FARM SECURITY AND RURAL INVESTMENT ACT OF 2002

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 403 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 403

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 2646) to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2011. All points of order against the conference report and against its consideration are waived. The conference report shall be considered as read.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SWEENEY). The gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LINDER) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, for purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H. Res. 403 waives all points of order against the conference report and against its consideration. The rule provides that the conference report shall be considered as read.

Adopting this rule would allow the full House of Representatives to consider the conference report to accompany H.R. 2646, the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002.

Yesterday, the Rules Committee approved this rule, which is a standard rule governing consideration of the conference report.

Before closing, I want to acknowledge my friends and colleagues on the House Agriculture Committee, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST), the chairman, and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS), the subcommittee chairman, who have spent a considerable amount of time on this measure.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the rule 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.

I want to thank the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LINDER) for yielding me the time.

This rule will waive all points of order against the conference report to accompany H.R. 2646. This is the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002.

I want to commend the chairman of the Committee on Agriculture, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST), and the ranking member, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM), and their staffs for their hard work on this bipartisan legislation. I also want to express my appreciation to Senators HARKIN and LUGAR, chairman and ranking member of the Senate Agriculture Committee for their tireless efforts as well.

I would also like to single out the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. CLAYTON) and Senator LEAHY for their contributions to the bill and their steadfast work as champions of hungry people in this country and around the world.

This bill will increase farm program spending by $73.5 billion over the next 10 years. The measure boosts government subsidies for major crops, while at the same time it directs more conservation payments to small farmers. The measure also provides funding for trade promotion, nutrition programs, for rural development, and agriculture research.

Mr. Speaker, I am deeply grateful that this legislation includes the Bill Emerson-Mickey Leland Hunger Fellows Program. This is a fitting tribute to our late colleagues, and it honors their legacy by training leaders in the fight against hunger.

I am pleased that the measure provides $100 million in fiscal year 2003 for the Global Food for Education initiative, and I am particularly gratified that this legislation authorizes the George McGovern-Robert Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program. This initiative, commonly known as the Global School Lunch Program, will continue and expand the good work of the Global Food for Education Initiative.

The Global School Lunch Program was inspired in a bipartisan fashion by former Senators George McGovern and Bob Dole, and it began as a pilot program in July of 2000. Under the bill we are considering today, this initiative will make a real difference in the lives of tens of millions of children all over the world. The program will feed not only hungry children, but it promotes education abroad, in addition to assisting American farmers.

This program is already doing a wonderful job encouraging children to attend school, especially girls. One example is in Pakistan, near the border with Afghanistan. Partnered with the World Food Programme, the Global School Lunch Program provides families with cooking oil if their daughters go to school. This is boosting attendance and improving performance; and important to our own national security, this program keeps the kids away from the madrahsas, schools funded by radical Islamic militants where students are fed a diet of hate for America. Because of the Global School Lunch Program, the students learn that America cares about them.

Mr. Speaker, the conference report includes an amendment I offered on the House floor which was accepted by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST) and adopted by the House. The amendment allows greater flexibility to use assistance funds for transporting food where it is needed. This provision will remove a bottleneck which can hinder the abilities of both the World Food Programme and private charities to distribute food aid.

In our own country, this measure restores food stamps to legal immigrants who have lived in the United States for 5 years. This is a needed change from the Welfare Reform Act of 1996, and it was a top priority of the antihunger community.

The bill provides an overall increase of $6.4 billion for domestic nutrition programs. This includes increases for the TEFAP program and the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program. These programs do help hungry people. They put food on the empty plates of Americans in need.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I do want to express my concern about the future of international food aid. This bill does increase slightly the Food for Progress program. However, if the administration follows through with its stated intentions to reduce surplus commodity donations through section 416(b), this will amount to a drastic cut in overall food assistance. This could result in a loss of almost $1 billion to feed hungry people next year.

This is totally unacceptable anytime, but it is even more tragic when the serious threat of famine looms in southern Africa, and the situation in war-torn Afghanistan is still shaky at best. I hope the administration will use the flexibility it has to ensure food aid is not cut.

American farmers are the most productive in the world, and our compassion is second to none. We need to strengthen that bond between our generosity and abundance and the outstretched arms and empty stomachs of the world's hungry people.

This bill is a step in that direction. We have a long journey still ahead to end hunger in our world. Mr. Speaker, I support this rule and the bill.

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

□ 1015

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GREEN).

Mr. GREEN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time. With respect to this bill before us today, there is no doubt that the bill is imperfect. One could argue it spends too much. One could argue it should probably do more to reform some of our USDA programs. But let me say this: In the area of dairy, this is a historic win for dairy farmers all across America.

In my home area in Wisconsin, we are losing some 3 to 4 dairy farms each and every day. There are 3 reasons why this bill will help. Number 1, it creates a new countercyclical program for dairy; a program I hope never goes into effect. We all hope dairy prices remain strong. But in the event the dairy economy crashes, as it did a few years ago, this will give them a safety net. This is money they can take to the bank.

Number 2, this program is national, not regional. For years our policies

have pit farmer against farmer, States against State, region against region. And we will still do that in the area of milk marketing orders, but with respect to the new countercyclical program, we break away from that. This is a historic step towards a new national policy.

And number 3, this program pays out without regard to end use of milk. Even though the trigger price for this countercyclical program is pegged to Class I, the payouts will go to all classes of milk whether it remains fluid or whether it goes into manufactured milk products.

There is more work to be done on the dairy front, to be sure, but this is a great step forwards. I congratulate the chairman of the Committee on Agriculture, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST); the chairman of the Subcommittee on Livestock and Horticulture, the gentleman from California (Mr. POMBO); and the ranking member, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM), and all the conferees. I urge my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on the rule and ''yes'' on the bill.

This is a big win for the dairy farmers in Wisconsin.

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

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN).

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, for the last 68 days, I have joined my House colleagues, 11 of them, to work on resolving differences in a farm bill between a bill we passed last summer and a bill passed a few months ago by the United States Senate.

During those 68 days, I have come to greatly admire and respect the leadership in our Committee on Agriculture, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST), our chairman, and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM), our ranking member. But why have we made this effort? Why does it matter? I think the answer is because we care about the future of our farmers and our ranchers, and we care about the future of the communities in which they live.

There is absolutely no doubt but that the times in agriculture country are tough. They are not getting better, they are getting worse. The profit margins are squeezed.

Last month, I conducted 66 town hall meetings from A to Z, Almena to Zurich. Record low prices for weather conditions paint a terribly bleak picture for our farm families. This week's headlines in the Kansas press: ''High Input Costs, Lower Livestock Income Cut Kansas Farm Income 28.6 Percent''; ''Bankers Indicate That Farm-Related Businesses Continue To Struggle''; and ''Falling Prices Mean Big Losses for Cattle Feeders.''

The average farm income for a Kansas farmer totaled less than $28,000 per farm. Total farm expenses increased 7 percent. The average debt for a farmer increased 34 percent. Farmers used to spend $81 for every dollar's worth of product they sold. Today it is $87. Cattle prices are down, meaning that our producers have lost $120 on every animal they sell. For a 10,000-head feed yard in Ashland, Kansas, that feeder has just lost $1.2 million.

These are the stories I have heard over the last month in 66 locations across my district. It is time for us to step forward.

I have a farm bill, a sale bill, that a constituent sent me, indicating that her neighbor was selling out the farm because they could not make it. And the note was, I have a young man who wants to take over my farm.

This is why we need a farm bill, so that that next generation has the opportunity to be farmers, to feed the world. It is about maintaining the safest and most abundant supply and having our consumers receive the safest food supply at the grocery store. It is about preserving our environment for future generations, conserving our natural resources, protecting our water quality and air. It is about helping rural communities sustain their economies. It is about ensuring adequate nutrition for all Americans, especially our children. But for Kansas it is about avoiding the headlines that say, ''On the Auction Block: Farmers Getting Out, Putting Items, Land Up For Sell During Tough Economic Times.''

This bill is valuable to the Kansas economy and it is valuable in our efforts to keep farmers on the land, to keep shoppers on our main streets, and to keep children in our schools. If we do not act now, next year will be too late for many family farms.

The wheat crop is in the ground. In just over a month we will begin harvest in my State, and planning is under way for our other crops. Farmers need details of a farm bill sooner, not later, and I urge my colleagues to support this farm bill and to vote for the conference report.

Mr. Speaker, I submit for the RECORD the Kansas press article I referred to earlier:

[From the Garden City Telegram, Apr. 11, 2002]

ON THE AUCTION BLOCK

GETTING OUT: FARMERS PUTTING ITEMS, LAND UP FOR SELL DURING TOUGH ECONOMIC TIMES

(By Kathy Hanks)

Gary Brooks is sifting through a collection of nuts, bolts and used tractor parts deciding what to sell Saturday at his farm auction.

Brooks and his wife, Carla, have farmed in the Healy area for 37 years. And though he describes the upcoming sale as ''bittersweet,'' the Brookes are ready to get out of farming and make a life change.

''We can see the handwriting on the wall. We've been pretty small farmers, and we just can't get enough for what we raise,'' Brooks said. ''My machinery is older, and it takes about two years of crops to fix something that breaks.''

The couple has made some major decisions in the past months.

''If your mind is made up, then it's a positive thing. If someone else is telling you that you have to get out, then that's sad,'' Brooks said.

They had a land auction earlier this year; selling about three-and-a-half quarters of ground. After Saturday's sale, the couple plans to move to Hays, where they will be close to children and grandchildren.

''I don't know what kind of job I'll get, but I sure don't want to work on commission; I've been doing that for years,'' he said. ''I want a job with a regular paycheck. I have a degree in botany, but I don't know what kind of work I can find with that.''

Brooks, however, said he is not too concerned.

''This is our decision. We'll walk away with a little money. And I'll be grinning all the way,'' he said.

Every weekend in April, Russell Berning, owner of Berning Auction, Marilenthal, has a farm auction scheduled somewhere in western Kansas.

''I wouldn't call these forced sales. I'd call them encouraged sales. The owners can see there's no future, and they want to get out while they still have something left,'' Berning said.

He has been in the auction business since the late 1980s, beginning just as the bad economic times and forced sales were ending.

Though farm sales are on the increase, he said what he is observing today is nothing compared to the 1980s, when many farm families were forced out of operation.

''At least for now, the mood is more of relief to be getting out of farming,'' Berning said.

There are no ''Penney Auctions'' taking place where the neighbors come and buy your land and machinery for pennies, then return it to you.

Instead, your neighbor is more likely to buy your ground.

''In western Kansas, we are seeing dry land sell for upwards of $725 per acre. People are buying the land. There are some guys still willing to take a chance with low interest rates,'' Berning said. ''And there is the old money farmers who have been on the land for generations. That's where most of the sales are coming from.''

Berning described the typical farmer selling his land as in his 50s and wanting to do something different with his life.

''I know some guys who are going into the insurance business, working as federal crop adjusters. That's a job where they still will be able to use their knowledge and still be involved with the farming aspect,'' he said. ''I see them selling their land and looking forward to doing something different.''

According to Berning, several of his recent sales have been in the Healy area of Lane County.

''They have had some dryer years in the past then some areas around them. It has just hit them earlier. If we don't get any more moisture, and prices don't change, we're going to see more of this. I think we're just on the verge right now,'' Berning said.

Along with land, he is selling a lot of farm equipment.

''A lot of what I'm selling is good, modern equipment in good shape, that is bringing in good money,'' Berning said. ''The older, smaller equipment has taken a significant drop in price.''

At Scott Auction, Garden City, Kent Scott was observing a similar situation with farm auctions.

''I'm not seeing an increase in forced sales. Instead, I see farmers trying to get rid of things on their depreciation schedule that they have quit using on the farm,'' Scott said. ''They may be cutting back their operation because of economics. Prices are not good. So, some are selling out now when they still have their equity.''

Berning agrees with that scenario.

''I have seen farmers selling their farm equipment and then just look for other work. They want to sell their land while they still

have some money left to start a new life.'' Berning said. ''Things aren't bad right now. It could get worse. And they do appear that they will get worse before they get better.''

In the southwest corner of the state, Jim Carrithers, owner of Carrithers Auction of Johnson City, said he is not seeing a noticeable change in farm sales.

''I can't seen any increase in farm sales with farmers going out of business,'' said Carrithers, who conducts auctions in southwest Kansas, eastern Colorado and the Oklahoma panhandle. ''We have always had farmers who made the decision to get out. They can see they aren't getting anywhere and would prefer to work for a company with insurance benefits.

''I am seeing just an average year, no different than what I've observed in the past 30 years of being in the business. Farmers just need some rain and a better farm program.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. CLAYTON), who has been a great representative. We are going to miss her, and she is a great fighter for this issue.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time, and this Congress is going to miss the gentleman from Ohio as well, but he is going to serve in another great capacity.

I wanted to say that after almost 2 years, the House and the Senate have finally come together on a farm bill, and the rule that we will vote on is a rule that is appropriate and I will vote for the rule.

Is this farm bill a perfect farm bill? Absolutely not. Is it a farm bill that will help many farmers? It indeed will. Are there areas I wish it had gone further? There are. Are there areas where I think it went too far? Yes. As in all legislation, there are winners and losers in this. But all in all, this farm bill speaks to providing a safety net that is critical.

I want to spend just a moment saying it does do things that we would be very, very proud of. It provides $6.4 billion over the next 10 years for nutrition. In addition to that, it provides $100 million for global food services that will provide education and food to a lot of children, making a difference in their lives, not only to girls, but families.

When girls learn, their families learn. It has been demonstrated that when young girls have an education, not only is that education good for themselves but it is good for the families. So when we indeed provide food for young children to learn, we are enabling their families to be more productive and healthy.

I would be remiss not to make mention that this global food program has been kind of the brainchild of the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL), the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. EMERSON), and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN). They have labored tirelessly. It is called formally the Dole and McGovern bill. Both of them wanted this bill.

This is an opportunity for us to share our bounty, to make a difference in the lives of those we help through our foreign affairs. This goes a long way to say who we are as human beings; that our American farmers wish to share their bounty with the people of the rest of the world.

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DAN MILLER).

Mr. DAN MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this agriculture welfare bill we will be voting on later this morning.

In 1996, this Congress passed 2 historic pieces of legislation; one was Welfare Reform and one was the Freedom to Farm. The idea was to get people less dependent on government, to get people more opportunity and more freedom. The Welfare Reform bill has been a success. We have reduced the welfare rolls by 50 percent, but, more importantly, we have given people the freedom and opportunity for their American dream, to not have to rely on a check from the Federal Government. And that was the concept with Freedom to Farm, but it did not work out quite right. We are just pouring money into the program every year classified as emergency spending, and now this year we are going to make it all entitlement spending and make more people dependent on the Federal Government.

This bill, sadly, goes in the wrong direction, in that it costs more for the American taxpayer, it costs the American consumer more, and it is this same reliance on Federal Government handouts that is so unfortunate. Most of the money goes just to a handful of crops; wheat, rice, corn, cotton, and soybeans. But it goes into a lot of other areas, and that is how it gets its widespread support on the floor of the House. We got rid of wool, mohair, and honey subsidies in 1996, but they are back. So now the taxpayers are going to subsidize wool, mohair, and honey.

We have added some things, like small chickpeas, dry peas, and lentils. I do not know why the Federal Government has to be in this business. The peanut program, and I like peanuts, but it is going to be, I think, like a $4 billion cost to the American taxpayers. This whole bill, they say, is only 77-some billion. But that is on top of the $100 billion entitlement right there now. So it will cost $170 billion. And if we really look at the true cost of this and base it on how poorly they estimated the cost in the 1996 bill, we are probably talking about a $340 billion cost.

A $340 billion bill, and we are trying to find more money for the Pell grants, the war on terrorism, homeland security, cancer research and biomedical research. We have a lot of needs for money, but we will spend $340 billion on this.

Now, what this bill does is it encourages overproduction. Take the sugar program. We produce too much sugar because we have a program that encourages too much. Last year, the Federal Government bought $430 million worth of sugar and we are storing it. We are storing it. And what we will do with this bill is encourage more production so we can store more sugar. And this is true with wheat, and corn, and cotton, and rice. All we are going to do is just produce more and more and store more and more, and the whole thing, in my opinion, will implode.

This hurts the small farmer. Eighty-eight percent of the money goes to the top 20 percent of the farmers. Bottom 80 percent, the smaller farmers, only get 12 percent of the money. So I encourage my colleagues to oppose this.

For liberals, it is good to oppose this because it costs the consumer more. It costs the consumer more. It is estimated at $2,500 more per consumer. And the environmental organizations are all opposing this because it does not do enough for the environment.

For my conservatives, it should be a no-brainer. This just expands the role of Federal Government and makes people more dependent on the Federal Government.

And for everyone else, this is just bad economic policy. Because what we really should believe in this country is to give people more opportunity and freedom, rather than coming to Washington to beg for a check and creating yet another new entitlement program.

I think this has gone in the wrong direction, it is unfortunate, and I hope we can defeat the bill today.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE).

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

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time, and I rise today to urge my colleagues to support the conference report and support the rule for the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act crafted by the chairman and ranking member and those on the committee who did, I think, an excellent job in balancing the needs for agriculture.

The previous failure of the Freedom to Farm bill failed to live up to its promise of an adequate safety net for American farmers and, consequently, year after year Congress was asked to step in and provide billions of dollars. While this bill is not perfect, it goes a long way in meeting the needs. I will not go into the details, others will talk about that as we go on, but I am pleased this conference report does many of these things.

While there is much to like in this report, North Carolina growers can be especially pleased that it reaches out and does many of the things they need. However, we have to understand that compromise is the cornerstone of successful legislation, and no bill is perfect by everyone's standards.

Mr. Speaker, before I yield the floor, I would like to engage the chairman of

the Subcommittee on Specialty Crops and Foreign Agriculture Programs, the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. EVERETT), in a colloquy.

Traveling through North Carolina, the number 1 topic of discussion in tobacco communities is the growing support for reform in the current Federal tobacco quota system. Tobacco farmers want to eliminate quotas so they can grow their crops without paying rent to quota holders, thereby cutting the costs and making their product more competitive in the world market. Quota holders are willing to support such reform provided they are adequately and fairly compensated for the quotas they now own.

Several different approaches for revamping the program have been introduced, one by the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCINTYRE), the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), and the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. HILL). There is another plan being drafted by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODE), the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. BOUCHER), and many others will have one in. All have strengths and weaknesses.

□ 1030

Now that the work of the Committee on Agriculture on the farm bill is completed, can we expect the committee to turn its attention to the crop left behind, the tobacco program?

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

Mr. ETHERIDGE. I yield to the gentleman from Alabama.

Mr. EVERETT. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE) is a strong and tireless advocate for the tobacco growers of his State, and I understand his interest in the future of the tobacco program.

The reform of the tobacco program is something that deserves and requires a great deal of thought and debate. I look forward to holding hearings in my subcommittee on this topic. I know several members are interested in this issue, and I can assure the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE) that the committee will take a hard and serious look at the Federal tobacco program later this year.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KENNEDY).

Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of H.R. 2646, the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2001, and I commend the chairman, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST) and the ranking member, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM).

This bill does help us increase clean energy. The bill is great for Minnesota agriculture and our many renewable energy sources. With six ethanol plants in my district, I am very familiar with ethanol. Ethanol is not only a domestic and renewable source of energy, it is oxygen rich and, therefore, helps gas burn more completely, resulting in cleaner air for us to breathe.

Another source of renewable and domestic, home-grown energy is biodiesel, which can be derived from soybean oil which helps diesel oil burn cleaner. Both ethanol and biodiesel help generate jobs in rural communities, and expand demand for our farmers' products; and I am proud Minnesota has played a leadership role in both of these. I am a strong supporter of expanding both the use of ethanol and biodiesel.

Wind energy is also an important energy source in my district. The Buffalo Ridge in southwest Minnesota is one of the most ideal locations in the country for generating wind energy. Many windmills have already been constructed bringing both clean energy and alternative sources of revenue for area farmers. When it comes to alternative energy, these are exciting times in southwest Minnesota.

This farm bill includes many provisions that reward farmers and others for using renewable energy sources. Two provisions in the energy title award loans and loan guarantees to individuals and businesses that use renewable energy sources or make efficiency improvements.

One of the strongest provisions is the ''Value-Added Agricultural Market Development Grants.'' These grants have been expanded to include wind power.

Mr. Speaker, although this bill is not perfect, it is a very good bill for clean energy and a great bill for Minnesota agriculture. I strongly support passage, and urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), who has been a tremendous leader in a lot of these programs, especially in the school lunch program that the gentleman has pushed so successfully, along with the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. EMERSON).

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the rule. I especially want to express my support for section 3107 of the conference report, the George McGovern-Robert Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program, which is included under title III of this bill.

The conference report establishes this global school feeding initiative as a permanent program and provides $100 million for fiscal year 2003 to act as bridge money to sustain the current pilot program projects currently operating in 38 countries, currently feeding 9 million children, until continuing appropriations are made by Congress.

I want to thank the conferees who worked so hard to include this provision in the final conference report. I especially thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) for his work on this. I also thank the majority leader and the chairman of the Committee on Agriculture and the ranking member from the other body for all their help, and I thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL) for his hard work to make this provision a reality.

Mr. Speaker, the International Food for Education Program named after the two visionary Senators who developed this proposal, George McGovern and Robert Dole, aims to provide at least one nutritious meal each day in a school setting to more than 300 million children who go to bed at night hungry. Some 130 million of these children will not go to school this week because their parents need them to stay home or go to menial jobs, or because they are orphaned by war, natural disaster, or diseases like AIDS, or because they are girls.

School feeding programs are a proven method of reducing the incidence of hunger among children, attracting them to school, especially girls, and keeping them in school. When part of an integrated education strategy, they further contribute to improving academic performance.

In these perilous times, I firmly believe that the dollars we spend today on feeding and educating the neediest children around the world promote our national security, combat terrorism, and ultimately result in economic growth in new markets at home. Nine of today's top 10 importers of U.S. agricultural projects are former recipients of food aid. Today's hungry children, who get the chance to go to school and get a nutritious meal, will become tomorrow's teachers, doctors, computer programmers and entrepreneurs, the leaders of their nations.

I know that our farmers and our private voluntary and development organizations are proud to contribute to ending hunger, poverty and desperation through this type of program. I look forward to working with my colleagues and administration officials to make sure this program has adequate funding in the future. Again, I thank the conferees for their assistance with this.

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHERWOOD).

Mr. SHERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, this farm bill is the product of months of hard work by the Committee on Agriculture colleagues, and it deserves our support, and I rise in strong support of the rule. I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST) and the committee for coming to us with a bill that will help keep our family farmers operating across the country and will keep our supermarkets filled with fresh products at the best price.

In northeastern and central Pennsylvania, I have seen dairy farms disappear all my life. Farmers have had difficulty surviving the price fluctuations that can cripple their family income. I have made a priority to do something to help the small dairy farms in my region. The farms support not only the farmers that live on them, but they support the communities and the schools and the churches and the very rural infrastructure that has made our country great.

This bill, for the first time, gives us a counter-cyclical dairy payment which will be good for all producers. It is a national program which will provide a much-needed safety net for our farmers across America by providing direct payments in times of low prices. It is not a regional program. It is nationwide, and it will help all farmers. It will be immensely important to Pennsylvania's 10,000 dairy farmers.

This bill is good for consumers. It is good for producers. It is good for the rural areas of our country, and it is good for the environment. It keeps people on the land. It keeps the dairy farms spread out across the country, which is a great thing to have in times when we worry about bioterrorism and the things that have happened since September 11. This bill is good for America. I thank the conferees for coming back to us with much-needed help for the families and communities whose livelihoods depend upon dairy farming. I urge my colleagues to support this conference report.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PETERSON).

Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this rule on the conference report. Overall this report represents a balanced bill that provides a good combination of safety net and flexibility. In so many ways, the Farm Security Act of 2002 is a renewed commitment to rural America at a time when it is needed.

As a member of the conference committee, I would like to offer my thanks to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM). I believe they provided the strongest leadership possible, and they negotiated a good bill for everyone. They were driven and tough, but yet they were understanding. Both of the gentlemen from Texas represented not only the interests of the House, but they also represented the best interests of American agriculture.

This bill is not perfect, and one of my disappointments is that we were not able to get a disaster provision in this bill. Members said there would be a point of order raised against it, so it was not possible; but we are going to continue to work to see if we can include it in the supplemental.

I am pleased with the dairy program where we have, for the first time, gotten everybody together. We have a national program that treats everybody the same that is going to be a big help when prices are low; and yet it is going to be the least disruptive to the marketplace. And, lastly, it is going to be focused on the smaller family farmers which are the ones that we are having a hard time keeping in business in this country.

We have provided some predictability with the commodity section, so with this 6-year bill, farmers are going to be able to update their bases and yields, have a target price, and have some kind of understanding what kind of help is going to be available from the government during these times of low prices that are being caused by these trade agreements and the high value of the dollar.

On conservation, the Sportsman's Caucus and the others that I have worked with are very pleased with the conservation program where we are putting money into proven programs like CRP, WRP, WHIP, and other programs that have served us so well and have a backlog, and this is going to be very positive.

In the sugar area, I come from an area that is big in sugar production, and we are glad to have the predictability, and being able to get rid of the marketing assessment and putting in market allocations so we can manage this industry on a level playing field with the market.

Lastly, in the energy area, I represent an area that has a lot of ethanol, and we are now moving into biodiesel. This bill will give us some strong emphasis on resources, and resources to be place on renewable energy. In the area of wind turbines and biomass, we are given greater latitude in conservation programs. And there is going to be a commitment to biodiesel, which is one of the exciting things we are going to be working. In Minnesota, the legislature just made a big commitment to biodiesel, and we are excited about getting this industry established.

This is a good bill for the country. It is a good bill for American agriculture. Again, I commend all of the members of the conference and the staff that worked so hard to put this together, and I encourage my colleagues to support the rule and the bill.

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, we have a House rule that says we cannot debate the motion to recommit. There is going to be a motion to recommit this afternoon, so allow me to explain that motion to recommit now since we are not going to have a chance to talk about it when the motion is made by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND).

There are a lot of things good about this bill. Farmers need some help; but there are some bad things about this bill. One is the fact that there is a loophole where farmers, where the huge farmers, the megafarms, can receive millions of dollars in price support payments every year. The Senate put in the provision to include generic certificates as part of the total price support limit that any farmer can have.

We have a couple of States where many farmers exceed the limit and the lobbying has been tremendous. I have been receiving hundreds of calls saying we understand you are killing the farm bill, and then I explain to them what the motion to recommit does, and then they say, is that all it does.

The only way this is going to kill the farm bill is if the chairman and the ranking member decide to take this back to committee and kill it themselves. Here is what the motion to recommit does: It is what we suggested in the motion to instruct on April 18 by a two-thirds vote when we instructed the conferees to include the provisions in the Senate bill that put an absolute payment limit on how much any farmer could get from price supports. The so-called loophole of generic certificates was included in the limit.

I think in the long run, it is going to hurt our farmers and our chances to have legitimate Federal farm policy that helps the average farmer. The loophole helps a couple of States, Texas, California, Arkansas and Mississippi, gain more from the generic certificates than almost all of the rest of the States put together.

□ 1045

There is a tremendous lobbying effort. Let us look at what is good policy, look at what is going to eventually help mainstream family farms in the United States. That is my request to this body. Vote for the motion to recommit.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I do identify with the comments of my colleague from Michigan, a family farmer who is focusing on the priority needs of agriculture in this country.

I look at this bill before us, and I argue against the bill; I argue against the rule. It is a lost opportunity for farmers, for people in my State, in Oregon, for conservation and water quality, and, most definitely, a lost opportunity for American taxpayers and consumers.

We are going to hear a lot of talk about conservation, and clearly conservation is a critical need for American agriculture. The rural-urban interface to protect farmland and their suburban neighbors is absolutely critical. Yet this bill struck important Senate provisions for conservation; and even though there is a huge increase in the dollar amount for agriculture, so large we do not know how much is going to be spent under this bill, at the end of the day, it devotes a smaller percentage for conservation than the 1996 bill.

It stripped out or watered down animal welfare provisions. This House approved provisions dealing with animal fighting, cockfighting. It reduced those penalties and delayed its implementation for a year.

Also dealing with downed animals. It is not a good bill in terms of animal welfare.

There are those, sadly, who think the only way you are going to help agriculture is to be able to pile more benefits on the very largest producers. They

ignore the fact that already there are almost 200,000 unmet applications for water conservation funding. These average only $9,000 per payment. What they have done is to expand these programs to the very largest producers, further subsidize these large feedlot operations, increase the benefits to $450,000 for years to come, and ignore being able to put more money to those who need it most.

It does little or nothing to deal with the needs of 80 percent of agriculture in my State and around the country, and it focuses on the largest elements.

Sadly, Mr. Speaker, we are presented with the next 10 years of agricultural policy that comes down to this: huge increases in dollars, no one knows how much, and a lost opportunity to forge a program for the needs of agriculture for the next century.

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. EMERSON).

Mrs. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the gentleman from Texas (Chairman COMBEST) and the ranking member, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM), for the excellent and diligent work they did on a most challenging bill.

I would like to just remind my colleagues to harken back to the 1996 Freedom to Farm bill and the fact that it was going to decrease subsidies, so to speak. But it was also based on three major components: number one, we would have lower taxes; number two, we would have fewer regulations; and, number three, we would have more markets in which to sell our commodities.

We all know Freedom to Farm did not work. We do not have fewer regulations; we have more. We do not have more markets; we have the same or fewer. And while no farmer wants to depend on the government for anything, it is critical that we provide a safety net to our producers.

I only wish that our colleagues who oppose this bill because of subsidies, and most of those folks I do want to say represent suburban districts, I wish that they would understand that in the United States we have a very cheap food policy. We spend 11 cents of every dollar on food, while in Europe they spend about 22 cents. In Russia they spend about 50 cents. We are very, very fortunate.

We have the safest, most abundant food supply anywhere in the world. I think that the conferees have done a remarkable job on this bill, given all of the challenges posed to them.

I do want to say one thing to our colleague from Oregon who said that we decrease funds for conservation. In fact, we increase funds by 80 percent. So that is incorrect.

Let me also take one moment to commend the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) for the steadfast commitment he has had and the work he has done on the Global Food for Education initiative. I greatly appreciate that work he has done, as well as our conferees, in funding this very, very important initiative that will help poor children in countries go to school and also get the nourishment they need.

Mr. Speaker, this is a good bill. It is important that we support it and certainly vote down any motion to recommit.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND).

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

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Ohio for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, as a Member of the Committee on Agriculture, I know and truly appreciate how hard it is to form a consensus farm policy with so many different competing regions, experiences, different interests and ideas, in what should constitute the farm bill. You throw in an important election season, and it makes it very, very difficult. And I appreciate the work that has gone in from the leadership on the committee and the staff in particular. But this has not been about personalities, it has been about process and the policy; and unfortunately, it has been a bad process, and it has resulted in bad policy.

That is why later today at the end of general debate, I am going to be offering a motion to recommit with instructions based on a motion to instruct conferees that passed the House by 265 votes a little over 2 weeks ago. It would establish a meaningful payment limitation cap, consistent with the Senate language, of $275,000, without exceptions, without loopholes.

Now, if you believe it is good farm policy for the next 10 years to continue to heap more and more taxpayer subsidies on a few but very large commodity producers in this country, then you probably should vote against my motion to recommit.

But if you believe, as I do, that we can do better, that we can produce a more fair and balanced farm bill that helps all our family farmers in all regions of the country, maintain fiscal discipline, and also maintain the opportunity for trade opportunities for our farmers, then I would encourage my colleagues to support the motion to recommit.

It is drafted clearly, very simply. The committee can adopt the language and report right back with the farm bill. This does not have to be a deal-killer; this does not have to ruin the ability to be able to provide a meaningful and balanced farm bill for all of our family farmers and to give them certainty in the upcoming planting season.

That is really what is at stake, in what direction we are going to go; whether we can have the courage to be consistent, where a majority of the Members of the House, a majority of the Senate are already on record of supporting a meaningful payment cap of $275,000; or if we are going to revert back to the old style farm policy. I encourage my colleagues to support the motion to recommit with instructions.

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE).

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

Mr. Speaker, I stand in support of the rule, but in opposition to the overall bill. I think we as Republicans in particular ought to worry about what we are doing here. In 1964 in a speech for Barry Goldwater, Ronald Reagan reminded us, he said: ''There is no such thing as a left or a right, only an up or a down; up to the maximum of individual freedom consistent with order, or down to the ash heap of totalitarianism.'' He said: ''Those who would trade freedom for security have already embarked on that downward course.''

Now, what we did last week in the conference is we traded the Freedom to Farm Act for the Farm Security Act. I think we as Republicans ought to think twice about what we are doing here.

We hear a lot about the cheap food that we have in the U.S. Well, if you wonder why our food is so cheap, you have to realize part of the reason is because we are subsidizing it. It will cost the average American family over the next 10 years over $1,800 in direct taxes simply because of subsidies to farm products. Do you want to know why products are cheap? It is because we are paying for it in other ways.

You have to also realize they should be cheaper. The average American family will pay $2,500 in addition to the $1,800 for a total of more than $4,000 over the next 10 years, simply because of inflated food prices because of the price supports inherent in this bill.

We ought to wonder what we are doing. There is no such thing as a free lunch, and Americans across the country are being stuck with the bill.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. POMEROY).

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time and rise in strong support of the rule and the underlying bill.

In reference to the remarks of the preceding speaker, let me just tell you that our Nation's farmers deserve more, much more, than to be pawns in some kind of ideological or partisan clash. That is why I so commend the leadership of the chairman and the ranking member of the Committee on Agriculture in bringing the bill before us today and the strong work they have done to craft a bill, get it passed and get it through the conference committee.

The bill restores a safety net for our Nation's farmers and sends a signal to them as they head into the fields this spring that we stand committed to family farmers as the primary element of the production of our Nation's food supply.

The bill restores a safety net for our Nation's farmers when prices collapse. No critical aspect of Freedom to Farm so failed our farmers as the failure to have a safety net price response. The bill makes that right.

The bill also increases conservation funding significantly, adds funding behind Market Value Development grants, and funds a Rural Strategic Investment program to help the financial health of our struggling rural communities, all of these very positive additions over present farm law.

It is a good bill, but it is not a perfect bill. I have to note some disappointments. The disaster assistance so badly needed by the farmers in my State, losses that were not compensated through the crop insurance program, were deleted from the bill. We have to make another run at finding another source to get that disaster funding put in place. Payment limitations should have been made more strict; they were not made more strict.

But I would respond to my colleagues that want to derail this bill today with their motion to recommit by saying at this point, I have got to part company with you. I support payment limits, but today is not the day to vote on that. We voted on it several times. Today is the day we put a farm program in place for our family farmers.

I believe if the program is derailed today, sent back to conference committee yet again, we will never get this in place for the upcoming crop year; and at this late point in time, that is the overarching priority, and that is why we ought to pass this legislation.

The bill is not the medicine that cures all that ails our farmers, but it is a good step forward; and I urge its passage.

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE).

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the rule and the underlying bill. I represent a rural area. We lost 1,000 farmers last year, lost 5,000 over the last 6 years, and have the three poorest counties per capita in the United States. I have not seen Scottie Pippen out there, and some of those who have received $200,000 payments broke even or lost money.

We are currently in the worst year of 5 years of record low prices. The European Union supports their farmers $350 per acre, Japan well over $1,000 per acre. We provide $43 per acre, and we say that is too much. I do not understand that.

I would have liked to have maybe seen some tighter payment limits, maybe more restrictive rules on packer ownership. It is easy to throw rocks and cast stones and say I do not like this or like that, but I do not think most people realize how difficult it is to coordinate all of the different agricultural regions in the country and to write a comprehensive bill.

Somebody earlier complained about the process. This thing went on over 2 years, 47 hearings. It was done in the full committee. The ranking member and the chairman could not have been more fair. Everybody had their shot. There was nothing done behind closed doors. It could not have been a better process.

So what the bill does is this: it eliminates emergency payments. The last 4 years we have spent $24 billion a year on agriculture with emergency payments. This bill should average $17 billion a year. That is not throwing money away, as far as I am concerned; that is fiscally responsible.

The 80 percent increase in conservation certainly does not ignore conservation interests. That is a huge increase. We have significant increases for research, 350 percent for agriculture research, and promotion of foreign trade, nutrition, rural economic development, which we badly need, and we also have some renewable fuel economies.

So if this bill is rejected, we will start over in the middle of an election cycle, and we will make the 1,370-page bill that the other body presented us look very small in comparison. I urge support of the rule and passage of the bill.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON).

□ 1100

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of the rule and the farm bill conference report.

Farmers throughout the 23 counties of Missouri's Fourth Congressional District have been facing some of the lowest crop prices in a generation. The 1998 Freedom to Farm Act was adopted when times were pretty good and with the notion of providing more flexibility for our agriculture producers. Unfortunately, it did not provide an adequate safety net and it failed to yield the tools we need to address hard times like the current farm recession. Consequently, since 1998, Congress has approved billions of dollars in ad hoc farm income assistance.

In contrast, this year's farm bill provides a meaningful safety net for America's agriculture producers and gives certainty and support to farmers who might otherwise be forced to leave farming.

The bill is comprehensive. It is a 6-year measure that covers subsidies to producers, conservation, food safety, nutrition and trade. For commodities, it continues the direct payment program in marketing loans, but also adds a countercyclical initiative that would make payments when farm prices are so low. Importantly, the bill also undertakes price supports for dairy farmers and increased funding for apple producers.

The farm bill expands USDA's conservation programs, including helpful funding for the Environmental Quality Initiative Program so that Missouri's farmers can address conservation problems and comply with expensive, but important, environmental regulations. It also extends and improves the food stamp program and other nutrition initiatives while renewing our emphasis on rural development, agriculture research and energy, including language that reauthorizes and funds both biomass and biodiesel initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, the farm bill is long overdue, and I commend the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST) and their counterparts from the other body in working together on behalf of America's farmers.

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT).

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time. I rise in support of the rule and the underlying bill.

Mr. Speaker, I have been listening to this debate and I cannot help but just think about how much we take for granted here in the United States, how spoiled we are. We take our farmers for granted every single day.

We take for granted that we have the cheapest food in the world. When there is any kind of an emergency in the world, who does the world turn to first? The American farmer. In fact, literally, before we had troops on the ground in Afghanistan, we were putting together food supplies to make certain that the folks in Afghanistan did not starve to death. That is true in every hot spot in the world. American farmers are taken for granted.

Mr. Speaker, there is something else we take for granted. Here is a chart. This is how much we pay for food in the United States as a percentage of the per capita income. It is only 10.9 percent here in the United States. We take that for granted every single day that we will have an abundance of cheap food on every supermarket counter all across the country.

For example, in India, it is 51 percent. Even some of our close friends like the United Kingdom, it is 11.2; Sweden, 14.6; in France, it is 14.8. We take that for granted every single day. We take so much for granted.

I hear this debate and people say, oh, my gosh, we are going to spend $73.5 billion over the next 10 years. Well, that is what we agreed to last year. That is what we formally agreed to this year in our budget resolution. It should not come as a surprise. The gentleman from Nebraska recently said we had 47 hearings on this. We went all over the country. We learned a lot about agriculture, whether one is in California or Pennsylvania or down South, in the upper Midwest, and this is a wonderful compromise.

I want to congratulate the ranking member and the chairman. Frankly, I think when this thing is all over we ought to send them to the Middle East to try to bring these people together to

come up with a compromise that people can live with, which is almost impossible.

As I say, there are 2 things that we take for granted in this country every single day. One is cheap food and the other, I think, is even more important, and that is an unlimited supply of young farmers who are willing to go out there and take a chance at it. We take that for granted every day. I think part of the reason we ought to pass this bill today is because we need to send a message to younger farmers that when we do things here at the Federal level that make it difficult for farmers to compete in the world marketplace, we ought to be there to provide a shock absorber, and when we send that message, we are going to have those young farmers out there willing to take a chance at it.

Let me show my colleagues the second chart. Some people say we are spending too much on farmers. Well, even with the passage of this bill, the old number was $49 per acre that we subsidize agriculture, and with the passage of this bill it will go to $54 an acre. Yes, that is a lot of money. But when we compare it to our trading competitors, the European Union is $309 per acre, and in Japan it is over $4,000 an acre.

Now, we are asking our farmers to compete in that world marketplace. What about leveling the playing field?

Finally, some people say we need payment limits, and I am in favor of payment limits. But understand that farming is changing. So when we look at these numbers, they look like big numbers, but if one is a full-time farmer, some people say, well, 80 percent of the benefit will go to 20 percent of the farmers. That is the farmers who produce the food for us and the rest of the world. I think we need to pass this today.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS).

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time, and I rise in support of the rule and in support of the legislation.

As others have indicated, when we put together a bill of such magnitude, of so many commodities, of so many different parts of the country, it is difficult stuff and, at the end of the day, nobody is going to be 100 percent happy, but this is basically a good bill, and I applaud the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST) and I applaud the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) for their efforts.

To my mind, the great crisis facing this country in terms of agriculture is that every single day we are seeing family farmers being forced off the land, people who, in some instances, have been, their families have been on that land generation after generation after generation. This is true in my State of Vermont, it is true in the Midwest, it is true in the South, it is true all over this country.

Some people say, well, what is the big deal? So what. Let the market work. So what if we end up with 3 companies who control the production and distribution of food in America? I say that is not good. I say that will be a disaster for the consumer. Think about what food prices will be when we have a few agribusiness companies controlling what we eat and the prices that we pay. Think about what it means to the environment when family farmers all over this country are forced off the land and shopping malls and parking lots take their place. What does that mean for suburban sprawl?

Think about food security for the United States of America. Every Member of this body is concerned about our dependence on Mideast oil. What will it mean when we are forced to import food to feed our people?

Vermont is a dairy State. We brought forth the North East Dairy Compact which protects New England and I thought and believe today that was good legislation. Other people in this body disagreed with that. What made sense for us was to work with our friends in the Midwest, work with our friends in the South, and say let us develop national dairy policy which protects farmers not only in the Northeast, but in the Mid-Atlantic, in the South, in the Midwest. I am proud that we were able to craft legislation that will give strong protection to dairy farmers, family farmers all over this country.

I want to thank all of the representatives from the Midwest, from the South, for their help in that effort.

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS).

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

Let me start off by thanking the chairman of the committee, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST), and the ranking member, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM). I know a lot of people have started off by saying that today, but I just want to tell my colleagues, having worked very closely with these gentlemen for the last 10 weeks and particularly over the last 2 years, 2½ years, almost, now, to construct this farm bill, these men have done yeoman work for the American farmer and they deserve every bit of the congratulations they are getting today.

Let me tell my colleagues how this farm bill came about. Two years ago the chairman decided that we wanted to approach the new farm bill a little bit different than we had approached any other farm bill. We went all across America. We held 10 hearings around the country. We did not talk to commodity groups and we did not talk to commissioners of agriculture; we talked to farmers. We said what is working with the current farm bill? What do you want to see maintained out of that farm bill? And what do you want to see, what type of different approach do you want to see?

Based on what we heard from farmers, the chairman and the ranking member came back, along with all of us who attended those hearings, and again, those of us who did our own hearings. I did a hearing in my subcommittee on the West Coast and the Midwest rural agriculture area and one on the East Coast, again, talking to farmers. We developed a philosophy that is entirely different from the approach in the current farm bill that we are operating under, but it is an approach that will allow our farmers to get a decent return on the investment they make every year.

Most people in America do not understand that every farmer in America gambles his life savings every single year when he turns the ground and puts seeds in the ground and fertilizer on top of it and hopes that at the end of the day, he is going to be able to get some kind of return on that investment that he has had to make.

This farm bill, irrespective of what crop it is, guarantees that our farmers will have an opportunity to plan right, to use good, sound business decisions to be able to get a decent return on their investment.

There has been a lot said about payment limits up here. Well, I am one of those States that is criticized for the high payment limits that our farmers have. Let me tell my colleagues what that means to my farmers. My farmers would just as soon not get one dime from the Federal Government. They would much rather rely on the market. But the simple fact of the matter is that prices today for commodities that my farmers grow and every farmer across America grows are lower than what they were or equal to what they were almost 50 years ago. But yet the cost of a tractor, the cost of a combine, the cost of a cotton picker, the cost of chemicals, the cost of fertilizer, have skyrocketed.

Our farmers deserve a break. Our farmers deserve to have an investment made in them so that every single individual who goes to the store or goes to the grocery store or the department store to buy food products or shirts or suits or whatever they may be can be assured that they are going to get a quality product at a reasonable price. We have seen the numbers up here about how much money the average individual in America spends on food products compared to what people spend around the world. The reason that is so is because of the investment the government makes under this payment limitation provision.

Let us support this rule, let us support the underlying bill and, most importantly, let us support the American farmer.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. FARR).

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

I represent the most productive agricultural congressional district in the United States, not only in production, but in diversity of crops, and I go home every week and I talk to my farmers and they ask me, when is somebody going to get up and say that these farm bills really do not protect farmers? I have heard a lot of discussion here today.

What this protects is farmers if they grow those crops in your district or in your State, but the majority of people out there who are planting the seeds that the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) talked about do not benefit from that program. They go to market and if the market price is low, they have to eat it. If the crop fails, they have to eat it. They do not get help from the Government. I think that the problem with the farm bill is it states for the next 5 years what our U.S. policy, and U.S. policy about agriculture is that if you are in a special commodity program, the Government is going to help you. If you are outside of it, you just have to take the risk and bear it.

Until we get a farm bill that is fair to everyone and fair to totality, the holistic approach to our community, to land use, to animal husbandry, to humane practices and to making it fair for every farmer in America, we are not going to have a good farm bill. I urge a no vote.

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes 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 am for the rule, but after listening to and learning from many of Iowa's leading farmers, I will vote against this farm bill conference report. It is fair to say that many farmers in Iowa have deep reservations about this bill. This farm bill conference report is not in the Nation's or my State's best long term interest. We need to go back to the drawing board. This bill fails in many ways.

The conference payment limitations provision is a sham. The Grassley proposal would have brought the limit down to $275,000 and have eliminated the 3-entity rule. The conference report favors the large southern producers of cotton and rice and is so full of loopholes that it does not even qualify as a step forward.

For instance, a 25,000-acre cotton farm could receive as much as $8.4 million in total annual payments because of loopholes. In 2000 and 2001, 85 percent of the 2 billion certificates went to farmers in large agribusinesses in just 4 States: Arkansas, Mississippi, Texas and California. Riceland Foods of Arkansas alone collected $221 million, and that continues under this bill.

The Grassley proposal for a ban on the packer ownership of livestock was endorsed by the Iowa Farm Bureau, the Iowa Pork Producers, the Iowa Cattleman's Association, the Iowa Farmers Union and the National Farmers Union. It is not usual for all of these groups to agree on farm policy, but on this they were unanimous, and the conference completely ignored this important issue.

