year is out to provide more help as we go through the conference.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I know there are a lot of Senators on their feet, but in an effort to try to be fair before I move for regular order, I am going to withhold so the Senator from North Dakota can comment and then the Senator from Georgia, and then I will ask for the regular order.

Mr. DORGAN. I do not intend to object. I have no quarrel with this provision that is being proposed tonight.

Mr. LOTT. Didn't I call the Senator and ask if there was a problem?

Mr. DORGAN. You did call within the last hour or so. I indicated to you there was no problem with this provision, and I do not object to this provision.

But I do want to make the point that the Senate has debated and passed an emergency provision calling for $500 million of indemnity payments. That is the only new money available. It is the only new money around in the appropriations process. If it is completed by October 1, then perhaps we may get money into the pockets of some farmers. We have seen prices collapse even further in recent weeks. It may get money into the hands of some farmers, perhaps in October—unlikely—perhaps November, maybe December.

My proposition is that to the extent that we have already debated this subject, the Senate, by 99 to nothing, has said we have an emergency in farm country. They have already passed a $500 million indemnity payment program. It makes eminent good sense to me that we would be able to pass that indemnity program this evening and move it to the House. Does the House want to deal with it? I don't know. But they won't have an opportunity to deal with it in any timely way if we don't proceed.

I have no objection at all to what the Senator is requesting. I simply ask that he consider, and we consider, taking the $500 million we have already decided upon and see if we can't move that to the hands of family farmers, many of whom are desperately strapped for cash.

As soon as the Senator has completed getting his unanimous consent and as soon as I am able to get the floor, I intend to ask unanimous consent the Senate will proceed to the bill providing the $500 million of agriculture indemnity payments, which was agreed to as an amendment to the agricultural appropriations bill, and the bill be read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

If someone objects to that, fine. But I hope they would not object to it. We will not object to this. I think this may help. I hope you will not object to that, because I know it will help. It would help in a more timely way than will be the case if we wait until after recess, and farmers have to wait until November or December. Perhaps we can help farmers to get some help from that provision earlier.

Mr. LOTT. I yield to the Senator from Georgia.

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I have just returned from a disaster area in our State. It is the most emotional difficulty, I believe, with which I have ever dealt. And I have dealt with a 1000-year flood and a 500-year flood. Back-to-back crises like this are enormous.

I heard the exchange between the majority and minority leaders. I understand the tensions of the day. I appreciate the minority leader, in deference to the issue involved, removing his right to object. I appreciate that.

That removal of an objection will lead to the movement and option of farmers, in many States, to relieve their cash flow problem. They have an equity problem. The proposal that the minority leader has mentioned, about the $500 million, and others, is something for the broader issue. There are many issues we are going to have to bring to the table to deal with this crisis. That is one idea. It is probably not near enough. It wouldn't take care of Georgia and South Carolina, much less Alabama and Texas and the Midwestern States.

We do have a major issue in front of us dealing with food and fiber and the Nation's security. I hope we could proceed this evening with that which does not require new funds and it is simply a logistical and administrative decision that will move money more rapidly.

I say to the leader, I appreciate the chance to speak on this. Again, I thank the minority leader for removing his objection.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read the third time and passed; that the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table; and that any statement relating to the bill appear at the appropriate place in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the request? Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (S. 2344) was considered read the third time and passed, as follows:

S. 2344

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Emergency Farm Financial Relief Act''.

SEC. 2. SPECIAL RULE FOR FISCAL YEAR 1999 PAYMENT UNDER PRODUCTION FLEXIBILITY CONTRACTS.

Section 112(d) of the Agirucltural Market Transition Act (7 U.S.C. 7212(d)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(3) SPECIAL RULE FOR FISCAL YEAR 1999.—Notwithstanding the requirements for making an annual contract payment specified in paragraphs (1) and (2), at the option of the owner or producer, the Secretary shall pay the full amount (or such portion as the owner or producer may specify) of the contract payment required to be paid for fiscal year 1999 at such time or times during that fiscal year as the owner or producer may specify.''.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate receives the House bill relative to H–1B, the text of which I send to the desk, the bill be deemed agreed to and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table. I further ask that if the text of the House-passed bill is not identical to the text just sent to the desk, then the House bill will be appropriately referred.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, there are objections on our side.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1999

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I believe we are ready to go to final passage of the defense bill.

