucher
Brewster
Browder
Brown (FL)
Brown (OH)
Brownback
Bryant (TN)
Bunn
Bunning
Burr
Burton
Buyer
Callahan
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Canady
Castle
Chambliss
Chapman
Chenoweth
Christensen
Chrysler
Clayton
Clement
Clinger
Clyburn
Coble
Coburn
Collins (GA)
Combest
Condit
Cooley
Costello
Cox
Cramer
Crane
Crapo
Cremeans
Cubin
Cunningham
Danner
Davis
de la Garza
Deal
DeLauro
DeLay
Deutsch
Diaz-Balart
Dickey
Dingell
Dixon
Doolittle
Dornan
Dreier
Duncan
Dunn
Durbin
Edwards
Ehlers
Ehrlich
Emerson
English
Ensign
Evans
Everett
Ewing
Farr
Fawell
Fazio
Fields (LA)
Fields (TX)
Flake
Flanagan
Foley
Forbes
Franks (CT)
Frisa
Frost
Funderburk
Furse
Gallegly
Ganske
Gejdenson
Gekas
Geren
Gilchrest
Gillmor
Gilman
Gonzalez
Goodlatte
Goodling
Gordon
Graham
Greenwood
Gunderson
Gutknecht
Hall (OH)
Hall (TX)
Hamilton
Hancock
Hansen
Harman
Hastert
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayworth
Hefley
Hefner
Heineman
Herger
Hilleary
Hilliard
Hinchey
Hobson
Hoekstra
Holden
Horn
Hostettler
Houghton
Hoyer
Hunter
Hutchinson
Hyde
Inglis
Istook
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Johnson (CT)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Kanjorski
Kasich
Kelly
Kennedy (RI)
Kennelly
Kildee
Kim
King
Kingston
Klink
Klug
Knollenberg
Kolbe
LaFalce
LaHood
Largent
Latham
LaTourette
Laughlin
Lazio
Leach
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Lightfoot
Linder
Livingston
Longley
Lucas
Maloney
Manton
Manzullo
Mascara
Matsui
McCollum
McCrery
McDade
McHale
McHugh
McInnis
McIntosh
McKeon
Meek
Metcalf
Meyers
Mica
Mink
Molinari
Mollohan
Montgomery
Moorhead
Morella
Murtha
Myers
Myrick
Nethercutt
Neumann
Ney
Norwood
Nussle
Olver
Ortiz
Orton
Oxley
Packard
Parker
Pastor
Paxon
Payne (VA)
Peterson (FL)
Petri
Pickett
Pombo
Porter
Portman
Poshard
Pryce
Quillen
Quinn
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Reed
Regula
Richardson
Riggs
Roberts
Roemer
Rogers
Rohrabacher
Roth
Royce
Rush
Salmon
Sanders
Sawyer
Schaefer
Schiff

Schumer	Stump	Walker
Scott	Stupak	Walsh
Seastrand	Talent	Ward
Shadegg	Tanner	Watt (NC)
Shaw	Tate	Watts (OK)
Shays	Tauzin	Weldon (FL)
Shuster	Taylor (NC)	Weller
Sisisky	Tejeda	White
Skeen	Thomas	Whitfield
Skelton	Thompson	Wicker
Slaughter	Thornberry	Wilson
Smith (MI)	Thornton	Wise
Smith (NJ)	Thurman	Wolf
Solomon	Tiahrt	Woolsey
Souder	Torres	Wynn
Spence	Torricelli	Young (AK)
Spratt	Towns	Young (FL)
Stearns	Upton	Zeliff
Stenholm	Vucanovich	
Stockman	Waldholtz	

NOES—89

Andrews	Goss	Oberstar
Baesler	Green	Obey
Barrett (WI)	Gutierrez	Owens
Becerra	Hoke	Pallone
Blute	Jackson (IL)	Payne (NJ)
Bonior	Jacobs	Pelosi
Borski	Johnson (SD)	Peterson (MN)
Brown (CA)	Johnston	Pomeroy
Cardin	Kaptur	Rivers
Chabot	Kennedy (MA)	Roybal-Allard
Clay	Kleczka	Sabo
Collins (MI)	Levin	Sanford
Conyers	Lincoln	Saxton
Coyne	Lipinski	Scarborough
DeFazio	LoBiondo	Sensenbrenner
Dellums	Lofgren	Serrano
Dicks	Lowey	Skaggs
Doggett	Luther	Stark
Dooley	Markey	Taylor (MS)
Doyle	Martini	Torkildsen
Engel	McCarthy	Traficant
Fattah	McDermott	Velazquez
Filner	McKinney	Vento
Foglietta	Menendez	Visclosky
Ford	Miller (CA)	Volkmer
Fox	Miller (FL)	Wamp
Frank (MA)	Minge	Waters
Franks (NJ)	Moakley	Williams
Frelinghuysen	Moran	Zimmer
Gephardt	Nadler	