Some aspects of this bill remind me of a return to the failed farm policies of the 1980s and early 1990s. Because it is tilted so heavily to agriculture in the South, it will encourage production in marginal areas with high crop failure rates. This will keep commodity production higher than it would be under free market conditions.

□ 1115

It is in the Nation's interest in terms of conservation to take marginal land out of production. CRP helps, but it will be buried by the push in this bill for higher production for marginal lands, and that will lower prices even further.

Mr. Speaker, we can do better than this conference report, and we should.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ACKERMAN).

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

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I reluctantly rise in opposition. After a decade of work, I had been tremendously pleased to see that my amendment to ban the marketing and movement of downed animals at auctions in stockyards was included and accepted by the House, and I am disappointed today that this commonsense legislation to protect the safety of the food supply and to end the suffering of downed animals was neutered by the conference.

The transport and marketing of these incapacitated, sick, and crippled animals creates a tremendous human health concern, as well as humane concerns. This is only one-tenth of 1 percent of the market, and they are not euthanized only because at that point they could not be used for human consumption.

The downed animal amendment has 165 sponsors, was accepted by both Houses. The House should know that meat from downed animals has an increased risk from bacterial contamination and other diseases, including neurological afflictions such as mad cow disease. The Veterinary Services Department of the USDA itself said that downed animals is the number two risk for mad cow disease.

We have prohibited the use of this product in the school lunch program; McDonald's, Burger King, Wendy's have banned the use of this, California bans the use of this. How on earth do we justify using the meat of these poor downed, crippled, sick animals in our own food supply?

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the Farm Security Act Conference Report. After over a decade of work, I was tremendously pleased to see that my amendment to ban the marketing and movement of "downed animals" at auctions and stockyards and to require that these animals be humanely euthanized was included in both the House and the Senate version of the Farm Security Act.

Today I am disappointed to report that this commonsense legislation to protect the safety our Nation's food supply, and to end the suffering of downed animals was severely neutered during conference committee negotiations.

The transport and marketing of these incapacitated sick or crippled animals creates tremendous human health concerns as well as humane concerns. Downers make up only one-tenth of 1 percent of the market. And not to euthanize them just because then they couldn't be marketed for human consumption, is indeed a sin.

The downed animal amendment cosponsored by 165 members, was accepted by the House and the Senate and offered a solution that would protect both the public health and downed animals.

Meat from downed animals has an increased risk for bacterial contamination and other diseases, including neurological affictions such as mad cow disease. This is not a fringe idea.

Last year, the USDA itself instituted a policy precluding the purchase of beef from downed animals for the national school lunch program because of these safety concerns.

How on God's Earth can they justify marketing this to the rest of the country, when they say it is unsafe to put in our school lunch program?

In addition to this, the fast food chains are doing the appropriate thing. Chains such as McDonald's and Burger King and Wendy's have all banned the use of meat from downed animals in their products. And who else? California, the largest cattle producer in the country, Colorado and Illinois, have already prohibited the entry of downed animals into the food supply. Why just them? All Americans must be protected from this risk.

And yet, and yet, there are some who kowtow to the few irresponsible folks within the industry in order to protect only one-tenth of 1 percent of the market.

Last year a Zogby America Poll of 1,000 people in our country found that four out of every five opposed the use of downed animals for human food.

I want to emphasize that my downed animal amendment passed both bodies; it has 165 cosponsors; and that it gives USDA the authority it needs and does not interfere with the USDA's current disease-testing program.

Mr. LINDER. 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. Speaker, I support the rule and I support the bill. The bill is not a perfect bill, but there is no perfect piece of legislation that I have ever seen pass the Congress or pass the House of Representatives.

But this is an important piece of legislation. It is not only an important piece of legislation for farmers, but for hungry people as well, and also for us as consumers. It affects millions and millions of people, and I think what the gentleman from Texas (Chairman

COMBEST) and the ranking member, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM), have done, and their staffs, everybody who has worked on this, is a tremendous task.

They are to be congratulated for all the different provisions that they put in there: for nutrition, for legal immigrants, for hungry people overseas, the TFAB program. So many programs that are important are incorporated in this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I hope we are able to pass this legislation. I see no reason why we cannot.

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

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, I yield the remainder of my time to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST), the chairman of the Committee.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SWEENEY). The gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST) is recognized for 1½ minutes.

Mr. COMBEST. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me. I simply want to thank the Committee on Rules for their warm acceptance of our testimony yesterday before them, for granting this rule, and for the kind words of support that have been indicated by the members of the Committee and others.

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, 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.

Mr. COMBEST. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 403, I call up the conference report on the bill (H.R. 2646) to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2011.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the conference report is considered as having been read.

(For conference report and statement, see proceedings of the House of May 1, 2002, at page H1795).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) each will control 30 minutes.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, is the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) opposed to the bill?

Mr. STENHOLM. I most certainly am not, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I claim the time in opposition to the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XXII, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST), the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM), and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST).

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

Mr. Speaker, before I get into the discussion of the heart of this bill, I want to take a moment to thank my friend and my colleague, the ranking member on the Committee on Agriculture, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM).

Two-and-a-half years ago, we literally linked arm in arm to try to move down a path of finding an answer to what had been plaguing the agricultural economy in America for a number of years, and we have seen it continue to exist and grow. This was done in a strongly bipartisan manner. We included all of our committee.

We went across this country and had hearings and listened to people tell us what their concerns were. We have heard and we will hear throughout this day opposition by people who, certainly their opposition in their mind is as justified as it is part of our process.

But I would say that looking at this in total and in whole, and looking at this from the standpoint of where we are if this conference report does not pass, I would say that to anyone who has a true care about agriculture and rural development and rural America and nutrition and conservation and research and trade, that there is no other option. It is either basically this or it is nothing.

I want to thank my friend for those long plane rides and those long hearings, for those hours of discussion that we moved through together. Because without that effort and without that opportunity, I do not believe that we would be where we are today. So I thank my friend.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the conference report on the farm bill. This is the end product of over 2 years of very hard work by members of the Committee on Agriculture. After dozens of hearings in Washington and around the country, and hundreds of hours of work, we brought a farm bill to the floor last October that passed this House with 291 votes. We went into a difficult conference over 60 days ago, and after a great deal of effort and compromise, we produced the conference report that Members will have before them today.

Because we could not finish a bill last year, the time needed to put in place a new farm bill for this crop year is almost gone. If the House does not pass this conference report today, there will be no strengthened safety net for farmers this year. Instead, the House will be faced with passing a fifth temporary emergency spending bill for farmers.

Both farmers and taxpayers are shortchanged by slapping Band-Aids on the problem of the farm economy. Farmers are facing the fifth year of record low prices, and the lowest real net cash income since the Great Depression. As a result, Congress has spent nearly $30 billion over the last 4 years in emergency assistance.

While desperately needed, these ad hoc payments always left producers and their lenders in a state of uncertainty. There was no ability to use this money efficiently.

One of the primary reasons for acting quickly on the farm bill was to end dependence on the ad hoc legislation. The conference report we have before us provides better, more flexible help for farmers. While the emergency bill averaged $7 billion per year, this farm bill, according to its scoring, averages less than $5 billion a year in additional spending to help farmers.

Clearly, putting in place an improved farm bill, beginning with this crop year, is better for everyone. But we have reached in the 11th hour. In a matter of days it will be too late to implement an improved program for this year. Congress will then be left with the option of yet another emergency spending and the job of redrafting a farm bill.

I want to emphasize to my colleagues that today's conference report is the best compromise we are likely to see. In addition to desperately needed help for farmers, it contains the largest single increase in conservation funding in history, significant gains for food stamps and nutrition funding, more resources for agricultural research, increased incentives for renewable fuels production, and a strengthened commitment to our rural communities. It is all accomplished within the limits of the budget.

Failure to act decisively today to secure the gains in this conference report would jeopardize the future of our farmers and all of the others who benefit from this work that went into the farm bill. This bill is supported by dozens of farm groups, ranging from the Farm Bureau to the Farmers Union to the Food Research Action Center to Ducks, Unlimited.

Yesterday, the Secretary of Agriculture said she would recommend the President sign the legislation. Today we have a statement from the President commending this legislation. They all know that this conference report benefits everyone.

Mr. Speaker, let us not pass up the opportunity to help American agriculture and rural communities. I would strongly urge my colleagues to support this conference report.

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

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 2 minutes to briefly summarize where we are.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this conference report. I, too, want to begin by congratulating my friend, my neighbor, and the chairman of my committee for his work and action over the last 2½ years. His leadership has been exemplary, and for that, I am very appreciative.

Speaking from the minority side, from the very beginning, the hearings that we held all over the country in which we asked for solutions when bringing the bill to the full floor of the House, after full deliberations in the committee in which every minority interest was heard, as well as every majority interest, and then coming to the floor of the House and having the full discussion under an open rule in which

every Member of this body was permitted to have their say, and now, the last 4 weeks, in a very difficult conference with the other body, Mr. Chairman, the chairman's leadership has brought it to this point. I am proud to have ridden shotgun with the gentleman in this endeavor.

Now we have urgency before us. It is time to report this bill out of the House, out of the Senate, and get it to the President, where he will sign it, as he has said today.

Mr. Speaker, this conference report is well-balanced. It restores the safety net for producers, it boosts spending on farm conservation programs by over 80 percent, it restores food stamps to immigrant children and the disabled, it addresses critical needs in rural development, and it tightens payments limits, and it is fiscally responsible.

We have stayed within the $73.5 billion that the Committee on the Budget gave us. As we have already heard from several speakers, if we really want to be fiscally responsible, we will pass this bill. We will not continue to depend upon emergency ad hoc spending, which has, as we have just heard, has been $30 billion over the last 4 years.

This bill is fiscally responsible. It does most of the things, even though it cannot please all of us. There are still those on the Committee on Agriculture and in this body that do not agree with everything that we have done, but I commend this as a reasonable compromise.

Mr. Speaker, I am in strong support of the conference report and oppose any motion to recommit.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all of my colleagues for the debate we have had. House consideration under an open rule resulted in passage of the bill by a vote of 291 to 120. After the Senate debated the bill for weeks, we had conferees from 10 House committees and the Senate come to agreement on the conference report that is before the House today.

Mr. Speaker, I particularly congratulate the chairman of the Agriculture Committee, my friend and neighbor, LARRY COMBEST. His leadership from the beginning has been outstanding. Under his guidance the Agriculture Committee, the full House, and finally the conference committee developed a refined farm bill that brings together a wide variety of interests.

Mr. Speaker, we need to pass this conference report without delay. It has been several years since we could say that things were going well in American agriculture.

Right now, corn is valued at under $2 per bushel, wheat—about $2.75; soy beans—about $4.60; and cotton is under 35 cents a pound. Our ability to export is hampered by an unfavorable exchange rate. The bottom line: Our producers need this farm bill.

Mr. Speaker, the conference report is a well-balanced package: It restores the safety net for agricultural procedures; it boosts spending on Farm Conservation programs by over 80 percent; it restores food stamps to immigrant children and disabled; it addresses critical needs in rural development; and it tightens payment limits.

Mr. Speaker, I know that many of my colleagues wish there was more in this conference report. So do I. I know there are colleagues who wish that some provisions were not included in this conference report. So do I. But we had to compromise and respect the views of our colleagues from the other body. The bill is not perfect, but it will do a great deal of good for our Nation. Agricultural producers will have greater financial security, hungry people will be fed, and natural resources will be protected and preserved.

Mr. Speaker, all of my colleagues should be clear about this. Regardless of the instructions, a motion to recommit will kill this conference report and everything in it.

I ask my colleagues to vote ''no'' on any motion to recommit and vote yes on the conference report.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the conference report. We have brought to the House a well-balanced bill, and I believe that a strong vote for its adoption will demonstrate the House's agreement. I want to thank my colleagues in the House for their cooperation and assistance in bringing this bill forward. My colleagues on the Agriculture Committee, on both sides of the aisle, deserve a great deal of credit for their willingness to get the farm bill off to a good start last July. Since then, it has sometimes gone slowly but we have persevered and can be gratified with the final result.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank all of my colleagues who served on the conference committee, including those from the nine committees other than the Agriculture Committee. The broad support of the conferees who signed the report is another testament to the balanced and inclusive approach that was taken to develop this important legislation.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I must take a moment to congratulate the Chairman of the Agriculture Committee, my friend and neighbor, LARRY COMBEST. His leadership from the beginning has been outstanding. Under his guidance, the Agriculture Committee, the full House, and finally the conference committee developed a refined farm bill that brings together a wide variety of interests.

Mr. Speaker, on October 5 of last year, after a full debate under an open rule, this House passed the farm bill by a strong bipartisan vote of 291 to 120. On February 13, the Senate passed its version by a vote of 58 to 40, after weeks of floor consideration. Following Senate passage, conferees from the Agriculture Committees—and nine other House committees—have worked daily to develop the compromise that is before the House today. As we usually see with conference reports on important issues, no one involved is completely happy with the final result. It is a truly balanced package, however, and there are many reasons to support swift passage of this conference report.

Mr. Speaker, the conference report before the House has many features. First and foremost, it provides for a strong safety net for our Agricultural producers. The bill retains the flexibility in production and reliability of decoupled assistance that were provided for in the 1996 Farm Act. Above and beyond that, the countercyclical payments it provides to program crop producers will alleviate the need for Congress to provide additional, ad hoc, income support when prices are in decline. Marketing loan tools will continue to be available to program crop producers.

Mr. Speaker, farm program support will be governed by new payment limit provisions. The conference compromise reduces the limit on fixed payments by 20 percent: the limit on countercyclical payments—in comparison to the House bill—are reduced 13 percent, and loan deficiency payments and marketing loan gains are cut in half. The total dollar limitation on program assistance under the conference compromise is reduced by 35 percent in comparison to the House bill. We have maintained the ability of producers to use generic certificates in order to continue to support them in these times of very low prices. New transparency rules regarding payment provisions are being included, allowing us to gather information in order to provide a clearer view of the distribution of program payments.

Mr. Speaker, the conference report extends the dairy price support program through 2007, and restores the program's budgetary baseline. In addition, the conferees propose a modification of the Senate's direct dairy payment program. Under the provision, a countercyclical payment will be made to dairy producers for any month during which the class I price for Boston under Federal milk marketing orders is lower than $16.94. A participating producer would be eligible for payment on all production up to 2.4 million pounds per year. While some Members will oppose any direct payments to dairy farmers, the conference has substantially improved the program in comparison to the Senate's provision. This is a temporary program that will help ease the sting of the loss of the Northeast Dairy Compact—which is not extended by the bill—for dairy farmers in the Northeast. It also provides fair support to producers throughout the Nation when milk prices fall.

Mr. Speaker, the conference substitute follows the House bill by ending the quota program for peanuts. Under this dramatic reform, peanut quota will be retired, and producers will become eligible for the types of marketing loan, countercyclical, and fixed payment benefits that apply to program crops.

The bill extends the sugar program and provides needed support for sheep and goat ranchers, as well as for beekeepers.

Mr. Speaker, the conference compromise also provides for extension of chapter 12—Small Family Farmer Bankruptcy provisions. The chapter will be extended to run until December 31, 2002.

The conference report provides for truly dramatic increases in spending on farm conservation programs. I know that many of my colleagues are hearing from one organization or another that the report falls short in this area. Sometimes those folks attempt to make their case without providing the facts. Here are the facts, based on the actual provisions of the conference report:

$17.1 billion is added to farm conservation programs over 10 years. This bill is an 80 percent increase in farm conservation spending.

Conservation Reserve Program acreage will rise from 36.4 to 39.2 million areas.

The Wetlands Reserve Program acreage cap rises from 975,000 acres to 2.275 million acres.

New Grasslands Reserve Program to protect 2 million acres.

Farmland Protection Program—A 20-fold increase.

Wildlife Habit Incentives Program—A 10-fold increase.

EQIP—Annual spending will rise to $1.3 billion, compared to $200 million under current law.

New Conservation Security Program to provide incentive payments for stewardship on working farms.

Mr. Speaker, the bill also allocates additional resources for nutrition program spending. In solidarity with the Bush administration, we propose to restore food stamp benefits for immigrant children and for disabled immigrants, as well as for immigrants who have been in the country for 5 years. Transitional benefits are provided for households leaving the TANF program, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families. As a result of this legislation, the food stamp quality control system is reformed and procedures are aligned with other welfare programs. The Emergency Food Assistance Program and other feeding programs are extended and expanded under the provisions of the bill. Altogether, nutrition program spending is increased by $6.4 billion above baseline levels.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to the programs I have mentioned, funding is provided to reduce backlogs in the rural water and waste programs, to reaffirm our commitment to helping farmers compete for foreign markets, to boost research on agricultural production, and to continue the Global Food for Education Initiative, GFEI.

The conference report also establishes a requirement that food labels identify the country of origin of meat, fruits and vegetables, fish, and peanuts. The Secretary must provide guidelines for voluntary labeling by September 30, 2002, and the program would become mandatory in 2 years. There are many concerns that have been raised by the affected parties regarding the implementation of country of origin labeling. I want to assure everyone interested in this issue that the committee intends to closely monitor the establishment of this program and to fine tune it as necessary before the final mandatory program becomes effective.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I need to speak to the budget aspect of this legislation. I must admit, it greatly disturbs me to come to this floor and support a conference report with $73.5B in spending, given our current projections on deficit spending. However, when I sit down and try to analyze a better solution, I can find none. When I look at our past actions on disaster and income assistance, I quickly come to the conclusion that the only way we can avoid more costly year-by-year assistance to agriculture is to provide a reliable long term agricultural policy that includes a programmatic response to low prices as well as disasters. I believe that this bill will save money in the long run because it lessens our need to rely on disaster and income assistance.

Mr. Speaker, I know that many of my colleagues wish there was more in this conference report. So do I. I know there are colleagues who wish that some provisions were not included in this conference report. So do I. But we had to compromise and respect the views of our colleagues from the other body. The bill is not perfect, but it will do a great deal of good for our Nation. Agricultural producers will have greater financial security, hungry people will be fed, and natural resources will be protected and preserved.

I strongly urge my colleagues to embrace these objectives and to vote for the adoption of the conference report.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today very, very reluctantly to oppose this bill. I have worked very closely with the chairman, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST) and the ranking member, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) over the course of the last several years trying to craft a sensible farm policy.

I do want to congratulate them for all of their hard work, their tenacity, and their ability to produce a bill in a very difficult political environment.

But maybe it was the political environment itself that causes us to be here. We have a closely divided Congress, we have big elections in November, and as a result, trying to do good sound farm policy in the midst of this frankly is almost impossible.

But they have, in fact, produced a bill that they are very proud of, and I am very proud of them for bringing a bill out.

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But in the end we have to make decisions as Members of Congress about whether it is the right policy. And as I look at the bill that we have before us, I stand to reluctantly oppose it. And I do so for a number of reasons, but at this point I would like to talk about the overall and overriding reason why I am in opposition to the bill.

For 60 years in America we put a hand, a lid, over the abilities of farmers' opportunity to succeed, all in an effort to be helpful to them. We had a system of loan rates and price guarantee, acreage reduction; and we did it from 1935 until 1996. Farmers did not have a chance at succeeding because we always had the lid over the top of the commodity prices, never gave them a chance to succeed. In 1996, we made a break from that policy and we went to Freedom to Farm. It worked well for a couple of years, but then when we had the Southeast Asian problem, prices began to collapse. We had the strength of the dollar that also inhibited our ability to export products around the world.

Then in a closely divided Congress fighting for control in the House and the Senate, got into a bidding war as to who could be the biggest friend of agriculture. And over the last few years we have had generous, very generous, emergency payments. But instead of staying the course and trying to allow farmers the opportunity to get their income from the market where farmers want to get their income, what we are doing is we are going back to what we know did not work for 60 years; and that is because the loan rates in the bill that we have before us and the target prices that we have will in fact drive more production. It will bring more marginal lands into production because of these high loan rates that will further decrease the commodity prices that we have today.

And what happens then? We expose the taxpayer to pick up the difference between those low commodity prices and the loan rates that we are setting. Farmers will have no chance to succeed, no chance of letting the marketplace ever work; and as a result small farmers are going to continue to go by in the way of a dust storm and only the biggest and strongest producers who frankly do not need this help will be getting most of the help.

I do not think that is what we want to do. I just think that American agriculture does in fact want the market to work. Farmers do not want checks from the Federal Government; they want them from the market place. But in my view of the bill we have before us, ask where it will lead us over the next several years. We will in fact see a collapse of commodity prices and as a result the 10 years' number of an additional $73.5 billion will in fact get eaten up in my view rather quickly over the next couple of years. And then we will have a real disaster on our hands. So my opposition to the bill is to say let us fix it now before we get ourselves into a box where we have excess products laying all over the country, very low prices and huge government expenditures.

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

Mr. COMBEST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS), chairman of the Subcommittee on Conservation, Credit, Rural Development and Research of the Committee on Agriculture.

Mr. LUCAS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the farm bill. Today, I believe, is a great day for America's farmers and for rural America. This bill shows the true commitment of Congress to the future of production agriculture. I am proud to have been a part of a process where we actually asked producers what they wanted to see in the next farm bill. Farmers told us they like the flexibility and the fixed payment system of the old farm bill, but there was a key element missing: producers wanted a safety net, and we responded by including a safety net in this bill.

Producers asked us to give them an option of receiving an LDP payment on wheat they grazed out. It was decided that that was the more economical thing to do than harvest it. This bill gives the producers that option and allows them to make decisions that are best for their operation.

Producers told us that the current conservation programs were working. The only problem was there was not enough funding. We responded by increasing the funding for conservation programs by 80 percent and the basic cost-share conservation program by six times. Producers pushed Congress to include a country-of-origin labeling

and their work paid off. When given this option, I believe consumers will pick American produce over our foreign competitors. I strongly support this farm bill. I urge my colleagues to vote for final passage and show their support for America's farmers.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOLDEN), who has been a valued member of the conference that helped us bring us to this point.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the conference, report and I want to congratulate and commend the chairman and the ranking member for their hard work and determination in bringing this regionally balanced piece of legislation to the floor.

I ask all of my colleagues to support this legislation, but I particularly want to urge my Pennsylvania and the Northeastern and Mid-Atlantic State Members to support this conference report. Historically, we have felt left behind when it comes to USDA policy, but this conference report changes that. We have a true safety net for our dairy farmers. Agriculture is still the number one industry in Pennsylvania, and certainly dairy is the most significant form of agriculture in Pennsylvania.

What we have here is a safety net that protects the first 2.4 million pounds of production. That will cover herds of up to 135 cows. That will overwhelmingly cover the majority of milk produced in Pennsylvania. We heard talk of an 80 percent increase in conservation in this conference report. That is so important in Pennsylvania. We have almost a billion dollars in this conference report for farm land conservation. Pennsylvania has already retired 194,000 acres in the Farm Land Protection Program. This will allow us to continue the fight to protect against urban sprawl and to keep our family farmers in business.

Rural development. We have over a billion dollars in rural development investment in this conference report; 360 million of that is directed towards the backlog in water and sewer projects. That is so desperately needed in the Northeastern part of the country, something that has also been very valuable in Pennsylvania as we attempt to clean up our streams and rivers and watersheds.

Again, I want to commend the chairman and the ranking member and all the conferees and everyone who has worked very hard on this legislation. It is balanced, and it is good for American agriculture.

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

Mr. COMBEST. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. EVERETT).

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

Mr. EVERETT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this bill. It is good for the American farmer, and it is good for the American people.