Mr. STEVENS. I ask we proceed with the unanimous consent agreement.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Shall the bill, H.R. 4103, as amended, pass? On this question, the yeas and nays have been ordered. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. NICKLES. I announce that the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. HELMS) is absent because of illness.

I further announce that, if present and voting, the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. HELMS) would vote ''aye.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 97, nays 2, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 252 Leg.]

YEAS—97

Abraham	Faircloth	Lugar
Akaka	Feinstein	Mack
Allard	Ford	McCain
Ashcroft	Frist	McConnell
Baucus	Glenn	Mikulski
Bennett	Gorton	Moseley-Braun
Biden	Graham	Moynihan
Bingaman	Gramm	Murkowski
Bond	Grams	Murray
Boxer	Grassley	Nickles
Breaux	Gregg	Reed
Brownback	Hagel	Reid
Bryan	Harkin	Robb
Bumpers	Hatch	Roberts
Burns	Hollings	Rockefeller
Byrd	Hutchinson	Roth
Campbell	Hutchison	Santorum
Chafee	Inhofe	Sarbanes
Cleland	Inouye	Sessions
Coats	Jeffords	Shelby
Cochran	Johnson	Smith (NH)
Collins	Kempthorne	Smith (OR)
Conrad	Kennedy	Snowe
Coverdell	Kerrey	Specter
Craig	Kerry	Stevens
D'Amato	Kohl	Thomas
Daschle	Kyl	Thompson
DeWine	Landrieu	Thurmond
Dodd	Lautenberg	Torricelli
Domenici	Leahy	Warner
Dorgan	Levin	Wyden
Durbin	Lieberman	
Enzi	Lott	

NAYS—2

Feingold	Wellstone

NOT VOTING—1

Helms

The bill (H.R. 4103), as amended, was passed.

(The text of the bill will be printed in a future edition of the RECORD.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate insists on its amendment, requests a conference with the House, and the Chair appoints the following conferees.

The Presiding Officer appointed Mr. STEVENS, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. BOND, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. GREGG, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. INOUYE, Mr. HOLLINGS, Mr. BYRD, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. BUMPERS, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. HARKIN, and Mr. DORGAN, conferees on the part of the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the order, S. 2132 is indefinitely postponed.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2344

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, as I indicated to the majority leader, it is my intent to ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the bill which provides $500 million in agricultural indemnity payments which was agreed to as an amendment to the agricultural appropriations bill, and the bill be read the third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

Mr. GREGG. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I heard on the other side of the aisle a chorus of ''I object.'' I am not quite sure why.

I was on a show this morning, WCCO Radio, in Minnesota. It is hard to explain to farmers why we can't take the action right now on the indemnity payment, the $500 million. We passed it. The correction would be made later on, but we can get assistance to farmers right now.

Why can't we send this over to the House? I say to my colleagues.

Mr. CRAIG. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. WELLSTONE. I am pleased to yield.

Mr. CRAIG. I helped craft that indemnity payment. It is very important we do work with the House. Senator CONRAD, I, and others, deserve to go to conference. Senator DORGAN was a part of that.

I can understand a rush to immediacy. That is in the next fiscal cycle. I think it is important we deal with it in a fair and balanced way. As it is written, already the circumstances of agriculture have changed significantly enough. We deserve to look at it in a broader spectrum.

We, the Senate, tonight acted to bring some immediacy to the difficulty you are expressing. There may be more to be done in the coming weeks as this whole difficulty with production agriculture increases across our country.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, let the RECORD show I am speaking for myself, but let the RECORD show that there was no objection to moving forward on advance payments for this ''freedom to fail'' bill, which is just an admission what an awful piece of legislation it was on our side. In addition, we could have gotten a $500 million indemnity payment out to farmers.