NOT VOTING—24

Beilenson	Lantos	Schroeder
Bryant (TX)	Martinez	Smith (TX)
Coleman	McNulty	Smith (WA)
Collins (IL)	Meehan	Stokes
Eshoo	Neal	Studds
Fowler	Ros-Lehtinen	Waxman
Gibbons	Rose	Weldon (PA)
Hayes	Roukema	Yates

☐ 0036

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania changed his vote from ''aye'' to ''no.''

Mr. TORRES changed his vote from ''no'' to ''aye.''

So the conference report was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the conference report on H.R. 2854 just passed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OXLEY). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Kansas?

There was no objection.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was grant to:

Mrs. SMITH of Washington, (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today, on account of illness.

Mr. MCNULTY (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today after 2:15 p.m. and the balance of the week, on account of death in the family.

Ms. ESHOO (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today after 8:30 p.m. and the balance of the week, on account of a death in the family.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. JEFFERSON) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. SKELTON, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PETE GEREN of Texas, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BROWDER, for 5 minutes, today.

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

By unanimous consent, permission to revise and extend remarks was granted to:

(Mr. MOAKLEY, and to include extraneous material, after debate on the unfunded mandate motion to recommit H.R. 3136 today.)

(Mr. FAWELL and to include extraneous material notwithstanding the fact that it exceeds two pages of the RECORD and is estimated by the Public Printer to cost 1,742.)

(Mr. MCINNIS (at the request of Mr. KOLBE), and to include extraneous material on the reconciliation rule of last year.)

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. JEFFERSON) and to include extraneous matter:)

Mr. TORRES.
Mr. STARK.
Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts.
Mr. POSHARD.
Mr. WARD.
Mr. MILLER of California.
Mr. FROST.
Mr. JACOBS.
Ms. ESHOO.
Ms. FURSE.
Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas.
Mr. MONTGOMERY.
Mr. BROWDER.
Mrs. LOWEY.
Mr. SKAGGS.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. HAYWORTH) and to include extraneous matter:)

Mr. BUNNING of Kentucky.
Mr. SHUSTER.
Mr. SOLOMON.
Mr. COMBEST.
Mr. FLANAGAN.
Mr. DAVIS.
Mr. FORBES.
Mr. CAMP.
Mr. ROGERS.
Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania.
Mr. GANSKE.
Mr. MOORHEAD.
Mr. EWING.
Mr. CUNNINGHAM.
Mr. RIGGS, in two instances.
Mr. SMITH of Michigan.
Mrs. KELLY.
Mr. OXLEY.
Mr. HORN.
Ms. MOLINARI.
Mr. CLINGER.
Mr. GILMAN.
Mr. BUYER.
Mr. PACKARD.
Mr. BUNN of Oregon.
Mrs. MYRICK.

ENROLLED BILL AND JOINT RESOLUTION SIGNED

Mr. THOMAS, from the Committee on House Oversight, reported that that committee had examined and found truly enrolled a bill and joint resolution of the House of the following titles, which were thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 2969. An act to eliminate the Board of Tea Experts by repealing the Tea Importation Act of 1897.

H.J. Res. 168. Joint resolution waiving certain enrollment requirements with respect to two bills of the 104th Congress.

SENATE ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The SPEAKER announced his signature to enrolled bills of the Senate of the following titles:

S. 4. An act to give the President line item veto authority with respect to appropriations, new direct spending, and limited tax benefits.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 42 minutes a.m.), the House adjourned until today, Friday, March 29, 1996, at 10 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XXIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

2311. A letter from the Secretary of Defense, transmitting the Department's report entitled ''Annual Report to the President and the Congress, March 1996,'' pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 113 (c) and (e); to the Committee on National Security.

2312. A letter from the Comptroller General of the United States, transmitting the list of all reports issued or released in February 1996, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 719(h); to the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight.

2313. A letter from the Executive Director, District of Columbia Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Authority, transmitting a report entitled ''Report on the Mayor's District of Columbia FY 1997 Budget and Multiyear Plan'' adopted by the District of Columbia Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Authority on March 21, 1996, pursuant to section 202(d)