Mr. Speaker, the U.S farm economy continues to experience one of the worst cycles of depressed prices for most of the major commodities, while the costs continue to escalate for major inputs. Our farmers and ranchers have been without a safety net to protect them during periods of low market prices. Fortunately, we are about to change that with this new farm bill. We began this process over two years ago with field hearings around the country to hear from producers about what they wanted to see in a new farm bill. I am happy to say that much of what we heard from producers is represented today in this farm bill, The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002.

I am confident the safety net provided to producers by this bill will insure they remain competitive and viable, even in times of depressed prices. A strong, effective farm policy is essential if our producers are to continue to provide us with the safest, most affordable, and most abundant food and fiber supply in the world. While our producers are some of the most efficient in the world, they have been forced to compete on an unlevel playing field, but I believe this bill will help to level that field.

It has been a long process before arriving at this point, but I believe we have produced a bill that will benefit all farmers, ranchers, and rural communities across America. In addition to the strong safety net this bill provides for producers, it contains conservation programs that represent an eighty percent increase in spending for conservation. There are also improved trade, nutrition, credit, research, and forestry titles and a new energy title focusing on renewable energy and bio-based products. Also, the strong rural development title will help bring new businesses to rural America and strengthen our rural communities.

As farmers are now in the fields planting their crops, I am pleased that they will now be able to focus on producing a crop, knowing we have taken the necessary steps to provide them with an effective safety net. I urge a yes vote on this conference report and no on the motion to recommit, so that this report can be approved quickly by both chambers and the bill signed into law, allowing the implementation process to get underway immediately.

Mr. COMBEST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE).

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

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding me time. I want to thank the chairman and the ranking Democrat, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM), for their great work in doing this and having the opportunity as a member of the House Committee on Agriculture and participating in the hearings around the country that led up to where we are today. We even had one hearing in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and farmers and ranchers in South Dakota made it very clear that they want to see a number of provisions in the new farm bill. The countercyclical target price system that is in the bill will give farmers needed assistance when times are tough.

The conservation provision. The Conservation Reserve Program, the Farmable Wetlands Pilot Program that was extended as part of an amendment that I offered on the House floor when it was debated here. The conservation security program is legislation that I sponsored in the House and that will give farmers incentives to do conservation practices on working lands, provisions like value-added that will enable our producers to reach up the ag marketing chain and become price makers rather than price takers. They are important value-added provisions that I worked hard for to have made a part of this farm bill.

The bio-energy program that encourages the production of bio-fuels such as ethanol and bio-diesel. These are all things that are going to be important to the future of agriculture.

Country-of-origin labeling, something as well that is important not only to the producers of this country but also consumers so they know where their products are coming from.

There are a couple of provisions, Mr. Speaker, that I would have liked to have seen in this bill that would prevent anticompetitive practices: a ban on packer ownership of livestock. I also would like to have seen a disaster declaration for the Black Hills National Forest that would allow us to treat the mountain pine beetle epidemic that we are dealing with there.

But on balance, Mr. Speaker, this is legislation that will move agriculture in a positive direction. I appreciate the chairman's and the ranking member's hard work.

Mr. Speaker, as a Member of the House Agriculture Committee, I had the opportunity of participating in the two years of hearings that led up to this final conference report, even hosting one in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Farmers and ranchers in South Dakota asked me to push four important goals in the farm bill: a countercyclical safety net, a strong conservation title, a commitment to value-added agriculture and creation of more competition in the agricultural marketplace. This bill goes a long way toward meeting these goals.

The commodity title of this bill establishes a new counter-cyclical target price system that will give farmers needed assistance when times are tough. Congress will no longer have to pass emergency legislation that, while much appreciated by farm country, does not provide the security that farmers need.

This farm bill increases our commitment to conservation by 80 percent. It is the ''greenest'' farm bill ever. It enhances current incentive programs, such as the Conservation Reserve Program by extending my Farmable Wetlands Pilot Program. It also creates a new Conservation Security Program that I sponsored in the House. The Conservation Security Program will give farmers incentives to do conservation practices on working lands.

Value-added agriculture has helped farmers in my state reach up the marketing chain to become price makers, rather than price takers. This farm bill includes two programs that are a result of my legislation to assist producers in

creative value-added enterprises. The first is the Value-added Market Development Grants that can be used for technical assistance and feasibility studies. The second is the Bioenergy Program that encourages the production of biofuels, such as ethanol and biodiesel.

This farm bill will enhance producer competition by requiring mandatory country of origin labeling for agricultural competition. In my tenure in Congress, I have always supported legislation for country of origin meat labeling. After offering an amendment during the committee consideration of this bill, I am pleased that it is in the final conference report.

Despite all of the bill's merits, I am disappointed the bill does not include two of my provisions that I fought to have included in the bill. First, there is no ban on packer ownership of livestock or other anti-trust provisions to protect farmers and ranchers from anti-competitive practices. However, I appreciate that the Chairman and Ranking Member have committed to hearings on this issue

There is also another issue that should have been addressed in this bill, which is a disaster declaration for the Black Hills National Forest. Two areas of the Black Hills are at high fire risk because of fuel on the ground and the mountain pine beetle epidemic. This disaster declaration would have allowed the Forest Service to manage these areas for fire prevention. I want to thank Chairman COMBEST and Subcommittee Chairman GOODLATTE for giving their best effort to include this provision in the bill, but I am disappointed that it was not included in the final conference report.

Mr. Speaker, we need to complete this bill today. This legislation provides the certainty that producers need. Vote ''yes'' on the farm bill conference report.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. PHELPS).

Mr. PHELPS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2646, The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act, and I want to thank the chairman and ranking member and conferees for their hard work on this balanced farm bill. I think this is the product of 2 years of bipartisan work that included extensive input from a wide spectrum of agriculture and conservation groups.

This farm bill will benefit farmers in my congressional district of central and southern Illinois, as well as across the country, for it provides a needed $73.5 billion in initial funding for agriculture which has been facing historic low prices, low income and increased costs. The farm bill provides producers with more options to implement progressive conserving practices on their land and increased technical assistance to producers. Several conservation programs were included in this bill and increased, such as Conservation Reserve Program, Wetlands Reserve Program, Wildlife Habitat and Incentive Program and Grasslands Reserve Program.

As vice chairman of the Sportsmen Caucus, I feel this legislation provides a balanced approach to meeting conservation needs. Although the House version did not address or contain an energy title, I am pleased to see the conferees adopted many of the Senate energy provisions. Throughout my career, I have worked to expand bioenergy and biofuels. Both ethanol and biodiesel are renewable sources and will greatly benefit the country.

I am pleased this balanced bill has reached us today. I urge Members' support.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to our colleague, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LATHAM).

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

Mr. LATHAM. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman very very much for the opportunity to speak on this farm bill; and I want to give my personal thanks to the chairman of the committee and the ranking member for working very, very hard on a farm bill, holding, I think, 47 hearings around the country and for putting forth a strong effort in a very difficult situation.

My belief is any farm bill should help the family farm, the medium-, small-size family operator. And it is with great reluctance that I am going to oppose this farm bill because I think this takes us in exactly the wrong direction. This farm bill will hasten the demise of the family farm. It will subsidize the largest producers with an advantage over the medium-small producers, a dramatic advantage. It breaks all of our trade agreements. There is no question that the provisions in this are in direct opposition to what we have stood for as far as free, open trade. There is more money for conservation and environmental portions in this farm bill and those titles. The problem is they are rendered useless because all of the incentives on this farm bill are for more production. And I know farmers. I am one. And we are going to produce every possible bushel that we can to make sure that when these high payments are made that we are going to be able to reap the benefits. So those provisions I think are virtually useless in this farm bill.

One provision I think that causes great concern in Iowa is certainly the fact that one of the largest megahog producers, who has been a habitual offender as far as the environment, under this farm bill is going to be eligible and entitled to 450,000 tax payer dollars as a reward for not taking care of the environment. It is with great reluctance that I must oppose this farm bill.

Mr. COMBEST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BONILLA), chairman of the Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this bill today. I must commend, first of all, the chairman of the Committee on Agriculture along with the ranking member, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM).

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) have done an incredible job of standing up for the rights of producers in this country under a great challenge, especially considering what some people in this town and elsewhere were proposing from a different part of the capital.

It is a good bill overall. There are some problems that we have to work through as we support this and move forward. The labeling provision is something that we know the chairman tried to work hard to not include in the bill but, unfortunately, it is in there along with the dairy provisions that are in there that are not good for some of our producers in our part of the country.

We also have some concerns with numerous new mandatory spending programs, programs that historically and rightfully fall under the discretion and funding jurisdiction of the Committee on Appropriations. I hope that Members do not forget the money associated with these new entitlement programs as my subcommittee attempts to respond to their funding requests in the FY 2003 agriculture appropriations bill. However, as Members of the Congress, we must base our votes on the positive areas of this bill. This is again a good bill overall for farmers and ranchers in this country and all associated with the bill. We are very pleased as well especially with the wool and mohair marketing loan provision that was put in the bill by our conferees. It is a good bill. I stand in strong support of this today.

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Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BERRY).

Mr. BERRY. Mr. Speaker, I want to, first of all, thank the chairman, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST) and the ranking member, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM). I think every one of us in this body owe them our respect and gratitude for the great job they did on this bill.

There have been many things said about this bill, and if there is one thing this body stands for, it is that right for any Member to express their opinion and vote in that way, and I respect that. We have had many things said about this bill, but I can tell my colleagues one thing, we have people come and talk about how we are going to produce too much. Having too much food is like having too much money. It is pretty hard to do. We do not want to run out of either one of them, and when we do, we have got a major problem.

This is a good bill. It is a balanced bill. It treats everyone as fairly as we can with the resources that we have at our disposal.

The objective of a farm bill is food security. It is not a social program. America's farmers have served this country well. They deserve our support

and to be recognized with this bill, to continue to produce the cheapest, safest food supply in the history of this country.

I urge passage of this bill.

Mr. COMBEST. Mr. Speaker, could the Chair give us an accounting of the time?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SWEENEY). The gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST) has 11½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) has 14 minutes remaining, and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) has 14 minutes remaining.

Mr. COMBEST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE).

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST) for yielding me the time, and I congratulate him on a hard fought battle with the Senate, and I think that on balance he has prevailed in sticking to the bill that we attempted to bring forward from the House.

We have made concessions that I do not like. There are things in this bill that I do not like, but on balance, I think there are far more things in here that will help to assure the American public that they have an abundant, affordable and safe supply of food for the next several years.

I am also pleased that we were able to include in this the funding to make it possible to bring local television service into every home in America within the next few years, and I am also very pleased that we are providing additional funds for food banks, a far more efficient way to deliver food to those people in greatest need in this country than the food stamp program, which is still, unfortunately, in bad need of additional reforms.

Overall, I think this legislation will help America's farmers. It will help America's consumers, and as a result, I am pleased to lend my support to it.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR).

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) for yielding me the time, and I commend him and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST) for producing this conference report, and I rise in guarded support of this conference report.

Basically I view the bill as a holding action. America obviously cannot undermine our farmers at a point when 70 cents of every farm dollar is coming from the government, and we ought to produce a different program that permits farmers to earn from the market. But this bill does have some historic titles that are important to building that future, importantly, the historic inclusion of an energy title. This title will really focus the Department of Agriculture on biofuels in every way, biomass for energy production, biobased products, et cetera.

There are some other important provisions in the bill, such as enhanced conservation and farmland protection, Global Food for Education, and many of our international programs that help feed hungry people throughout the world and relieve the surplus on our market. We want to compliment the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. EMERSON) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) for their terrific work there.

I think the bill falls far short in the area of assisting specialty crop producers to be included. Also, it does not do enough to break up concentration that is causing higher food prices, and really, a narrowing of those who can bring product to the market in this legislation.

I am not pleased with what was done on changing the language dealing with labelling of irradiated foods. But overall, we cannot undermine our farmers at a point when they need our support to maintain U.S. food security. I would urge my colleague's support of this legislation.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY).

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, I think this is a sad day for our country. We are taking a big step in the wrong direction. I would say in the direction of Soviet style agricultural policy. It is hard to know where to begin with this bill, but let me start with the cost.

Here we are, a Nation at war, running a wartime budget, substantial deficits this year. We have got a budget baseline that already commits us to spending $100 billion in farm subsidies over the next 10 years, and this bill commits us to add to that considerably more than the advertised additional $75 billion. I say more because this bill knowingly uses dated commodity price assumptions that lowball the total cost. It also uses gimmicks such as creating a whole new $100-million-a-year program and then pretending that that will only be funded for 1 year.

The truth is, the American taxpayer cannot afford this bill, but it is, in particular, a sad day for Republicans because we know better than to do this. This is a massive government subsidy of crops that is going to cause overproduction, that is going to cause further decline in crop prices and make a bad situation worse, especially for small farmers such as those in Pennsylvania.

We, who generally believe in freedom and independence and personal responsibility in the marketplace, we are in danger of systematically turning farms into dependent serfs of the Federal Government, already dependent on government for an average of 46 percent of their income. This bill will increase that to well over 50 percent.

This is a sad day for my Democratic colleagues, who often pride themselves for their support of the working people and the poorest in our society. This bill is a massive transfer of wealth from poor people, and especially urban poor, to many large and wealthy corporations.

The Environmental Working Group observes that two-thirds of farm subsidies will go to 10 percent of farms, many of which have an average income of a quarter of a million dollars a year. The cost for the average American household is going to average $4,400 over the life of this bill, $1,800 in higher taxes, $2,600 in higher food prices because of the price support mechanism.

Mr. Speaker, one of the great lessons of the 20th century clearly was that command control economics, government-run subsidies, government manipulations of the marketplace does not work. It leads to a misallocation of capital, distortion of the marketplace and prices, and economic ruin, but that is exactly the direction we are taking today with regard to farm policy in America.

I would urge my colleagues to support the motion to recommit, but if that fails, vote against passage of this bill.

Mr. COMBEST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) who has done a wonderful job on the committee in these last 2 years.

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I commend the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST), the chairman, and the ranking member, for the outstanding work that they have done in producing the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act.

Despite, Mr. Speaker, what my colleagues may have read in the newspapers around the country this morning, those of us that represent farm districts in America know this is the right farm bill for America today. We know that American farmers are facing their fifth straight year of record low prices, record high costs of production. We know that real net farm income is at its lowest since the Great Depression, and we know that American agriculture is competing in a global economy where our trading partners are subsidizing their farmers at considerably more than our country does before this bill.

We are simply equipping our farmers in America with the ability to compete and survive while we set the table, if I may add, Mr. Speaker, for presidential trade promotion authority, negotiating down trade barriers, negotiating down subsidies, to move toward that vision of a free market global agricultural economy.

Let the fields rejoice and all that is in them. We have a farm bill that will make American agriculture and America's food supply safe and secure.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PETERSON).

Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) for yielding me the time, and I rise again in strong support of this bill. I want to focus a

little bit on this issue of the use of certificates, which has been debated here on the floor and was debated in the conference.

I come from a part of the country where certificates are not used a whole lot, and I have to admit that I did not have a good understanding of this program until we had considerable debate in the committee.

I think the people that are concerned about this whole payment limit question and use of certificates, first of all, should understand that in this bill there is language that will be law that is going to require us to look at this issue. So it is not going to go away, and we have set up a commission that is requiring USDA to come back to us with a study of this to find out who is actually getting this money and, if we made these changes, what would be the impact on farm income, land values and the infrastructure of agriculture.

In this area of certificates, I think that folks that do not represent farm country, and this is a complicated area, should understand what the implications are. If we do not have the certificate program, what will happen is that these folks that hit these limitations will forfeit these crops to the CCC. So the elimination of certificates will not change much what is going to happen, other than it will cost the government more money because this will be forfeited, and then we will incur the cost of storage, the cost of disposal of these crops that are forfeited to the CCC.

So actually, the use of certificates is a savings to the government, and we debated whether there should be reform in this area but, frankly, could not come to a resolution on what would be a better system. I think people need to understand that limitation in that area is not necessarily going to change a whole lot other than to cost the government more money.

Lastly, in this whole area of people should also understand that we put a limitation on adjusted gross income for individuals and net income for corporations. So that anybody that exceeds $2.5 million of net income is going to be limited in getting these payments.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE).

(Mr. FLAKE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks, and include extraneous material.)

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) for yielding me the time.

When I stood a week or so ago to oppose this bill, it was said from the other side, well, that fellow does not know anything about agriculture. If my colleagues look at the end of my right index finger, it is missing. It was cut off in a wind rower at age 5 on an alfalfa field.

I have been away from the farm for a long time, but I still know manure when it is shoveled, and a lot of it is being shoveled here today.

This farm bill is bad for Americans. It will cost the average American family over $4,000 in terms of direct taxes and price supports, inflated prices because of price supports over the next 10 years. We are abandoning the Freedom to Farm Act, and in its place, putting in a Farm Security Act.

We as Republicans should not be doing this. Democrats should not be doing it either. We ought to look past special interest politics and look at what is best for American families across the country, and at this point I am going to insert an article from The Wall Street Journal.

[From the Wall Street Journal, May 2, 2002]

BLOAT WATCH

(By Jeff Flake)

As a young kid growing up on a farm in northern Arizona, one of my more unusual chores was what I called ''bloat watch.'' I would sit atop a hill with knife in hand, watching cattle grazing on the green alfalfa field below. As soon as the first critter assumed the bloated ''I've fallen and I can't get up'' position, I would rush to the victim, raise the knife and stab just behind the last rib high on the left side—then taken cover as pent-up gas and alfalfa spewed heavenward, raining down on boy and bovine. I'm sure that being stabbed in the side wasn't pleasant, but the alternative was to be unceremoniously dragged over the hill to the bone yard.

As we debate the newest farm bill in Congress, I find myself instinctively reaching for my old knife. There are many examples of bloated government in Washington, but none are just begging for the knife as much as our farm policy.

Last week, House and Senate negotiators approved a farm bill expanding payments to farmers by nearly $50 billion over the next decade. The bulk of this increase, more than 90%, will go to farmers producing just five crops: wheat, corn, rice, cotton and soybean. Two-thirds will go to just 10% of farmers. The passage of this bill will mark a full scale repudiation of the Freedom to Farm Act of 1996, which sought to wean farmers off government assistance.

That the new farm bill is bad policy is not seriously disputed. It distorts the free market, wreaks havoc with incentives, further institutionalizes dependency and jeopardizes our export economy. But it is more than just bad policy—it is bad politics for Republicans.

The farm bill's $173.5 billion price tag over 10 years make sour claim as the party of fiscal discipline purely relative. It is estimated that this legislation will cost the average American household $4,377 over the next 10 years—$1,805 in taxes and $2,572 in inflated food prices because of price supports. That doesn't sound like a message this Republican wants to run on.

As evidenced in 1994, Republicans win elections when they draw a sharp contrast with Democrats. When Congressional Republicans seek to blur the lines, as we've done for the past several years, Democrats gain ground, as they've done for the past several years. There is an old political axiom that goes ''You can never out-Democrat a Democrat.'' While we Republicans have tested that axiom's limits of late, we ought to understand that voters will eventually go for the genuine article. With this approach we might eke out another election with our slim majority intact, but our days are numbered.

On the other hand, if presented with an articulate ''freedom'' vs. ''security'' argument, most voters will opt for the former. The dilemma for Republicans is that we've not only abandoned the freedom argument in principle, we've dropped the rhetoric as well. Last week, at the same time Republican conferees on the farm bill were replacing the Freedom to Farm Act with the Farm Security Act, other House Republicans were holding a press conference where they slammed the Democrats for stealing the Republican Conference's ''Securing America's Future'' theme. Frankly, I'd rather be accused of stealing that patronizing theme than coining it. Let the Democrats have it.

In a 1964 speech, Ronald Reagan reminded us that there is no such thing as ''left'' or ''right.'' Rather, there was only an ''up'' toward freedom or a ''down'' toward totalitarianism. ''Those who would sacrifice freedom for security,'' Mr. Reagan said, ''have already started down the downward path.''

It is probably too late for Congress to reverse course on this farm bill. We can only hope that President Bush is watching, pen in hand, as Congressional Republicans abandon all discretion and graze on green alfalfa right along with the Democrats. Being stabbed with a veto pen might not seem pleasant, but it sure beats ending up in the political bone yard.

Mr. COMBEST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN).

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I want to first thank the chairman of this committee for his extraordinary efforts on behalf of the farmers and ranchers in Klamath Basin.

I intend to actively support this bill today because of what it is doing to solve the water problems we face not only in the Klamath Basin, but across the West. The increase of 80 percent in funding of conservation programs are what is going to make the difference so that our farmers get water this year.

It was little over a year ago that the Federal Government cut off the water to the 1,400 farm families in the basin. Many of them have gone bankrupt. Most of them had no income. It is an incredible tragedy that has been allowed to occur.

The chairman was successful in the conference in getting $50 million earmarked specifically for an environmental quality investment incentive program that will help solve some of the problems and has been very supportive of our efforts to resolve the long-term water needs and problems in this basin to improve water quality and quantity. This is an extraordinary step forward that will bring real long-term solutions to the Klamath Basin.

I thank the Chairman for his diligence, his tireless efforts on behalf of those farmers and ranchers and for the other work in this farm bill that is going to make an extraordinary difference for the men and women who make their living off the land in Oregon.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for the time.

As I have repeatedly informed my colleagues since last April, the past year has seen a terrible crisis in the Klamath Basin of southern Oregon and northern California. On April 6 of last year, nearly 1,400 farmers and ranchers were denied water during the 2001 growing season in large part due to Endangered Species Act issues. Yet, earlier this

year the highly regarded National Academy of Sciences, NAS, which reviewed the Government's actions, found that there was ''no substantial scientific foundation at this time for changing the operation of the Klamath Project to maintain higher water levels in Upper Klamath Lake, or higher minimum flows in the Klamath River.'' In other words, the Government's decisions that crippled the livelihood of farming and ranching families were not backed up by the science. The Government's actions were devastating in many ways, causing economic damage between $135 million and $200 million, depriving wildlife refuges of water and feed, and dumping lethally hot water into the Klamath River, thereby threatening the endangered coho salmon the Government was entrusted to help.

However, just because the Government made poor decisions doesn't mean there are not significant water quality and quantity problems that must be dealt with in this basin. That's why I support this farm bill and the $50 million in funding for the Klamath Basin that is included in the Environmental Quality Incentive Program section of the bill. It is a wonderful way to make sure that those funds are spent where they will do the most good for fish, farmers, and waterfowl.

Since December of last year, the National Academy of Sciences issued its report criticizing the decisions made by the Government. That critique has now been included in the new biological assessment, BA, issued by the Bureau of Reclamation. In addition, the President has created a cabinet-level task force to address the unique and complicated issues in the Klamath Basin. The farm bill provides an 80 percent increase in conservation funds to pay for the very types of projects that must be done if we are ever to solve the water quality and quantity issues in the basin.

I have refused to forget that this is the farm bill, and the purpose of what we do in the farm bill is to make sure that we have a vibrant agricultural economy in the Klamath Basin and throughout this country. The steps taken in the bill will improve fish habitat, will improve water quality and quantity, and will improve the health of the national wildlife refuges. By doing all of these things we will improve significantly the chances that farmers and ranchers in the Klamath Basin will get the water they need and everyone comes out a winner.