People are asking, when are we going to see this assistance? People are thinking about a lifetime of 2 months or 3 months.

I hear this discussion that we need to take a broader view, it needs to go over to the House, and we need to work it in conference committee, and we haven't had a chance to meet yet in conference committee. Do you know how ridiculous that sounds to the people whom we represent?

Mr. President, I will just say I don't think it is just that simple. Obviously, I am not going to change the course of events tonight.

My colleague from Iowa came out here earlier and spoke about this. First, the minority leader asked whether or not we also could have unanimous consent to get this indemnity payment out to the countryside, out to families in rural America. Then the Senator from Iowa spoke about it. Then the Senator from North Dakota comes to the floor, after we have agreed to go forward—fast forward the advance payments was just fine with this Freedom to Farm bill. And now we come out and the Senator from North Dakota asks unanimous consent that we get the $500 million—when did we pass that? I ask my colleagues.

Mr. DORGAN. Almost a month ago.

Mr. WELLSTONE. A month ago. We get this out now, over to the House of Representatives; they take action this week or next week; and then we get the assistance out to farmers.

And what I hear on this side is this chorus of ''No,'' and then everyone leaves. With all due respect, it is not that simple. I want the farmers in Minnesota and I want the farmers across the country to know that there was an effort made tonight to get some additional help to people above and beyond these advance payments, which will help only a little.

It is a desperate situation. Many people are going to go under over the next several months. There was an effort tonight to get $500 million passed, over to the House, and out to farmers all across the country, especially in those areas that have been hardest hit. And my colleagues on the other side said no. And they are gone.

I will be willing to yield in 1 second. I would like to speak a little bit more about this for another 3 minutes. It is not that simple. I will just say to my colleagues on the other side, I see that it is late at night, but I will just say to them, it is not as simple as saying no. You said no to a proposal, to an effort to get assistance to people now. We could have done it. We have done it.

I think the RECORD should be very clear. I want every single farm family in northwest Minnesota that is in desperate shape to know that this proposal was turned down by the Republican Party—unwilling to do it. We were more than willing to help out a little bit with moving forward on the advance payments. No reciprocation or cooperation on the other side in getting the $500 million out to people right now.

I don't think it will be very easy to explain to people why we are waiting another month. I don't know whether we should have even left. It is sort of interesting to me, a bitter irony. Now we are gone. We probably shouldn't have gone. We probably shouldn't be going into recess.

How do you say to people, well, it will be in a conference committee and we haven't quite got that together and we just didn't want to do it tonight because there are some things that I am not satisfied with as a Senator and I would like to work on that longer?

The future is now for people. Time is not neutral. We could have passed something which would have provided $500 million to farmer families that are in real trouble, and we didn't do it. I am embarrassed that we are going into recess. I am embarrassed that the U.S. Senate blocked this. I am embarrassed, specifically, that my Republican colleagues blocked it.

I didn't get a chance to talk earlier because the majority leader tried to move things along, said he would recognize two Senators, and the Senator from Georgia was the last Senator. So now I get to speak. I think it is just outrageous.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. I simply wanted to make the point that the reason I asked the unanimous consent request really has nothing to do with the request by others to advance the Agriculture Marketing Assistance Act, or AMTA payments as they are called, under the Freedom to Farm bill. I didn't object to that. If that will help a producer here and there, that is good. Anything that helps gets assistance into the pockets of family farmers, I am for that. So I didn't object to that. I told folks this evening I wouldn't object to that.

But, this is not new money at all. This is just a payment that they are supposed to get later on. Now, they might get this payment earlier or at least they will have the option to get it earlier.

I was thinking about the farmer who testified yesterday at our farm policy hearing. This was young fellow from South Dakota who testified. When he talked about putting the crop in this spring, he could barely continue. His chin was quivering, and he had tears in his eyes. He talked about having to find something on his farm to sell in order to get the money together to put in his crop. Then things went bad for him and he was out of money again. He had to sell some of the feed for his cattle that he put aside for this winter. He