Additionally, the conference committee was kind enough to include a feasibility study I crafted that was passed unanimously by this House last October, only to languish in the other body. This feasibility study is needed to address an imminent endangered species habitat claim against the Chiloquin Dam is southern Oregon, which is the Modoc Point Irrigation District's current gravity flow diversion source. This dam blocks endangered suckers from reaching 95 percent of their former spawning and juvenile rearing habitat in the warm water reaches of the Sprague River. Several parties have identified the Chiloquin Dam as constituting a significant habitat problem for endangered suckers. They include: The Klamath Tribes, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Bureau of Reclamation, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Klamath Water Users Association. This feasibility study was constructed in consultation with both the Modoc Point Irrigation District and the Klamath Tribes.

The study will include: Review of all alternatives for providing passage, including the removal of the dam; determination of the most appropriate alternative; development of recommendations for implementing the alternative; and examination of mitigation needed for upstream and downstream water users as a result of such implementation.

Mr. Speaker, as you can see we have been working on this issue diligently for some time and I would be remiss if I did not thank a few Members and staff for their support during this process. I would like to especially thank Chairman COMBEST for putting these provisions in the farm bill. Congressman POMBO also gave me great counsel throughout the process. Chairman HANSEN and Chairman YOUNG, the conferees from the House Resources Committee, were invaluable. And finally, Doug Yoder and Steve Petersen from the Resources Committee and Lance Kotschwar and Bill O'Conner from the Agriculture Committee went to great lengths to secure this needed help for the Klamath Basin. I'm indebted to all of them.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes 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 thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) for yielding me the time.

I also want to congratulate him and our chairman for their diligent work and that a word needs to be said about the process. It was an engaged process. It was over 2 years. Many individuals and representative companies and organizations had their day. Rather, everyone had their day. I am not sure but certainly it was not for a lack of trying, was not lack of openness and effort to be involved in it. So process does help as well as the end product.

This is not indeed a perfect bill. With any bill this size there will be winners and losers. It is not perfect by any means. There are indeed winners. The winners hopefully will be our farmers who indeed will have opportunity to know about what rules will work.

There are some things that go too far in my judgment, but it is a bill that is basically going to ensure a safety net for our farmers, and it also takes the uncertainty out of our market fluctuation.

More importantly for me, Mr. Speaker, there are indeed some great strides made for constituents that I represent and constituents in disadvantaged communities throughout this country. I believe that the food stamp program is one of the most effective tools we have to ensure that no parent in America is unable to feed their children. It is our Nation's largest child nutrition program, and through this bill we make a number of modifications that allow working families, children, elderly to have food. Additionally, we also make provisions internationally as well.

I would be remiss not to say that my peanut farmers are desperately needing some certainty of that. Indeed that is a costly program, I will admit that, but it is costly when we ask sectors of our economy to make tremendous change and transition. So American taxpayers are being asked to assist in this transition.

It is a bill that is worthy of our support. It is a bill indeed if it is to go back to conference to be rewritten means that our farmers will have more uncertainty than they have now.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the food stamp program is one of the most effective tools we have to ensure that no parents in America are unable to feed their children. It is our Nation's largest child nutrition program. It helps us fulfill our basic responsibility to assist the neediest among us in meeting their most basic need, proper nutrition. In my years on the Agriculture Committee, I have worked to strengthen the food stamp safety net so that it can help provide nutritionally adequate diets to families in our Nation's rural and urban areas alike.

I am delighted that the nutrition title of the farm bill that is before us today contains many significant improvements that are targeted toward low-income families with children, particularly the working poor. It goes a long way toward restoring food stamp benefits to legal immigrants and their families by ensuring that all legal immigrant children are eligible for food stamps and by incorporating the administration's proposal to make food stamps available to all otherwise eligible legal immigrants after they have lived in the United States for 5 years. The bill will allow transitional food stamps for families that are leaving welfare to help keep them connected to this critical work support program. It also simplifies the program, which will reduce paper work and red tape and remove some barriers that eligible families face in trying to receive food stamps.

And, on another positive note, the title contains additional money for the Emergency Food Assistance Program to help our Nation's food pantries and soup kitchens respond to the growing demands they have faced in recent years.

I thank Mr. STENHOLM and Mr. COMBEST for their leadership on the farm bill and on the nutrition title in particular. I want to associate myself with Mr. STENHOLM's statement on the nutrition title and I would like to add a few remarks on some of the key provisions.

The bill makes a remarkable improvement to food stamp eligibility for legal immigrants. I am pleased that many of my colleagues from the other side of the aisle have joined with President Bush to recognize that the restrictions on immigrant eligibility from welfare reform went too far and put too many low-income immigrant families with children, many of whom are citizens, at risk.

The final agreement restores food stamps to all eligible legal immigrant children and does so without requiring sponsor deeming. This should simplify the message that States and advocates provide to needy families. Poor children are eligible for food stamps, period.

We conformed food stamp eligibility rules for legal immigrant adults to those in TANF and Medicaid. This should make it easier for the States to administer the three programs jointly. Qualified immigrants who came to the United States at least 5 years ago will be eligible for food stamps. Of course, this is subject to the sponsor deeming rules. Because USDA's rules on sponsor deeming are sensible and balanced, we choose to continue the current

USDA sponsor deeming rules. We have no intention of sabotaging this restoration by making low-income sponsors that live with eligible immigrants and receive food stamps to incur a liability because their family member is part of their food stamp household.

Another important benefit improvement in the bill is the reform of the food stamp standard deduction for all households. Prior to 1995, the food stamp standard deduction had adjusted for inflation each year to reflect that fact that the cost of basic and necessary expenses that households have to make before purchasing food rise each year. The standard was frozen in 1995 for cost savings and has been $134 ever since. Under this legislation, the standard will be adjusted for inflation each year. In addition, it will be scaled to household size to reflect the fact that larger households have higher basic living expenses. This provision will take effect this fall, which may be difficult for some states. I encourage USDA to be flexible with states that are doing the best they can but who cannot implement on time.

Despite these critical benefit improvements, I am deeply disappointed that the final agreement on the farm bill does not include a Senate provision that would have modestly eased one of the very harshest provisions of the 1996 welfare law, the 3-month time limit on participation by unemployed childless adults. The provision denies food stamps to some of our Nation's most vulnerable individuals. The provision disproportionately affects African-Americans, veterans, and the homeless, among other groups. While I have been pleased with the steps USDA has taken to implement this overly restrictive provision in regulation and urge the Secretary to continue to do everything she can to ease the harsh effects of this provision, I hope that Congress can revisit the eligibility rules for this group at some point in the future.

While we did not ease the 3-month time limit, the farm bill does eliminate the 80 percent set-aside of unmatched Federal employment and training funds for individuals subject to the time limit. Nonetheless, the new rules require USDA to give this population, and States that elect to serve them, special consideration when allocating employment and training funds among states. States that serve large numbers of unemployed childless adults should continue to have the resources to do so.

On a positive note, this bill gives States more opportunity to develop employment and training services that do not meet the strict definition of a work activity under the 3-month time limit. Services such as job search and programs lasting less than 20 hours per week may not be funded with these monies. While individuals subject to the time limit who participate in these activities will not meet the definition of work for purposes of the 3-month time limit, the services may help them find employment before the three months expire.

Turning toward another provision, one of our most important goals in designing this food stamp reauthorization was to make sure that families leaving welfare stay connected with the food stamp program. Currently as many as two-thirds of households leaving cash assistance for work, a time-limit or other reasons do not continue their enrollment in the food stamp program. These families still have very low incomes and are still eligible for food stamps. It was a priority to us to find a way to ensure that these families keep receiving these critical nutrition benefits. States and client advocates have said that families fall off the program because clients are confused about their ongoing eligibility and that they often fail to complete paperwork requests from state agencies which result in their termination from the food stamp program.

The legislation gives States a very attractive new option that should make it quite simple to continue food stamps with no paperwork whatsoever to families leaving TANF. When a household leaves TANF, the States would simply recalculate its food stamps by subtracting the cash benefit from the family's income. No questions would be asked of the household. This new transitional food stamp amount would be the correct amount for the next 5 months.

Under this new option, we can be sure that poor families receive the nutrition assistance that they need to feed their families without any hassles or risks of losing the benefits for procedural reasons. If, at some point during the 5-month transitional period, the family thought that they might be eligible for more food stamps because their circumstances changed, they could always reapply for a higher benefit amount. This new approach should result in a dramatically higher share of families leaving welfare for work to continue receiving food stamps.

This legislation also responds to requests from States and clients to make the food stamp program simpler to administer and easier to understand. Unfortunately, just over half of eligible low-income families participate in the food stamp program. Many poor families are frustrated that they have to provide the State agencies with too much paperwork on unimportant details of their life and finances. And they are unhappy about having to reapply for benefits so frequently.

The nutrition title responds to this complaint by allowing for 6 months of continuous eligibility—unless the household's income rises above 130 percent of the poverty line or the State has some reason to believe that the family is ineligible. If States do not want to provide continuous eligibility, they can freeze households deductions, eliminating many reporting requirements in between certification periods. In this case a household would have to report changes in their earnings, but all other change reporting would be optional. States would only have to respond if the household reported a change in earnings or if they moved.

The bill also allows States to align the definitions of income and resources in the food stamp program with the ones that they apply in their Medicaid and TANF programs. This will give States unprecedented authority to align these aspects of eligibility across the three programs. USDA must now allow States to use data from their child support systems to determine what a household's child support deduction will be even if that data is somewhat old. This will relieve the household of having to keep track of every change in the payments that they make.

The utility component of the shelter deduction has been dramatically simplified. States now have an option that would require a household to only show one utility bill, other than a phone bill, in order to get a standard utility allowance. These changes should ensure that many more eligible families find it easier to get the help that they need.

I do wish that we had found ways to ease paperwork and office requirements on the elderly and disabled. It is my hope that USDA will explore this area and attempt to ease those burdens administratively.

I am delighted that we were able to work with the Senate and the administration to reform the food stamp quality control system. The current system set up half the States for failure by sanctioning all States with error rates above the national average. That is unfair. At least until very recently, it also has created inappropriate disincentives for states to serve large numbers of earners or immigrants because these households typically are more error-prone.

The new system targets sanctions at those states with persistently high error rates rather than any State above the national average. It also refocuses bonus payments away from just payment accuracy and will institute a new set of performance measures that will balance payment accuracy along with other measures of strong administration such as client service.

One element of the Senate-passed bill that interested me a great deal was adjustments to sanctions for States doing a particularly good job of serving low-wage working families or immigrant households. As it happens, however, we did not need to include this in the conference report because USDA assured the conferees that it would continue past practice and adjust sanction liabilities to eliminate the impact of high or rising proportions of working poor households or low-income immigrants. Given the Department's commitment to the adjustments, we saw no need to include adjustments in the statutory changes to the system.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of what we have achieved in this nutrition title. I believe that the farm bill strengthens the food stamp program by improving benefits and easing access for our low-income working families. This outcome is good for families, good for communities and good for farmers.

Mr. COMBEST. Mr. Speaker, could the Chair please give us once again the remaining time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST) has 8½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) has 9 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) has 10½ minutes remaining.

□ 1200

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

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time, other than my closing on the floor.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND).

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

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

Mr. Speaker, to understate the phrase, this has been a very difficult process, trying to put together a farm bill and projecting out in future years the needs of our family farmers, but we can still produce a better result. We need a farm bill, a farm bill that will

be a more fair and balanced farm bill for all our family farmers in all regions of the country.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, I intend, at the conclusion of the debate, to offer a motion to recommit with instructions, based on a motion that already passed this House a little over 2 weeks ago with 265 Members of this House on record supporting a $275,000 meaningful payment limitation cap consistent with the language that is already in the Senate bill and consistent with the majority wishes in the United States Senate.

There exists a majority in both the House and the Senate now to take this approach to farm policy, so we cannot only have a safety net for our family farmers but also be able to do it within the realm of fiscal responsibility and fiscal discipline; being able to provide more benefits to family farmers in all regions, while also maintaining the hope and promise that we can open up greater market access to agriculture products produced in this country. That has to be a part of any long-term farm policy.

Without a meaningful payment limitation cap, the next round of trade talks are in serious jeopardy, in my opinion. We are hearing the clash of the international community coming down on this Congress with the farm bill that is before us today, telling us it will jeopardize the ability to negotiate fair trade agreements for our American producers.

With the money and resources that are freed up with this payment cap, we would have more for volunteer and incentive-based conservation programs, programs that will lead to better watershed management, quality water supplies, the protection of wildlife and fish habitat, and, ultimately, the protection of productive farm land itself. We would be able to have additional resources for agriculture research, for rural development and nutrition programs, but also for the new energy program, relying on biomass and biofuels, which is the wave of the future.

Now, this is the way it should be decided, through a debate and by a vote. It should not be a clash of personalities; rather, an honest debate over ideas. I believe this motion to commit will produce a better farm bill at the end of the day and I encourage my colleagues to support it.

Mr. COMBEST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS), chairman of the Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities and Risk Management.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. Speaker, again I would like to commend the chairman and ranking member of the Committee on Agriculture for crafting what I think is good sound farm policy and it will be a tremendous benefit to every farmer in America with this farm bill.

My State is the largest peanut-producing State in the country, and my district happens to be the second largest peanut-producing district. We are very proud of that. We have a long and rich heritage. The peanut program in this bill is getting completely restructured and retooled for the reason that we have had a fight over the peanut program every year that I have served in this body.

There has been a philosophical objection to the way the peanut program was crafted because of the quota program that existed within that peanut program. Well, this year our peanut industry has gotten together as a whole and has made a decision we need to do what is best for the long-term interest of the peanut industry, and so we have drastically changed the peanut program within this farm bill, a program that now is going to benefit our quota holders, our producers, as well as our industrial base within the peanut community.

I am very pleased with the results we came out with. Is it perfect? No. But it does provide benefit to every aspect of the industry, and allows the peanut industry, particularly in my State, to have a long-term viable future. I urge the passage of this bill.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. COMBEST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the chief deputy whip.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time, and thank him and the ranking member for their great work on this bill. I think our conferees worked hard, did a tremendous job, kept this on focus, and my belief is that it was as likely as not that we could have wound up at the end of that conference without a farm bill if it had not been for the great dedication of the House conferees to make this happen.

This is a good bill. It sets the stage for several years of agriculture stability, provides a much-needed safety net that was not present in the last farm bill, it continues to decouple payments, allows updating of acreage, and does good things in dairy. More importantly, it establishes the rules and does that early enough that it may even have some positive impact this year.

We all worked hard to get this bill out. Of course, the House passed a bill months ago. Again, our conferees, the chairman and the ranking member, as they bring this bill to the floor, have a lot to be proud of. Farm families in America have a lot to look to with appreciation for the job we have done, the job I believe we will do today as we pass this bill, and I look forward to its implementation.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time. I have been involved in writing Federal farm legislation since the 1960s, when I was Michigan chairman of Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, and then I got an appointment in 1970 to be Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs in USDA down here in Washington.

I appreciate the effort that the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST) have gone through in arguing how they resolved many of the disputed issues in this bill as we try to get something for the whole country. But it seems to me, and I would suggest to my colleagues, that our goal in farm policy should be that we develop and help the mainstream family farmers in this country.

And you can argue how big is a family farm, but if you are talking about 20,000, 40,000, 60,000, 80,000 acres owned by the big landholders, that now have a loophole provision that is not subject to any payment limitation, then you are talking about a situation that puts the average family farmer at a disadvantage. The average commercial farm operation in this country is a little over 900 acres.

I am disappointed. This House, on my motion to recommit on April 18, voted overwhelmingly, 265 votes, to have the Senate provisions on payment limitations. This was not acknowledged by the conferees. The conferees should not be the House, they should reflect the will of the House.

Senator GRASSLEY just called me and said, look, we have done some whipping; we originally passed that provision for payment limitations by a little over two-thirds; we will accept the motion to recommit of the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND) to reinstate the Senate payment limitations.

The Senate per farmer, per year payment limitation gets rid of the loophole. The loophole is the fact that benefits from generic certificates are not included as part of the pay limitation. Without getting into detail, it is a maneuver where the loan price support programs do not come into play. As long as there is the tremendous pressures, special interest pressure, to have unlimited payment limitations that place our family farms at a disadvantage, I am very concerned about the future of ag legislation in the country.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SWEENEY). The Chair wishes to inform Members that the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST) has 6½ minutes remaining, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) has 9 minutes remaining, and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) has 6½ minutes remaining.

Mr. COMBEST. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman would also inquire as to the closing rights.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would inform the Member that the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST) has the right to close.

Mr. COMBEST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHERWOOD).

Mr. SHERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the chairman and the ranking member and the conference committee for their hard work in putting this good conference together.

There has been much said that this bill does not help family farmers and it helps big corporate farmers. Well, the provision that is in this bill, that I have worked for for 3½ years and that I am so proud of, is the dairy provision, and that is for family farmers. That is for every dairy farmer in the country. And there is a limit to the size of production that can receive a counter-cyclical support payment.

So that is very good for family farmers, and it is very good for conservation because it spreads the animals out across the country, and it is good for consumers because it assures us of a locally produced fresh supply of milk throughout this country.

So I would ask all the Members from both sides of the aisle who are in the dairy coalition to support this bill.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP).

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this conference report. This agreement provides a strong safety net for our Nation's family farmers as well as for the small and disadvantaged farmers. It ensures a flexible, affordable, and top quality food supply for our consumers while strengthening our national security. It provides a 6-year reauthorization of the farm, rural development, conservation, and nutrition programs that are administered by USDA.

The bill provides nearly 80 percent more funding for conservation programs than the current law provides, providing environmental benefits for all Americans. The bill will help producers of all commodities stay on the lands that they hold and that they love so much so that they continue their livelihood while conserving our natural resources for future generations.

While not perfect, the agreement today also addresses many of the needs of those in southwest Georgia, in the second district, in terms of making strides in restructuring the crucially important peanut program. Let us not allow the perfect to be the enemy of the good. Let us pass this conference report today for our farmers so that we can move forward with this year's planting season and have American agriculture continue to be the best in the world.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLEY), my friend and colleague on the Committee on Agriculture.

Mr. DOOLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this bill with a great deal of personal anguish because of the respect I have for the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM). But as a Member of Congress serving on the Committee on Agriculture, and as a farmer, I believe this is not the right policy for U.S. agriculture in this new century.

Henry Wallace, back in the 1930s, when he was Secretary of Agriculture under President Roosevelt, said when they instituted programs very similar to these that these were temporary solutions to deal with an emergency. We are still dealing with the same temporary solutions. And where has it gotten us?

□ 1215

It has gotten us to the point where last year 40 percent of net farm income in this country was government taxpayer dollars. And with the bill that we are passing today, that 40 percent will increase to 50 percent in the near term. Too many times we hear people do not understand how little of agriculture is actually receiving these taxpayer subsidies. Eighty percent of the agricultural products that are produced in this country receive not 1 cent of taxpayer money.

We can go into any supermarket and walk down the produce aisle, and every product in that produce aisle does not get a taxpayer subsidy. The meat and poultry aisle, there is not one product that gets a direct subsidy from the taxpayer. We can go down the canned fruit and canned vegetable aisle, and not one product there gets a subsidy from the government. We are passing a program that is going to ensure that 20 percent of the agricultural commodities that are grown in this country are going to get 70 percent of $170 billion over the next 10 years, and that is wrong.

I am concerned that policies in this bill are going to ensure that we are going to continue to see overproduction because of the way that we have structured our marketing loan programs and our counter-cyclical payments.

Mr. Speaker, it is important for us to have a safety net, but we need to do so in a manner that does not distort the marketplace, and this bill does that at the expense of taxpayers. It is not only at the expense of taxpayers, this bill creates distortions against other farmers throughout this country.

There has been a lot of talk about the peanut program which is crying out for reform. It does not cost taxpayers a dollar right now. But the reform that is embodied in this bill will result in taxpayers spending $4 billion over the next decade. That is not appropriate. What it also will ensure is that it will increase the supply of peanuts that are in the marketplace.

When I represent a district that has an almond industry that is twice the size of the peanut industry, they are going to be facing increased competition with peanuts that being subsidized by the taxpayer, that are going to drive down the price of the pistachios, walnuts and almonds that receive no taxpayer support because of the taxpayers stepping in providing $4 billion to a competitive product in the snack food market. That is wrong.

We also have another problem in the dairy program. We are embarking on a path with the dairy program that is going to result in taxpayers most likely putting out $2 billion. What are they going to get for that $2 billion, increased production, which is also going to require these same taxpayers to purchase more butter and powder so they are going to be out more money.

What are other dairy farmers going to face? They are going to see lower prices because of this new taxpayer subsidy, which is going to result in farmers in California, dairy farmers, losing over $6 million in the next 3 years.

Mr. Speaker, we had an opportunity to pass a policy that would move us into a new direction that could have invested in products and enhanced the productivity and competitiveness of our farmers, and we lost that opportunity. I encourage my colleagues to vote no on this bill.

Mr. COMBEST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. PICKERING).

Mr. PICKERING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the conference report and to commend the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) for their leadership as we do a bill that is good for our farmers, good for the environment, conservation, and good for our catfish farmers in Mississippi as we stop the Vietnamese imports of false labeling, of the taking the good name that we have developed in the southeast of the good catfish, good flavor, the good taste.

I also want to say that this is good for research as we see our land grant universities increase in research, for our rural communities, and as we see our key infrastructure needs being met.

As a sportsman, it will be good for wildlife as we see the CRP and WRP programs almost double. I support this legislation which establishes a safety net so we can plan and plant and prosper in Mississippi and across the country in agriculture. This is good legislation, a good farm bill, and I thank the chairman for his good work.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS).

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the Committee on Agriculture for the good job that they have done. I have some serious concerns about this bill, and my concerns are that our sugar program continues to drive food processors and candy makers out of business in my community. We are continuing to lose jobs by the hundreds because they cannot afford the high cost and the high prices that they are paying for sugar.

I also have some concerns that the civil rights, that the concerns expressed by minority farmers are not adequately addressed. I grew up on a small farm, and so I know what minority farmers are feeling and what their experiences are.

I hope as we continue to develop our agricultural policy, that we take those concerns and put them at the top of the list rather than the bottom of the list. Again, I commend the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) for the work that they have done, but I cannot support a bill that will not provide for the food processors in my community to stay in business.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SWEENEY). The Chair wishes to inform Members that the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST) has 4½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) has 7 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) has 3 minutes remaining.

Mr. COMBEST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. POMBO), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Livestock and Horticulture.

Mr. POMBO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the bill; but it is not a perfect bill. There are problems. I have had the same problems that the chairman and the ranking member had in trying to work through this particular piece of legislation to get the best possible bill that we could to be enacted into law.

For those Members who have stood up this morning and talked about how they were concerned about it being bad farm policy. I would caution them on the motion to recommit. If Members think that there is a problem with the current bill, look at the motion to recommit. That is the worst possible farm policy that we could adopt in any way. We turn it into a welfare program. We try to say that the purpose of farm policy is to support those small, disadvantaged farmers so that they can get a welfare check. Well, if that is what we really want, we should just make it a welfare program. That is a huge problem.

It also transfers money into conservation title. At a time when we are fighting to open markets for us to ship into and other markets to ship into us, they want to take as much land as they possibly can out of production and ship that production offshore.

Mr. Speaker, that is the worst possible farm policy that we could possibly come up with as the U.S. Congress. No matter what we do on this bill, Members have to vote, begins the motion to recommit.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, earlier I pointed out my broad concern with the high loan rates that we have in this bill and the fact that it will depress commodity prices requiring more of net farm income to come from the government. Last year's figure was 40 percent of net farm income came from the government. I believe with lower prices as a result of this bill, that number will exceed 50 percent quickly.

There are other problems with the bill. I think the message this sends to our trading partners around the world is the wrong message. These payments will violate our trade agreements with the World Trade Organization, and send a strong signal to our allies who worked with us to reduce trade barriers around the world that we are not serious about this. It tells our competitors we are going to continue to do what we have been asking them not to do.

Secondly, when it comes to the issue of labeling, I think it violates our agreement with our neighbors, Mexico and Canada, and I think it is discriminatory against our other trading partners around the world. So from a trade standpoint, I think we are sending some mixed and bad messages.

The dairy program that we have contained in this bill is totally unnecessary. Over the last 4 years, in all of agriculture, dairy prices were at record highs. Dairy farmers had the best 4 years they ever had. Why do we need to spend $2 billion for dairy? Pure and simple, for political reasons coming from the other body. It is unnecessary, it will drive down prices, and will drive up exposure to the taxpayers.

But as I close, as Members of Congress, we are here, and we are here to make decisions on behalf of our constituents. As I said earlier, this is not an easy decision on my part or others who are opposing this bill. We have great respect for the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) who have guided this process; but we have to make a decision as Members of Congress, and the decision I have made, reluctantly, is to oppose this bill because in the end, it will lead to much bigger problems.

We have heard that if we do not pass this bill, we will have really big problems. We can do an emergency supplemental to fix those problems in the short run, and we can produce this bill in a much more sane political environment that will give us a much better product after the election early next year.

Mr. Speaker, the point I want to make to my colleagues is that we can do better. I know that it is a difficult process to come up with a uniform policy for the whole country, but the fact is that we can do better. We must do better to balance the interest amongst those in agriculture, and to balance the interest of those in agriculture with the interest of the taxpayers and others who are always here seeking our government help.

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

Mr. BOEHNER. I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I think the gentleman would feel better if he recognizes, as I do, that in this bill there is a continued movement by the farm communities towards market orientation, and that should help the gentleman.

Mr. BOEHNER. Reclaiming my time, I would argue that the opposite is exactly true. I reluctantly urge Members to vote no on this bill.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take the remaining time and correct some of the misstatements that have been made concerning this bill.

To those that suggest that we need a little more time, where were they for the last 2½ years when the committee and subcommittees held numerous hearings all over the country? I did not notice many of my colleagues being the most vocal being in many of the hearings much of the time.

To those that suggest that these are too high loans for cotton, which has come under a little bit of discussion, the loan rate for cotton in this bill is 52 cents. That is exactly what it was in 1986. So to those that suggest we have too high loans, they are completely ignoring market reality.

To those that said that we are getting 40 percent of our income from the government, the 2000 figures from WTO show that the United States farmer receives 22 percent of his income from the government, which I agree is too high, but the farmers in the European Union gets 38 percent of their income from government.

A lot of the other comments today, particularly some of the editorial comments that we have had on this bill, reminds me what President Eisenhower said in the 1950s: ''Farming looks mighty easy when your tractor is a pencil, and you are a thousand miles away from the corn patch.''

I think many of the comments that have been made in the editorial pages are completely ignoring the market reality that we have down on the farm, particularly when we see conservation, that we did not do enough on conservation. There is an 80 percent increase in this bill, the largest single increase in conservation spending, I believe, in the history of the Congress.

Budgetary responsibility, take a look at what we have done time and time again regarding emergency ad hoc disaster assistance: $30 billion over the last 4 years. What we do in this bill is put in predictability. The lion's share of spending in this bill does not go to stimulate production, only $2.8 billion goes toward marketing loans. The rest goes for nutrition, trade, conservation, and rural development. That is not quite what was stated on this floor.

□ 1230

Mr. Speaker, we have heard a lot about the $73.5 billion. This year the American farmer and rancher will export $54.5 billion worth of our commodities. If you multiply that by 10, that means the return on investment for the

United States taxpayer will be $545 billion, assuming we do not gain any additional market share.

Now, I think it is particularly interesting that some of our foreign competitors are lending their voices to criticism of the work of the bill that we put before the full House today.

The European Union Commissioner has said that the United States should receive a failing grade on the farm bill. He recently said in a statement of April 30, ''I am astonished by claims made in the United States Congress that much of these price-linked subsidies would not be counted against U.S. commitments. The U.S. will have to respect WTO rules.''

Absolutely we will respect WTO rules. Nothing in this bill and what the Committee on Agriculture has recommended in this conference bill has anything other than we will respect WTO rules. I say to the Agriculture Commissioner of the European Union that his facts are wrong and that this conference report will comply with all of the U.S. trade obligations within the WTO.

In fact, it is interesting to me, the European Union's commissioner is saying this because he seems to be trying to draw attention away from his own problems subsidizing agriculture.

Basically what we are doing with this bill, we are saying loudly and clearly as we enter the next WTO round, the United States Government will stand shoulder to shoulder with our producers in the international marketplace and we will negotiate down these subsidies, but we will demand that other countries do an equivalent amount, instead of what has happened to us time and time and time again in previous negotiations. We seem to be the ones to cut.

When you have a situation today in which European farmers are subsidized by over $300 an acre, and we are in the $40 range, is that fair? Is that a level playing field? I say to my friends until Europe, let us negotiate them down. Let us recognize that, yes, all farmers would be better off if we did not have as much government involvement, but we are not going to unilaterally disarm our farmers. And those who choose to vote for the motion to recommit or against this bill, that is exactly what you are doing.

Finally, in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, time and time again we ignore this one fact: we as a Nation are blessed to live in a country that has the most abundant food supply, the best quality of food, the safest food supply at the lowest cost to our people of any other country in the world. That does not happen by accident.

That happens because, time and time again, we have had agricultural programs that recognize the importance, yes, of the safety net to our producers, but also to conservation, to food stamps, to feeding people, to addressing the critical needs in rural development. We have always done this. And this bill today, one of the strongest titles is the nutrition title. It distinguishes itself as one of the most important pieces of food stamp legislation since the landmark 1977 act 25 years ago.

The most significant program simplification since the 1977 act is in this bill. Many of the title provisions are targeted toward low-income families with children, particularly the working poor. The bill will allow transitional food stamps for families that are leaving welfare. The things we have said over and over that we want to accomplish, this bill accomplishes it in the nutritional title.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to vote ''no'' on the motion to recommit. It will not make the bill better. I encourage my colleagues to support this balanced bill that does not only what our American farmers want done but the 280 million American consumers that will benefit from that which we are about to pass.

Mr. Speaker, I have always believed a strong nutrition title is a crucial part of any farm bill. That is particularly so when we can improve our ability to support hard-working low-income families and to ensure that all Americans have the opportunity to obtain a nutritionally adequate diet. Doing so gives balance to the bill and benefits both production agriculture and low-income Americans. I am pleased that this year's farm bill has a nutrition title that all of us can be proud to support.

The nutrition title stands out in several respects. It strengthens incentives for families to work and thereby promotes welfare reform goals. It does so by making food stamps better available to low-income working poor families that do not want to get welfare. It does so by facilitating the transition from welfare to work. It does so by targeting relief on needy families with children, particularly the working poor. And, it does so by simplifying the program. Under this bill, States and low-income households alike should find less paperwork and red tape. We can reduce errors while also removing some obstacles to eligible working families receiving food stamps.

The nutrition title contains a number of reforms that the states have been calling for on a bipartisan basis, including restored eligibility to legal immigrants that play by the rules. In addition, the title adds funding for the Emergency Food Assistance Program to help food banks and food pantries meet the needs they face.

I would particularly like to thank Chairman COMBEST, Representative GOODLATTE and Representative CLAYTON as well as all the members of the House Agriculture Committee for their work on this title. I am pleased that we have developed a title with strong bipartisan support believe that it will make concrete improvements in the nutrition safety net for low-income families.

Of course, I know that most Members have not had the opportunity to pore over the dense legislative language of the nutrition title in detail. I therefore would like to take this opportunity to explain some of the key food stamp provisions on behalf of myself and Representative CLAYTON, the ranking member on the Department Operations, Oversight, Nutrition and Forestry subcommittee of the Agriculture Committee, so that Members can have an idea how much this title has achieved and what an important component it is of this overall legislation.

One of our top priorities in this legislation is to help low-income families make the transition from welfare to work. Significant research shows that many families that leave the TANF cash assistance program do not receive food stamps even though they have very low-incomes and remain eligible. The Urban Institute found that only 40 percent of families that leave welfare continue to receive food stamps. This has meant that hundreds of thousands of low-income families that worked their way off welfare, only to lose one of the most critical work supports available to them—food stamps,

Food stamps can mean the difference between whether these families have enough income to put food on the table every day. It is in everyone's interest for these families' difficult transitions to be successful. A family is unlikely to regard its transition from welfare to work as a success if it cannot feed itself.

This legislation offers states a new option called transitional food stamps that would eliminate food stamp paperwork requirements for those families leaving TANF. This should enhance the food stamp program's ability to support families moving from welfare to work. States can provide this new transitional benefit to any category of eligible household that they choose except certain households under sanction for misconduct.

When a household leaves the state's cash assistance program, the state would simply recalculate their food stamp benefits without the cash benefits. This new amount would be the correct food stamp amount for all purposes and would be frozen for the next 5 months. There would be no contact between the state and the household at the beginning of the transitional period. Thus, the household would not have to comply with any procedural requirements to remain on the program.

We would give states the flexibility to make this a transitional benefit a freeze or to make adjustments for changes they become aware of in other programs. These changes could include a cost of living adjustment in Social Security benefits or a newborn child whom the state is covering under Medicaid or SCHIP. Of course, states would always have to adjust for automatic changes in the food stamp program such as the Thrifty Food Plan or the standard deduction.

As is always the case during a certification period, a household would retain the right to reapply to have its food stamps recalculated based on its current circumstances. Some households likely will experience major changes that render their transitional benefit amounts inadequate. These could include the loss of employment or the birth of a child. In these cases, the household may decide it is worth its while to go through the process of reapplying to have its benefits adjusted accordingly.

I am very pleased that the nutrition title will make significant strides toward simplifying the food stamp program. This can only help states, eligibility workers, working poor families, and everyone else connected with the program.

Last year, America's Second Harvest released a report entitled, ''The Red Tape Divide.'' This report detailed how long and complicated food stamp applications around the

country are. Some of the problem is because some states have yet to take steps to simplify their applications. But another part of the problem is that federal food stamp rules require far too much detail from households on unimportant matters.

This legislation provides states with several new options to streamline the food stamp program. These should result in less paperwork for those households already participating in the program as well as shorter food stamp applications. USDA should work with states to ensure that states are able to implement these provisions on the effective dates and need not wait for regulations.

Arguably, the biggest impact will come from the provision allowing states to extend ''semiannual reporting'' to a broader group of households. Currently, states may only apply semiannual reporting to households with earnings. Semiannual reporting eliminates a household's reporting obligations for 6 months at a time unless its income rises the program's gross income limit. The household provides information once every 6 months and the state relies upon this snapshot to issue benefits for the next 6 months.

This will significantly reduce paperwork and other administrative burdens on both participating households and state agencies. It directly responds to states' request to have more latitude within this option. This should encourage more states to adopt the option. It also should held align reporting rules among food stamps, TANF, and Medicaid. We encourage USDA to work with HHS to issue joint guidance on how states may use this new option to reduce overall reporting burdens for families as well as to better coordinate reporting requirements.

For example, we are concerned that under the current option that when a household reports a change for the purposes of the Medicaid program it could threaten the household's receipt of food stamps. This could be true even though the household remains eligible for food stamps. That makes no sense. A household should not be at risk of losing its food stamps unless the state has reason to believe that the household is no longer eligible for food stamps.

In crafting this proposal, we assume that the Department's major procedural rules for monthly reporting will apply to this option as well. For example, if a household files a late or incomplete semiannual report, it should be given an opportunity to supply the missing information.

We were disappointed not to have found a way to reduce reporting burdens significantly for the elderly, the disabled and other groups excluded from periodic reporting. I hope USDA will explore options that could ease their reporting requirements for these households as well so that we can build upon this legislation's momentum.

The bill allows states to align the definitions of income and resources in the food stamp program with the ones they apply in their Medicaid or TANF programs. Of course, the food stamp income and resource eligibility thresholds will remain, but these two provisions should give states sweeping new authority to eliminate unnecessary questions on their food stamp applications form about livestock, plasma sales state work study programs, individual retirement accounts, interest income, etc. We do include modest lists of items that states may not exclude under the new authority to conform. Obviously these lists are intended only to limit exclusions under the new paragraphs we are adding to the act. They do not affect exclusions under other paragraphs of sections 5(d) or (g). We urge the Secretary to add to these lists only where absolutely essential to ensure that food stamp benefits reasonably reflect need.

Along with simplifying the reporting and counting of income, we also simplified the deductions states apply to determine households' incomes. The shelter deduction targets food stamp benefits to households that have the most trouble affording a nutritious diet because their incomes are so low they have little left over for food after paying their shelter costs. Households typically can deduct utility expenses in addition to their rent or mortgage, other payments they must make to get or keep ownership of their homes, fire insurance, and a few other costs.

Since utility expenses vary so much from month to month, the program allows states to calculate households' utility costs with a fixed estimate, or standard utility allowance, in lieu of computing each household's particular utility bills. In welfare reform, we allowed states to require that all households's shelter deductions be calculated based on such a standard utility allowance or SUA.

In this bill, we further simplify the SUA by allowing some states to eliminate some of the current restrictions on when households may claim it. This provision would apply if the state took the option from welfare reform to require household to use the standard instead of their actual utility bills. In these states, if a household can show that it has at least one utility bill, other than just a telephone bill, the household would receive the SUA. It would not matter if the household was doubled up with another family or individual.

In recent years we have seen the utility costs households face soar in certain areas of the country because of various energy crises. I expect that these mandatory standards will be updated each year to reflect rising utility costs in the state. That will ensure that needy families do not have to choose between buying food for their families and paying their heat and other utility bills.

I am pleased that we were able to craft this legislation so that the new simplification options can begin to make a difference soon. On several of them USDA is likely want to promulgate rules. States will not have to wait for USDA to do so, however, before implementing the new options. For example, they can conform their definitions of income and resources to those in TANF or Medicaid without waiting for USDA to promulgate regulations about the items that cannot be excluded in the name of conformity.

Similarly, they can implement the provision allowing them to ignore most changes in households' deductions between certification periods without waiting for USDA to promulgate new regulations. They would, of course, still have to comply with existing USDA rules on when changes in earned income must be reflected in recalculated benefits. And, states would have to adjust benefits when a household elects to report that they have moved. The new rules, however, give states many options for minimizing the number of changes that require action. Freezing households' deductions is unlikely to cause significant hardship since the household can always reapply before the end of its certification period if a major rent increase, large new child care costs, or other deductible expenses render the household's current allotment inadequate.

Despite Congress's best efforts over the years, child support payments are not always as regular as they ought to be. This has caused states concern about when they should anticipate that a household will make or receive a payment. We examined this question closely. Fortunately, a large part of the answer can be found in longstanding USDA regulations on anticipating income. Whether a state is determining gross income or net income, these regulations provide that it may only count amounts reasonably certain to be received during the month in question. Last year, USDA amplified these regulations with some extremely helpful guidance that also gave states new options for simplifying the treatment of child support payments that a household receives.

This legislation builds upon that effort by extending the simplification to replace the deduction for child support payments made with an optional income exclusion. States now can exclude any legally obligated child support payments made by a household completely from income calculations. Thus, these potentially volatile payments need no longer be considered when applying the gross income eligibility limit. We did not mandate this change to avoid forcing states to undertake costly reprogramming of their computers purely to implement this provision.

In addition, the legislation directs USDA to establish procedures that permit states to rely on information from the state child support enforcement agencies in calculating households' incomes. We expect USDA will allow states great flexibility to rely on older information that might otherwise be appropriate. States' child support enforcement agencies often have computers that do not mesh effectively with the systems states rely upon to calculate food stamps. The value of simplification in this area seems far more important than that of requiring the household to verify the most current possible information. Of course, a household that chooses to submit information about recent changes in its child support obligations or payments should receive whatever food stamps those changes justify.

Finally, the legislation includes an experimental approach to providing food stamps to persons residing in certain kinds of institutions. Where a drug or alcohol rehabilitation center or similar facility would have served as the households' authorized representative anyway, the legislation allows states to provide a food stamp benefit directly to the home. As long as the claimant lived in the institution, the benefit would be calculated under a standardized formula that would not require the institution to gather a great deal of detail about the circumstances of each resident.

These procedures only apply in facilities that qualify as institutions under USDA's rules. Those regulations correctly limit the definition of an institution to a place that provides the majority of meals to its residents over the course of a month. The new group home procedures would not apply to a facility that does not regularly provide most of each resident's meals.

Also, we do not intend it to limit in any way the ability of victims of domestic violence or

others that are capable of managing their own benefits to participate under regular food stamp rules. We certainly do not want to compound the tragedy of domestic violence by stripping a woman of her food stamps.

This experiment should be a great convenience to centers as well as state agencies. In return for that convenience, we expect USDA and the states will require participating centers to have reliable systems for passing along notices to households and providing forwarding addresses to the state agency when a household moves. Residents leaving these centers in mid-month should not have to try to get by without adequate food assistance.

Upon investigating a few of the Senate bill's simplification proposals, we were delighted to find that USDA's regulations already provide states the option to simplify the program. For example, I was pleased to learn that the current rules allow states to simplify the conversion of weekly and biweekly amounts of earned income deduction in the food stamp program if they have done so in TANF. Under this authority, Maryland multiplies weekly paychecks by four to calculate monthly income in both TANF and food stamps. Thus, we saw no need to adopt a Senate provision in this area that would have reduced the earned income deduction.

Similarly, the Senate bill included a complicated provision that would have converted the food stamp recertification process into a redetermination system. Although this long has been a problem in the food stamp program, we discovered that recent changes USDA has made in its regulations address the major concerns. No one disputes the principle that a household should be able to receive food stamps continuously as long as it remains eligible. Also, no one intends that certification periods be so rigid as to create unnecessary burdens on either state agencies or households. On the other hand, we do believe it is important that states periodically confirm that a family in the food stamp program remains eligible just as they would for a family in any other on-going public benefit program.

Recent USDA regulations give states broad flexibility to extend certification periods without going through recertification processes. They also allow states to undertake reviews in the middle of an unexpired certification period by sending a request for contact where the state knows an important change has occurred but does not have enough information to act on that particular change. In both instances, the key is eligibility rather than an arbitrary review schedule set months in advance. The transitional food stamp provisions in both USDA regulations and this legislation similarly avoid entrapment in rigid certification periods.

The only question the Senate provision raised, then, was one of procedure. We preferred to maintain the one we had. Switching to a redetermination model would require states to undertake a costly reprogramming of their computers. It also could have allowed some inattentive eligibility workers to ignore review schedules and send food stamps to indisputably ineligible for many months.

Not only did we seek to simplify by changing the program, we also sought to promote innovative approaches to simplification within the existing structure of the program. Each year, USDA will have a significant pool of money it can use to fund creative uses of the discretion states already have to ease access for low-income working families and others in need. For example, my state has pioneered centralized change reporting centers that ensure that someone is always available to receive a household's report of an increase or decrease in its monthly wages. I hope that USDA will use some of this money to fund efforts to create joint applications for food stamps, Medicaid, and other work supports for households that do not want to receive welfare. In this regard, USDA should not hesitate to fund a promising idea that would improve the food stamp program just because its benefits might spill over into other areas.

Beyond these simplification provisions, we have made numerous other improvements in nutrition programs. We have streamlined the employment and training program to allow states easier access to these funds. This will give states flexibility to serve other groups of people that cannot receive employment and training services from other programs. For example, some households in which the parents are ineligible based on their immigration status might nonetheless be appropriate for food stamp employment and training assistance if some children in the household are getting food stamps. These children will benefit, and their need for food assistance will decline, if their parents can increase their earnings.

Because this fund is limited, however, we have retained the current prohibition on spending these funds in ways that effectively supplant funding available through the TANF block grant. The Food Stamp Employment and Training Program should be the funder of last resort for these programs.

We remain committed, however, to serving people subject to the three-month time limit. Unlike other applicants and recipients, these individuals cannot receive the food assistance they need unless they have the opportunity to work it off. The legislation requires USDA to give particular attention to this population when allocating the money among states. States that have elected to serve large numbers of unemployed childless adults should continue to have the resources to do so.

This change will expand states' ability to provide employment and training services that do not meet the definition of a work activity in the part of the law creating the 3-month time limit. These could include routine unsupervised job search activities and training programs lasting less than twenty hours per week. Months spent in these activities usually will not count as months of work for purposes of the 3-month time limit, but they may nonetheless help the individuals in question find private-sector employment. States already have broad authority to decide how to coordinate these various employment-related requirements under the act. This change will give them the funding flexibility to take advantage of that authority.

The conference report does not include Senate-passed provisions modifying the 3-month time limit. A major factor in this decision was our examination of the commonsense regulations USDA promulgated last year. We may want to revisit this provision of the law at some point in the future, but USDA reduced the urgency of that with the series of pragmatic and fair-minded choices it made.

The final bill does, however, eliminate the current $25 cap on the amount states may reimburse E&T participants for expenses other than dependent care. This cap was unreasonably limiting states' flexibility in designing their own programs. We expect USDA will continue its longstanding policy of giving states broad flexibility in how they provide these funds to participants. With states paying half of the cost, we have no need to impose federal paperwork burdens on States and households.

My own state of Texas was one of the first to issue food stamp benefits to households through electronic benefit transfer, or EBT, rather than paper coupons. The first generation of EBT contracts have begun to expire, and we are close to having a nationwide system of providing food stamp benefits via EBT. It therefore seems appropriate to take stock of the current system and some of the challenges that it present both to states and clients.

This legislation requires USDA to issue a report on the current status of EBT. I am particularly interested in what information the Department can share on ensuring that claimants have full access to EBT systems and on ensuring that those systems fully meet their obligation to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act. It is not acceptable to have eligible, needy individuals effectively denied food stamps because they lack the physical or mental skills necessary to use the equipment in a safe and reliable manner.

The final bill does not include a Senate-passed provision to ensure that no households' EBT benefits are taken ''off-line'' or made inaccessible unless the household has left them idle for at least 6 months. I was comfortable with this decision because the Department has informed us that it is already planning to implement this policy via regulation.

I am pleased that this legislation will restore eligibility to legal immigrants. We were very fortunate to work with the administration, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, the Congressional Black Caucus and many other members of Congress on this proposal. Legal immigrants' eligibility for food stamps was severely restricted in 1996, causing significant harm to these families. Many of these families contain poor citizen children who have left the food stamp program since the passage of the welfare law despite remaining eligible. We assume that this is because their parents have been confused about who in their family is eligible.

This bill would restore eligibility to qualified low-income legal immigrant children regardless of their entry date into the United States. In addition, qualified legal immigrant adults who have lived in the United States for 5 or more years with that status also are eligible. We decided to make these adults subject to sponsor deeming because the rules USDA implemented last year strike us as a sensible, equitable approach to balancing our desire not to provide food stamps to families that are being supported by their sponsors with the program's purpose of getting food to those in need. We do not expect USDA to make any changes in this area. In particular, these families should not be subjected to any additional paperwork requirements that may prove difficult to meet if the sponsor is uncooperative.

This restoration would bring food stamp policy for adults into conformity with the rules already in force in Medicaid and TANF. In each of the three programs, an adult becomes eligible for benefits 5 years after obtaining a qualified status. It does not matter if the immigrant

at one time was granted one qualified status, such as asylum, and now has another, such as legal permanent residency. The 5 years begin to run from the time the immigrant first obtained qualified status. This conformity should make these rules much simpler for states to administer and for immigrants to understand. Finally, the legislation would allow legal immigrants receiving benefits under specified disability-based programs to qualify for food stamps.

When we received cost estimates of this package from CBO and the administration on this proposal, neither projected any offsetting collections from sponsors as a result of immigrants receiving food stamps. This seems reasonable since so many low-income immigrants live with their sponsors. Over the years, Congress has consistently rejected proposals to require food stamp recipients to repay properly issued food stamp benefits. The OMB and CBO scores show that those agencies recognize that sponsor liability has never been intended as an end-run around that principle. No sponsor should incur a debt for food stamps that he or she receives along with the sponsored immigrants. The impact of this restoration would be compromised severely if eligible immigrants feared that their family members would be sent a bill as a result a their participation in the food stamp program.

This scoring guided our thinking in how to draft the proposals. Certainly, we do not intend to encourage affluent sponsors to abdicate their responsibilities. But we also do not intend for low-income sponsors who are a part of the food stamp household or family unit to incur a liability as a result of their family's or household member's participating in the food stamp program. How could an aunt who is also her nephew's sponsor elect to enroll that child in food stamps if it would simply result in the aunt receiving a bill for the value of those food stamps?

The bill also includes an important benefit improvement for all low-income households. The food stamp standard deduction, which operates like the standard deduction in the Tax Code, has been improved. First, the standard deduction will now be scaled to household size. Instead of a flat $134 deduction for all households, households will receive a deduction equal to 8.31 percent of that year's federal poverty guidelines. States must implement this provision by October 1, 2002. We understand that this effective date will represent a challenge for many states because it will require reprogramming their computer systems within a short period of time. We encourage USDA to work with states to provide some leeway for those states that are working diligently towards implementation but who may not be able to achieve the October 1 deadline. Of course, current law protect all states from quality control errors as a result of this provision for 6 months after the effective date.

One of the most profound reforms to the food stamp program included in the bill is the new direction for the quality control system. There has been longstanding agreement amongst states, antihunger groups, and the administration that the quality control system needs to be reformed. The reforms included in this bill will ease federal-state relations and allow state administrators to adopt a balanced approach to program administration. Payment accuracy will remain essential, but not to the exclusion of the program's basic goals. While continuing the program's commitment to payment accuracy, the new formula will restrict sanctions to the worst offenders, as recommended by the National Academy of Science's review of the quality control system.

The new system eliminates the feature of current law that puts about half of the states in sanction each year. This will allow USDA to focus its energies on states with persistent payment accuracy problems. Under the new system, the threshold for sanction is increased to exclude states with error rates very near the national average from fiscal penalties. In addition, states whose measured error rate may exceed the threshold only due to statistical uncertainty are exempt from sanction. Finally, no action is taken against states in the first year they exceed the threshold; these states are given an opportunity to improve their performance before they are subject to a penalty.

If USDA determines with statistical confidence that a state has triggered a sanction by exceeding the threshold in a second consecutive year, USDA has three choices.

First, it can require the state to reinvest up to 50 percent of the sanction to improve administration of the program. The legislation is deliberately open-ended about what kinds of program improvements can be the goals of reinvestment efforts. We believe each state is likely to be the best judge of what improvements it needs. Current USDA policy sensibly allows reinvestments seeking to improve program access as well as those that seek to improve payment accuracy.

Second, USDA can designate up to 50 percent of state's potential liability to be held at risk. The state must pay moneys held at risk from the previous year if the state's error again is subject to sanction. If the state is not subject to sanction in the following year, the amount held at risk is automatically waived.

Thus, the state would not pay any sanctions unless it exceeded the threshold for sanctions for the third consecutive year, determined again in a statistically reliable manner. USDA cannot collect sanctions during the year in which they are applied.

Finally, USDA can waive any portion of the sanction amount. Any sanctions that are not reinvested or held at risk must be waived. USDA should consider the causes of the state agency's problems and whether the state's error rate is falling along with other relevant factors when determining how much to waive of a state's sanction to waive. Where the state is clearly on the road to correcting its problem, even a complete waiver may make sense.

The final bill does not include an important feature of the Senate-passed bill, adjustments to sanctions for states doing a particularly good job of serving low-wage working families or immigrant households. Since 1998, USDA has adjusted the sanction liabilities of states to eliminate the impact of high or rising proportions of working poor households or low-income immigrants. Last year, the Department wrote to the states to assure them that it would continue to make these adjustments. USDA informs us that it has done so again with regard to states' error rates in fiscal year 2001. USDA reiterated to us its pledge to continue making these adjustments so that no state is thrown into sanction, or has its sanction increased, because it is serving a high or rising proportion of immigrants or earners. With USDA taking this action through its administrative authority, we saw no need to included in adjustments in the statutory changes to the system.

I must confess to some nervousness about the timetable for implementing this new system. On the one hand, the current system would remain in place for the current fiscal year. I hope USDA will apply its broad discretion to waive the sanctions of states estimated to exceed the sanction threshold by small or statistically unreliable margins as these states would not be sanctioned under the new system.

More significantly, under this legislation no state would be subject to automatic sanctions in fiscal year 2003, no matter how seriously and chronically it had failed to meet our payment accuracy goals. By extension, fiscal year 2004 could count as no more than a second year for states, even those with serious problems in 2002 and before. I fear this one-time relaxation in QC sanctions could lead to an unacceptable increase in the national payment error rate. None of us have any desire to yield back any of the hard-won gains of recent years.

Neither our bill nor the Senate's provided for gaps of this nature. We adopted this timetable solely at the suggestion of the Department. We trust that the Department will use its broad authority to sanction ineffective or inefficient program administration in the case of any state whose payment accuracy performance during this transition is seriously flawed. The Department must bear the responsibility of ensuring that this lengthy transition that it has requested does not undermine the program's integrity.

The legislation that gives USDA new authority to penalize those states that appeal their quality control error rate findings and that lose their appeal. This is provided to ensure that USDA is not barraged with patently frivolous appeals. Since states cannot be made fully whole for reinvested moneys that ultimately are found not to be owning, a state with a good faith dispute over a sanction could reasonably wait to begin reinvestment until its appeal is resolved. USDA should not deny these states the opportunity to reinvest any sanctions ultimately found due.

The bill also replaces the current system of enhanced funding for states with extremely low error rates with a system of high performance bonuses. The criteria upon which USDA awards these bonuses should reflect a balanced picture of the goals of state administration of the program. Payment accuracy is an important part of that system, but so are complying with the law's application processing deadlines and its requirements to make food assistance accessible to those in need. Measures focusing on administrative service, such as timeliness and denying only those applicant households that are ineligible, should be a significant portion of the bonus package. By requiring USDA to consult with states in developing its system of bonus payments, we by no means intend to suggest that USDA may exclude academics, claimants' advocates, and others from its consultations on this issue.

In conclusion, with this legislation, Congress will improve benefits for many of our nation's neediest families and accomplish historic simplification of the food stamp program, better enabling states to serve working families with this critical work support.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SWEENEY). The gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST) is recognized for 3½ minutes.

Mr. COMBEST. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. NUSSLE), the chairman of the Committee on the Budget.

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

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, no farm bill is perfect, but this conference report deserves our support. I will support it.

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

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD a list of the groups we have heard from just today in support of the bill.

National Cattlemen's Beef Association
South East Dairy Farmers Association
National Milk Producers Federation
The Alliance of Western Milk Producers
National Pork Producers Council
United Egg Producers
Alliance for Agricultural Conservation
National Association of Wheat Growers
Coalition for Food Aid
Food Research and Action Center
National Farmers Union
United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association
National Cotton Council
Renewable Fuels Association
National Corn Growers Association
Land O'Lakes
American Farm Bureau Federation
USA Rice Federation
National Grain Sorghum Producers
American Sheep Industry Association
Dairy Farmers of America
American Beekeeping Federation
U.S. Apple Association
American Sugar Alliance
American Sugarbeet Growers Association
U.S. Beet Sugar Association
American Sugarcane League
Florida Sugarcane League
Rio Grande Valley Sugar Growers Inc.
Hawaii Sugar Farmers
Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative of Florida
Illiinois Corn Growers Association
National Barley Growers Association
National Sunflower Association
USA Dry Pea and Lentil Council
U.S. Canola Association
American Soybean Association
US Rice Producers Association
CoBank
Independent Community Bankers of America
National Association of Conservation Districts
National Association of State Foresters
Ducks Unlimited
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Ducks Unlimited
International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
National Rifle Association
Pheasants Forever
Quail Unlimited
The Wildlife Society
Wildlife Management Institute

Mr. Speaker, I heard concerns about how our trading partners to the south, our trading partners to the north, our trading partners in Europe may be looking at this. Mr. Speaker, this is a farm bill for rural America. This is not for rural Mexico, this is not for rural Canada, this is not for rural Europe.

I would also call to the attention of my colleagues, in the motion to recommit it mentions that parts of the money would go to conservation programs, parts of money would go to nutrition programs, parts of the money would go to rural development programs, parts of the money would go to energy programs. So for my conservative colleagues that think that this spends too much money, it does not change the spending; it simply puts it somewhere else.

Also, it may be great language for a recommit motion, but I would encourage my friends to read the conservation title, the nutrition title, the rural development title and the energy title. Those all have extensive programs. The decision of where that would go would take, I feel, a great deal of time, having spent the last 2 months working through a conference.

I would also say you do not create a conference report of this magnitude in a vacuum. Anytime you make a change in one area, you make substantive change somewhere else. It may be easy on the floor to say well, we could just do this and then move on.

That is simply not possible. It would take a tremendous amount of time to go back in and look at the programs that are in place that are based upon the conference report as was reported. It would take extensive amounts of time to go back in and try to rebalance those. We would have to look at all of the conservation payment limitations that are in fact in place. We would have to look at the payment limitations in other areas, such as the farmland protection areas. All this would take considerable time.

Mr. Speaker, we do not have the time. We are out of time. And let there be no doubt about it, if the motion to recommit passes, this conference report is dead. We will be back to writing a new program under a new budget score. And if we think it was difficult to write this over 2½ years, I cannot even imagine the difficulty in writing a new one.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the intensity of all of the Members who have participated today. This is a day that I have looked forward to for 2½ years.

I include the following:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE,
Washington, DC, March 7, 2002.

Hon. LARRY COMBEST,
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture, Longworth Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: We have reviewed the Senate amendment to H.R. 2646, the Farm Security Act of 2001, which is now before the Conference Committee. Under rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure has jurisdiction over ''pollution of navigable waters.'' Certain provisions of the Senate Amendment to H.R. 2646 fall within that jurisdiction, including:

Section 203—This section amends section 1243 of the Food Security Act of 1985 to authorize funding for, among other things, meeting the purpose of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act.

Section 213—This section amends section 1240 of the Food Security Act of 1985 to include as a purpose, assisting livestock producers in complying with the Federal Water Pollution Control Act.

Section 262—This section establishes a Klamath Basin Interagency Task Force that includes the Environmental Protection Agency, and includes as a duty, using existing Federal programs in the Klamath Basin for ''improvement of water quality.'' Existing federal programs for the improvement of water quality in the Klamath basin are programs under the Federal Water Pollution Control Act.

Our Committee recognizes the importance of this legislation and the need to conclude the conference expeditiously. While we have a valid claim to jurisdiction over the provisions outlined above, I have not asked that the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee be named Conferees. This is conditional on our mutual understanding that we are not waiving any jurisdiction over these or any similar provisions and that you work with us to resolve any concerns we may have about them.

I would also appreciate it if you would have this letter and your response inserted into the Record when the Conference Report on the legislation is considered on the Floor.

I look forward to working with you on this matter and thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

DON YOUNG,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
Washington, DC, March 13, 2002.

Hon. DON YOUNG,
Chairman, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Rayburn HOB, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN YOUNG: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 2646, the Farm Security Act of 2001, which is now before the Conference Committee. I look forward to working with you on items within your jurisdiction in order to complete this important legislation in an expeditious manner.

Recognizing your Committee's jurisdiction under House Rule X, with respect to the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, I appreciate your cooperation in not seeking the appointment of conferees. I agree that your decision to forego the appointment to the Conference Committee will not prejudice the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure with respect to its jurisdictional prerogatives on this or similar matters and I look forward to working with you to resolve the issues at hand.

I greatly appreciate your cooperation in this matter and I will insert a copy of our exchange of letters in the Congressional Record during consideration of the Conference Report.

Sincerely,

LARRY COMBEST,
Chairman.

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the conference report for the farm bill. Overall, I think this is a good bill and I thank the conferees for their hard work.

This bill makes significant improvements to our current farm policy, which has not worked as promised to help American farmers. This bill will restore counter-cyclical payments to provide support to farmers when market prices for a commodity drop below a target price, restoring the safety net that was cut with the 1996 Freedom to Farm Act. In addition, the bill

reauthorizes the existing programs that provides fixed annual payments and marketing loans to commodity producers and continues the planting flexibility that came out of the Freedom to Farm Act.

The bill also provides a significant increase in funding for conservation programs. such as the Conservation Reserve Program and the Wetlands Reserve Program. These programs are very important to the farmers in the Congressional District I represent, and I am glad to see that there will be adequate funding for the expansion of these key programs.

I am also pleased that the conference report includes $405 million for energy-related programs, including the Commodity Credit Corporation bio-energy program. This program pays producers who purchase commodities for the purpose of producing biodiesel and fuel-grade ethanol. Illinois is the largest producer of ethanol, and the continuation of this program is good news for our farmers.

Mr. Speaker, overall I believe that this is good legislation, and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill to help America's farmers.

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I have no choice but to oppose the conference report before us today. I agree that there are some excellent provisions. I support the increase in spending for conservation, as well as the country-of-origin labeling and research subsidies. I also support the restoration of food stamps for legal immigrants, and indeed, have voted numerous times during my tenure to support restoration of food stamp benefits to legal immigrants.

But I cannot in good conscience vote for this bloated bill. What we hope will come out of a conference is a well-reasoned and reasonable compromise. In reality, the end result is frequently an agreement to split the difference. Today, we are presented with an even less appealing compromise—an agreement that is completely out of proportion to the requests of either the House or Senate bill. This is hugely irresponsible in a time of economic duress and budget shortfalls.

It is the sins of omissions that are the downfall of this bill. I am sorely disappointed to see that the conferees chose to ignore the will of the House and of the Senate and not implement the recommended subsidy payment limitations. The result would cost this country billions of dollars while benefiting the largest corporate farms and big agro-business. This does not help the small farmer. In fact, these huge handouts would aid corporate farms in buying out the small farmers the bill purports to protect.

And there are other glaring omissions. Gone are the provisions that would improve animal welfare. Many important conservation measures have been gutted. As a percentage of the total, the conservation portion is actually less than it was in the 1990 Farm Bill.

For these reasons, I oppose this conference report. The bill represents a missed opportunity and it is a failure.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the conference report on H.R. 2646. I want to commend the Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Committee on Agriculture and the Chairman and Ranking Member from the other body for their hard work in getting this bill through conference.

The Committee on International Relations also has a substantial interest in H.R. 2646, as the Committee has jurisdiction on trade and export programs as well as international food aid, all of which we addressed in Committee consideration of Title III.

The conference report strikes an appropriate balance between international food aid programs and trade promotion. I am pleased to note that the report also preserves the reform's to the Food for Peace authorities in substantially the same form as the Committees recommendation and contains further reforms for the Food for Progress suggested by the Senate.

By strengthening our international food aid programs, this bill helps to ensure that tens of thousands of hungry men, women and children do not starve to death simply because they were born in a country with chronic food shortages, civil war or poor governance.

While U.S. food aid programs authorized by the bill before us today cannot end world hunger, they can play a crucial role in helping our nation meet its moral obligation to alleviate human suffering in places like sub-saharan Africa, the Middle East and South Asia while at the same time help to support thousands of American farm families. As we have seen, suffering and despair can often be manipulated and turned into a breeding ground for evil and hate.

I am also very pleased that we have been able to include two new but very important provisions. This bill will permanently authorize the Global Food for Education Initiative launched by Ambassador George McGovern and former Senator Bob Dole, and provides $100 million in bridge funding for the pilot program while additional funding is being identified.

The second provision is the Farmers for Africa and the Caribbean initiative, first introduced by Congresswoman EVA CLAYTON as H.R. 1894 which will help bring American farming expertise to the countries that most need if through farmer to farmer type programs.

This legislation will also increase American agricultural exports, which support thousands of farm families around our nation. Considering that agricultural exports account for nearly one fourth of all farm income, it is vital that we continue to support or trade promotion programs.

Mr. Speaker, these programs epitomize the true American spirit and the values we hold dear. Through these programs, we are able to take the bounty of our lands and share it with the needy and the hungry around the world. At the same time, we are able to help sustain the family farms and help producers and growers expand their markets. It is no wonder that these programs enjoy such widespread support.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the tremendous work by the staff on the Committee on International Relations on this legislation. In particular, I would like to pay tribute to Nisha Desai and Paul Oostburg, without whom essential issues relating to U.S. international food aid would have been far less robust than the bill before the floor today. People around the world owe them their thanks.

I hope that all of my colleagues will support the conference report.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with much disappointment that the animal protection provisions once included in the Farm Bill were stripped out during conference committee.

As a long-time champion of animal rights, I have been a cosponsor of The Downed Animal Protection Act, The Bear Protection Act, the ban on cockfighting, and similar pieces of legislation since my early days in Congress. And with each year that they are introduced and re-introduced, the House comes closer and closer to passing them, but yet we always fall short. The Farm Bill was the best vehicle in recent memory for finally having these protections signed into law. But, alas, we find ourselves back at square one.

Despite this missed opportunity, I ultimately decided to support the Farm Bill because it contains several positive provisions that will greatly benefit many of my constituents. The Nutritional Title within the bill is one of the most important pieces of food stamp legislation in 25 years. It invests almost $7 billion over ten years in crucial improvements in the program, including a restoration of benefits to all documented immigrant children and to immigrant adults who have resided in the country for five years. The bill also provides families with transitional food stamps as they leave welfare and move into jobs, making the difficult transition much more stable.

In addition, the Farm Bill includes $275 million for the Watershed Rehabilitation Program which will provide much-needed resources to protect and preserve the New York City Watershed. The bill also contains provisions that will be beneficial for fruit and vegetable growers and dairy farmers in Upstate New York.

While I am pleased that the Farm Bill made vital improvements in the Food Stamp Program and invested in important agriculture initiatives, I do not approve of the conferee's decision to strip out the animal rights protections. It is my sincere hope that Congress will quickly revisit and implement these crucial protections that have been put off for far too long.

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, as I've traveled across Northeast Iowa and listened to members of the agricultural community over the last few years, the shape and the content of the new farm bill has been the centerpiece of our discussions. I've heard from many farmers about the challenges they face, their preferences for this legislation and their hopes for a quick resolution.

I voted for the original Freedom to Farm legislation in 1996. Freedom to Farm was working until the United States fell prey to a trade war, a currency collapse and substantially subsidized overproduction in South America. Accordingly, as Chairman of the House Budget Committee, I constructed the fiscal year 2002 and fiscal year 2003 budgets to set aside necessary funding. I did this so Congress could write a new farm program as soon as possible to meet these challenges farmers have faced since the implementation of Freedom to Farm.

As Chairman of the Budget committee, I am pleased that the conference agreement fits within the amounts assumed for reauthorization of a farm bill within the fiscal year 2002 budget resolution. Our budget resolution accommodated these amounts by establishing a 302(a) allocation for the Committee on Agriculture for fiscal year 2002 that could be used at the committee's discretion for emergency relief or reauthorization of a farm bill. It set aside the rest in a reserve fund that can only be used for reauthorization of the farm bill.

Our budget resolution also allocated $7.35 billion in fiscal year 2002 and $73.5 billion

over the period of fiscal years 2002 to 2011. According to the Congressional Budget Act, bills may not exceed the appropriate levels in the budget resolution. This conference agreement meets this standard. Chairman COMBEST, Ranking Member STENHOLM, and their staffs have worked hard to ensure that this bill complies within the Budget Committee guidelines and I recommend them for this.

Farmers needed and deserved a farm bill last year to adequately prepare for 2002 crops. I believe allowing this debate to go so long was irresponsible and unsympathetic to the challenges Iowa's farmers face each crop year.

I am extremely disappointed that the final conference agreement failed to include a ban on packer ownership of livestock. Because I realized how critical it is for Iowa's livestock producers, I introduced separate legislation on this issue in February. The leaders of the conference committee promised to continue investigating packer ownership of livestock and its effects on producers. I plan to remind them of that promise and will pursue every avenue remaining to find a solution.

My second major concern about the conference agreement is that it fails to address payment limitations in a meaningful manner.

I fear the lack of these two provisions will drive more family farmers in Iowa to experience the harmful effects of consolidation in the marketplace.

I am also concerned about the new Conservation Security Program included in the final bill. As a new, unproven entitlement program, it potentially takes dollars away from conservation programs that have proven successful in the past such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). We will need to closely monitor the effects of this initiative.

While the conference agreement is clearly far from perfect, I believe there are numerous strengths that must be considered as well.

The overall package placed before us today is an improvement over the status quo when it comes to the support and safety net the Iowa farmers have requested. That is precisely what I provided funding in my budget to accomplish, and that is why I voted to approve the conference report.

Overall, the new farm bill provides necessary stability for agriculture by maintaining planting flexibility and implementing countercyclical payments to help farmers deal with poor weather conditions and unfavorable market conditions.

I am very pleased that his legislation includes much needed funds for rural development including rural business investment, emergency personnel and firefighters and high speed internet access for rural areas.

This legislation also includes important provisions for the improvement of trade for Iowa's farmers. The legislation includes funding for the Market Assistance Program as well as the Foreign Market Development Cooperator Program. I am also pleased that this legislation include a National Dairy Program intended to help all dairy producers and significantly increases conservation programs, an 80 percent increase over Freedom to Farm.

While a new farm program is indeed the centerpiece for a prosperous future for Iowa's farmers, further action is still necessary to ensure a strong and healthy agricultural economy. We must continue to press for better trade agreements, including the approval of Trade Promotion Authority for the President. Agriculture also deserves improved treatment under the tax code. Opportunities also exist to benefit farmers in pending energy legislation and regulatory relief.

While one size will never fit all when it comes to agricultural legislation, the Farm Security Act provides the support and safety net that Iowa farmers have asked for. As such, I vote to approve the Farm Security Act.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I rise in reluctant but real opposition to the Conference Report for H.R. 2646, the Farm security Act.

My opposition is reluctant because I do think Congress should enact a new farm bill this year, to establish sound policies for agriculture and to do such essential things as the extension and expansion of the food stamps program and further the use of renewable sources of energy.

But my opposition is real because this conference report not only falls short of the ideal—as does most legislation—but also fails the fundamental tests of fairness and responsible public policy.

In 1996, Congress passed the Freedom to Farm Act. I was not a Member of Congress at that time, but I understand its basic purpose was to allow more flexibility to farmers to plant different crops depending on market demands. It was also supposed to reduce government involvement in farming and save taxpayers money.

It seems clear to me that experience since 1996 has shown that the legislation needed revision—but this bill goes far beyond a mere revision. Instead, the principles of the 1996 legislation have been abandoned, and now we are faced with a farm bill that increases spending by more than $73 billion dollars.

The Commodity Title of this bill, which is supposed to provide farmers with ''security,'' is seriously flawed. First off it provides government payments to only a few commodity producers, those who produce corn, rice, wheat, cotton, soybeans, sorghum, barley and oats. And even for those producers it is structured so that it will provide the most subsidies to the largest producers. As a result, the small family farmers will get a little government assistance, while some of the largest farms will receive the bulk of the subsidies. In my opinion, this is not the way to really provide security for America's farm families or to stabilize commodity prices in a sustainable way. Instead, this title will encourage farmers to overproduce the favored commodities because they are guaranteed a price for their crop, and taxpayers will make up the difference between the set price and the market price.

Equally important, the conference report's conservation provisions are simply inadequate.

There are a number of farmer conservation programs that have had a history of success that are authorized by the farm bill. The biggest problem with these programs is that they have been underfunded and many farmers who qualify and want to participate in these programs can't. The House farm bill provided $1.6 billion for these programs and the Senate bill provided $2.4 billion. But the Conference report only provides $1.4 billion for these programs. This bill does not go far enough with these conservation programs that farmers support.

So, while the conference report does have some provisions that deserve support—from school lunch programs, to WIC—overall it does not deserve enactment.

Farmers need some sort of security program to protect them from poor weather conditions, rapid price fluctuations, disease, and other perils. They need security, but this bill does not do that. This bill will have Colorado taxpayers—including both farmers and consumers—pay out more money to subside out of state farmers than Colorado farmers and the environment will receive in benefits.

We need a better bill to provide security to all farmers.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, American agriculture now stands at a crossroads. The question that we as a society have to answer is do we want an agricultural system that is comprised of very few, very large corporate producers—probably owned by one of the largest supermarket chains and probably overseas—or do we want a decentralized system of family based agriculture that produces food in rural communities across the nation.

Foe me, the answer is clear. We need to support and preserve family based agriculture throughout the Nation in all commodities. Why do I say this? Why should Americans care that their food is produced overseas on large corporate farms? While overseas producers are not as efficient as US farmers, they are in many cases lower cost producers because the cost of land and labor are, to excuse the pun, dirt cheap. And the health and safety standards and environmental standards are far more lax than ours, if they exist at all. So, Americans may get food that is produced more cheaply overseas. But is that the only consideration that should dictate the shape of American agriculture. I don't think so. For a host of reasons it is increasingly clear that corporate controlled farming is bad for the Nation.

First, I consider the preservation of the family farm a question of national security. Everyone in this room will agree that we are far too dependent on foreign oil. With all the troubles today in the Middle East we see how vulnerable our economy is to foreign upheavals over which we have little or no control. In 1991, when Iraq invaded Kuwait, this nation went to war quickly in order to protect our oil supply from the Middle East. How vulnerable will we be if we become dependent on foreign nations for our food?

Secondly, small decentralized farms are important for our environment. When farming is spread out it has less impact on the environment. In addition, family farms help reduce the blight of suburban sprawl that is gobbling up so much open space in this country.

Thirdly, family farming is an integral and critical part of our rural economy. They support not only their own families, but also a host of related businesses like feed stores, equipment dealers, and local retailers. They also maintain the scenic landscape that is so important for the tourist industry in Vermont and elsewhere.

Finally, consumers are ultimately the winners when food is produced on family run farms across the country. As I mentioned earlier, one of the reasons that American farmers can be undersold is that we have some of the highest food safety standards in the world. While that makes our food more expensive to produce, it also means that American consumers can be more certain that the food they are buying is high quality and safe for their families. And as for the cheaper cost of production overseas, consumers are unlikely to

benefit. Consolidation in the retailing and processing industry means that lower cost food from overseas is more likely to provide increased profits for them rather than lower consumer prices.

Those are just some of the reasons that, in my view, we need to promote a system of family based agriculture. But as you know that trends are currently against those of us that support family farmers. In 1950, there were 5,388,437 farms in the U.S. By 1997, that number had fallen to 1,911,859. That's a loss of 3,476,578. Or to put it another way, in just 47 years, almost two-thirds of the farms in the U.S. had vanished.

But while farms were getting fewer, they were also getting bigger. The average farm in 1050 was 216 acres. By 1997, the size of the average farm had more than doubled to 487 acres.

Just as troubling and perhaps more troubling for farmers is that the people who buy their product—namely the processors and retailers—have become larger and larger to the point that they have far, far too much control over the price that farmers get for their milk.

In 2000, the top five food retailers controlled 42% of retail sales in the U.S. This represents a staggering fast consolidation because the top five retailers in 1993 only controlled 20% of food sales and as late as 1997 the top five only controlled 24% of food sales.

The same is true among dairy processors. As of 2000, the top four dairy processors controlled 35% of the fluid milk market. That's over a 34% increase in only 2 years.

And regionally, control is even more concentrated. Although Suiza entered the dairy processing industry in 1993, by 2000 it controlled 70% of fluid milk processing and distribution in 13 Northeastern states.

This consolidation is not limited to dairy, it is happening in every agricultural commodity. The top four beef packers control 81% of the market. Among pork packers, the top four control 59%. The top three corn exporters control 81% of their market. Those top three corn exporters also are the top three soybean exporters and they control 65% of that market.

In a business environment like this, family farmers are getting squeezed harder and harder as fewer and fewer buyers control the marketplace. It's true for dairy, it's true for apples, it's true for commodities across the spectrum.

This imbalance in the marketplace and this consolidation in the among producers is being accelerated by the increased amounts of foreign trade in agricultural products.

In 2000, the U.S. was importing enough cheese and dairy ingredients to replace some 10.6 billion pounds of domestic milk production. The U.S. exported the equivalent of 4.3 billion pounds. That's a trade deficit of 6.3 billion pounds of milk.

And this pattern is going to get worse as processors and retailers look to cheaper sources of food to fatten their profit margins.

In fact, a 2001 report from the University of Missouri noted that if there was completely free trade in dairy, the world milk price would always be lower than the U.S. cost of production. This led the researchers to conclude, and I quote, ''If the dairy lobby is successful in opening up global trade through the World Trade Organization (WTO), we will find most of the remaining 90,000 US dairy farms exiting rapidly.'' What an absolute tragedy that would be.

Now if you agree with me that America needs family farmers; and if you agree with me that we, at a minimum, need to protect small farmers from the increasing power of the concentrated processing and retailing sectors, what should we do?

What we need to do is make sure that we have agricultural policies that protect, promote and empower family farmers in this country. That means for a start that we do not put American farmers at the mercy of world milk prices.

We also need a federal agricultural policy that doesn't focus its help on large farms. Under the failed 1996 so-called ''Freedom to Farm'' program, only 40% of farmers in the US received subsidies. 60% did not. The top ten percent received 70% of the subsidies. Fifty percent of farmers received only 2%. Companies like DuPont, Archers Daniel Midland, Boise Cascade and others have received hundreds of thousands of dollars.

I am therefore disappointed that the payment caps I voted to support and that the Senate included in its version of the farm bill were not included in the final bill. As the votes demonstrated, there is majority support in both bodies of Congress for this provision.

However, even though the payment caps were excluded, as were other positive proposals, this Farm Bill represents a major victory for family dairy farmers in Vermont and across this country. When the Northeast Dairy Compact expired last fall, family farmers in New England were left at the mercy of the outrageously low $9.90 support price. I am also pleased to say that the entire Vermont delegation pulled out all the stops to extend and expand the Compact. But we were opposed by the dairy processors, who were working with large producers in the West, and Congresspeople from the Upper Midwest who, mistakenly in my view, thought the Compact hurt their farmers.

Last October, I introduced an amendment on the floor of the House to create a national dairy program that would provide family dairy farmers across the country with benefits equal to what New England dairy farmers received under the Compact. We were opposed by the top Republican and the top Democrat on the Agriculture Committee, both of whom are from Texas. Much to everyone's surprise, we received 194 votes after just two weeks of organizing. Much of the credit for the strong showing that this amendment received goes to colleagues from the Midwest and the South who joined with myself and other Northeastern members in support of this national plan. It is fair to say that without the courage and leadership of those Midwestern and Southern Members was critical to our success.

Vermont's Senators then took that concept into the Senate where a version was included in the Senate bill. Now the House and Senate conferees have completed working out the differences between the House and Senate versions of the Farm Bill and the final version includes a new national dairy program that will accomplish what we have been fighting.

The new national program would provide virtually the same benefits as did the Compact with the difference being that the money would come from the Federal Government as opposed to the processors. Now I, as much as anyone, want the processors to have to pay a fair price for their product. But without the Compact, family dairy farmers in Vermont and across this country need this safety net. My hope is that in years to come we can shift the funding source back where it belongs, on the processors so that farmers are getting their money from the market. But it makes no sense to let thousands of family farmers go out of business while we work to make that happen. This program will also help make sure that farm subsidy payments are more evenly distributed across the country. Right now, the vast majority of the money goes to the Midwestern and Southern states who produce program crops.

Of course, that Federal Government has much more to do if we are to save family farming in this country. In addition to making sure federal ag policy benefits small farmers, we have to address the concentration issue among processors and retailers by enforcing our current antitrust laws and perhaps enacting new ones if current law doesn't offer enough protections.

The road ahead for family agriculture is not going to be an easy one. But farmers will not have to fight it alone. There are millions and millions of Americans who do not live on farms or in rural communities who understand the value—from a national security standpoint, from an environmental standpoint, from an economic standpoint, from a consumer standpoint—of decentralized family based agriculture in the country. They will be your allies. At the same time, farmers have to realize that the corporate, agribusiness interests are the opponents of family-based agriculture. They need to be cut loose so that, for example when they want outrageous free trade agreements that allow them to purchase agricultural products overseas at a fraction of the U.S. price, family farmers all over this country stand up and say no. It will be a tough fight but together we can reshape American agriculture for the better.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, we have done a tremendous job fixing our system of social welfare, and the reforms have been a tremendous success in my district and across the nation. We did the heavy lifting in 1996 and we will reauthorize those reforms later this year.

I find it extremely troubling that our Nation's agricultural policies seem to follow a philosophy completely opposite that of our social policies: a hand out, not a hand up. At the same time we're preparing to strengthen our social welfare reforms, we're completely repealing any semblance of agricultural reform.

This Farm Bill will bring our total agricultural spending to $208 billion over 10 years. It not only perpetuates crop subsidy programs, it virtually doubles them. It represents business-as-usual for our nation's heavily-subsidized agriculture community.

Our Nation's agriculture policy is possibly the most disgraceful aspect of the entire federal government. If I had my way, I would scrap the wasteful, bureaucratic Department of Agriculture and all its programs, and start from scratch! The Department has an astonishing 99,000 full-time employees. By comparison, the Department of Education has just 5,000 employees.

We need to come to grips with the fact that our farms are growing too many crops, which has led commodity prices to plummet. Yet, in the face of such convincing evidence, we refuse to take any market-oriented approach. Instead, we will be exacerbating the problem by providing even more subsidies, thereby encouraging marginal farmers to continue to

overproduce and send prices further downward. Why is agriculture immune to basic economics? Because, I suspect, America has a romance with the family farm. Farming represents all that is good and pure in America.

This motion is recommit will make two extremely modest improvements to our farm policies. First, it will limit annual farm payments to $275,000 for a married couple per year. Second, it will shift the money saved by these limits to conservation programs.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly oppose this Farm Bill because it continues our failed, wasteful, anti-competitive agriculture policies. I urge my colleagues to vote for the motion to recommit and against the underlying bill.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, for the last 68 days, 11 of my House colleagues and I have worked to resolve differences with our Senate counterparts and finish a farm bill.

The House Agriculture Committee began writing this bill more than two years ago. We held 47 hearings in Washington and across the country, and heard testimony from 368 producers and the organizations that represent them. More than 2,500 farmers and ranchers participated in the process of crafting the House bill, which was approved unanimously by the Committee and was passed last October by the full House with bipartisan support, on a vote of 291–120. This bill reflects a broad effort to respond to the concerns and needs of agricultural producers, rural citizens, and American consumers.

Why this effort to approve a farm bill? Because our farmers need it, rural America deserves it, and our consumers demand it.

The American farmer is the most efficient producer of food and fiber of anyone in the world. For an example of the benefits of agriculture we enjoy in America, let's consider a loaf of bread. I purchased this loaf of bread this morning at my neighborhood grocery store for $1.69. Each bushel of wheat, for which the farmer receives about $2.50, yields 65 loaves of bread. That means the farmer receives about $.04 for each loaf sold—when was the last time you purchased a loaf of bread for 4 cents, the amount actually going to producers? It's easy to see why farmers grow increasingly frustrated by the widening gap between the prices consumers pay and the commodity prices they receive.

There's no doubt that times are tough in farm country. The ag economy continues to suffer the burden of low market prices and rising costs of production, and producers, already squeezed by narrow profit margins, pay the price.

Last month, I completed my 66-country tour and story was the same in each town hall meeting from Alemena to Zurich. Record low prices and poor weather conditions paint a bleak picture for farm families.

This week's headlines in Kansas read: ''High Input Costs, Lower Livestock Income Cut Kansas Farm Income 28.6%''; ''Bankers Indicate the Farm-related Businesses Continue to Struggle''; and ''Falling Prices Mean Big Losses for Cattle Feeders.'' Average net farm income in Kansas last year totaled less than $28,000 per farm. Total farm expenses increased 7 percent and average farm debt climed to 34 percent of assets, up 32 percent from the year before. In 2000, a farmers spent $81 for every $100 worth of farm products sold. In 2001, those input costs climbed to $87 for the same level of market returns.

Even more recently, the market price drops have been dramatic. The breakeven price for the average cattle feeder on May 1 was about $70 cwt. On April 29, cattle prices were $62—down from $73 on March 1, just two months earlier. That means that producers lost around $120 on every animal they sold. Multiply that number for an individually-owned, 10,000 head feedyard in Ashland, KS, and that feeder has just lost $1.2 million. These are the stories I heard all across the First District of Kansas.

Our farmers and rural communities need help to survive, and looking at the farm economy over the past 20 years tells why. In 1970, a combine cost $7,000; today it is $170,000. Tractors have increased five-fold in price. Fuel was $.30 per gallon; today it's $1.30. The amount of seed corn for planting that could be purchased for $25 in 1972, now costs $140.

Income, on the other hand, has gone the opposite direction of input costs. In 1973, soybeans sold for $12 per bushel; yesterday, they were at $4.28. In 1974, wheat hit $5 per bushel; yesterday, it was $2.45.

So it should not come as a surprise when farmers turn to us in desperate times, or send sale bills like this one—with the note inside from a farm wife—''This is the reason we need a decent farm bill! I have a young man, with farming in his blood, eager to take over our ground—Please make it possible for him to continue the family tradition and earn a decent living from the farm to provide for this family.''

There are many reasons we need a farm bill, and a farm bill is about much more than just agriculture. It's about maintaining the safest, most abundant, most affordable food supply our consumers expect and deserve. It's about preserving the environment for future generations, conserving natural resources and protecting the quality of our water and air. It's about helping rural communities sustain their economies. It's about ensuring adequate nutrition for all Americans, especially our children.

But for Kansas, it's also about avoiding this headline: ''On the Auction Block: Farmers getting out, putting land for sale in tough economic times.'' This bill is worth $318 million to the Kansas economy this year alone, to keep farmers on the land, shoppers on Main Street, children in our schools.

If we don't act now, next year may be too late for some family farms. The wheat crop is in the ground, just over a month from the beginning of harvest, and planting is underway for other crops. Farmers need details of a farm bill sooner, not later.

I urge you to support the farm bill and vote for the conference report.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this Member carefully reviewed the provisions in the conference report for H.R. 2646. Although it contains numerous positive features, in many ways the conference report is disappointing and unimaginative. This Member is also concerned that it will lead to dramatic increases in production, lower farm prices, and thereby will lead to an early exhaustion of the $73.5 billion increase in funding called for over the next decade.

In making a judgment on the conference report, this Member considered the following positive and negative features of the legislation. Specifically, this Member is pleased that the conference report for H.R. 2646 includes these positive aspects: Provides a counter-cyclical approach which will establish a greater safety net for farmers and should eliminate the need for annual emergency assistance. This provision is an especially important and positive feature of this legislation.

Retains the planting flexibility, a feature of the current farm program which has been extremely popular with producers.

Although the bill is far from perfect, it does provide additional income assurances for producers.

To the benefit of the sorghum producers of the Great Plains region, the sorghum loan rate is raised to the level of corn.

Gives producers the option to update base acres and yields.

Increases funding for conservation programs by 80 percent. Included in the increase are these positive provisions:

The Conservation Reserve Program acreage is increased from 36.4 million to 39.2 million.

The Wetlands Reserve Program acreage cap is increased to 2.275 million acres.

The Conservation Security Program is established which will provide incentives to maintain and improve stewardship practices.

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program receives an increase from $200 million to $1.3 billion annually over the next six years. This program is especially important help for livestock producers in a national effort to protect our environment.

The program for the rehabilitation of aging small watershed structures that have been constructed over the past 50 years is provided $275 million in funding.

Funding for the Market Access Program is increased to $200 million annually by 2006.

Funding for the Foreign Market Development (Cooperator) Program is increased from $27.5 million to $35 million per year.

An energy title is included and funding is provided to promote ethanol and biodiesel.

Funding is provided for broadband service in rural areas and rural local TV broadcast signal loan guarantees.

Funding is included for value-added agricultural market development grants.

Funding is provided for the Rural Business Investment Program.

The Global Food for Education Initiative (McGovern-Dole) is continued as a pilot program for FY2003.

Commercial airlines are required to carry baby chicks as ordinary mail. While this might seem like a small item, it is very important to a number of Americans, a part of the American farm heritage, and a personal interest of this Member.

However, Mr. Speaker, there are also some very significant deficiencies in this conference report. Among them are the following:

The conferees failed to address the concerns related to increased concentration in the agriculture sector. There is a growing concern which has been consistently expressed to me by constituents in recent years that there is too much concentration of economic power and too little competition on the input, production, and marketing sides of agriculture. Unfortunately, the conference report dropped initiatives designed to address these concerns.

The conferees allowed a disproportionate amount of the funding to go to very large farm operations. There is no real reform of payment limitations and large producers will continue to reap most of the benefits. In the past 5 years, 10 percent of the producers received two-thirds of the payments. This conference report

does little to change that situation. The incentives are in this conference report to cause the big farm operations to get bigger to the detriment of most Nebraska and American family farmers.

The conference report dropped the ban on packer ownership of livestock which the Senate approved, a ban which is also overwhelmingly supported by the great majority of Nebraska farmers and livestock producers.

After balancing the beneficial aspects and deficiencies of this legislation, the conference report for H.R. 2646, this Member has decided to vote ''aye'' since the measure is an improvement over the status quo.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, this Farm Bill Conference Report represents a missed opportunity on many levels to finally redirect agricultural policy to reflect today's realities and respond to tomorrow's challenges. It represents a lost opportunity for taking care of the environment. It is a lost opportunity to provide meaningful assistance to the family farmer. It is a lost opportunity for farmers in Oregon. Since the Farm Bill has so many direct and indirect impacts on urban and rural economies, it also contains other opportunities too numerous to list.

We could have easily done much more. Instead, the Conferees repeatedly ignored the wishes of a majority of Senators and Representatives. They have cloaked their actions in language of concern about family farms and the environment. Yet they repeatedly struck provisions that would have made a meaningful difference to both. A few of the more egregious examples include ignoring Senate and House votes to set reasonable limits on subsidies and provisions agreed to by both the House and Senate to protect and enhance environmental clean up payments to family farms by limiting payments to corporate livestock producers. They dropped the Senate provision to limit overproduction on sensitive lands. The 80 percent ''increase'' in conservation funding claimed by supporters is misleading. Critical conservation programs are cut by almost $3 billion from the Senate bill and national conservation priorities are not addressed. The percentage of the farm bill devoted to conservation is actually less than the 1996 Farm Bill.

This farm bill does not help the majority of farmers. Because subsidies increase with the amount of crops produced, this bill benefits primarily the largest agribusinesses. It has been estimated that up to 73 percent of farm subsidies go to just 10 percent of farms, most with annual incomes over $250,000. The conference report provides little support to the majority of farm families, directing only 12 percent of the funding to the bottom 80 percent of farmers.

This Farm Bill is not good for Oregon. The imbalance of payments maintained in this bill disadvantages states like Oregon, where we don't grow as many commodity program-supported crops as other states. Negotiators dropped key language to address one of the state's most pressing environmental crises in the Klamath Basin. This was a lost opportunity to redirect our farm policy and restore the natural hydrology of the basin and to ensure that all federal agencies were implementing their federal trust responsibility with Native Americans.

An overwhelming majority of the public supports redirecting our agricultural funding to protecting the environment. In the end, despite all the talk of the importance of conservation this Conference Report will shrink conservation spending as a percentage of total farm spending. As stated by the League of Conservation Voters, ''The version of the Farm Bill . . . is a missed opportunity to support meaningful conservation of America's farm lands.''

The Conference Report requires taxpayers to foot the bill for helping corporate livestock producers clean up their waste, even though they are already required to do so under the Clean Water Act. Currently, the average payment for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program is only $9,000 and almost 200,000 applications are left without funding. Instead of directing more funding to clean-up this backlog, the conferees have opened the flood gates for mega producers to expand and divert badly needed money away from small and average size family farms.

While farmers in some states receive over 20 cents for each dollar of product they generate, farmers in significant agricultural states like Oregon, Florida, Pennsylvania, and California receive 3 cents or less. Even though the number of farmland acres lost to sprawl doubled over the last six years, negotiators cut $1.25 billion out of the only federal program to help farmers curb sprawl. They also failed to adopt Senate language that would have ensured conservation programs work in every state and don't discriminate against farmers and ranchers in areas with high land values, an important provision for my state.

It is a lost opportunity for improving animal welfare. Both the House and the Senate passed important animal rights provisions. Unfortunately, one by one, these provisions have been stripped in conference, against the will of the majority of Members in the House and the Senate. We had the chance to close loopholes that would have limited the barbaric practice of cockfighting already illegal in 47 states and to stop the potential export of these birds across state lines. Instead, the conferees ignored identical language in both the House and Senate bills to impose stiffer penalties on those engaged in illegal transport of these animals across state lines. They also extended the effective date from 30 days to one year giving illegal cockfighters an extra eleven months to continue their practice.

The final bill strikes provisions dealing with downed animals at slaughter facilities. This issue bears on human health as well as animal welfare. It is not healthy to have sick and traumatized animals in the food chain. This conference report represents a lost opportunity for improving food safety and protecting consumers.

This Farm Bill is not good for the taxpayers. Because of how it is structured we won't know for years how expensive this bill will ultimately be. Ironically, much of this cost goes into paying subsidies that create surpluses and further depress crop prices. Stung by the embarrassing revelation about who really benefits from farm payments, House conferees attempted to amend the Freedom of Information Act to hide part of the payment information instead of adopting reasonable limits. Luckily, the Senate language prevailed and the information on all subsidies, which will be more disturbing in the future, will be available to the public.

The conferees turned a blind eye to the recent House vote which passed 265–158 in favor of the Senate's $275,000 payment limit and instead today's bill imposes a $360,000 payment limit that is largely meaningless through its exemptions for large scale agribusiness such as those who participate in rice and cotton certificate programs.

This Farm Bill is not good for tribal governments because the federal government does not fulfill its trust responsibility in regards to Native Americans. Language that passed in the Senate but was dropped by the Conferees that would have authorized a Forest Service assistance program for tribes seeking grants and provided informed and uniform guidance in the Agency's widespread relations with tribes. This was a missed opportunity to promote greater cooperation between the U.S. Forest Service and forest conservation by tribal governments.

Finally, this farm Bill is not good for international trade. U.S. farm subsidies send the wrong message to other regions such as Europe and Japan that have more protectionist policies than we do. We cannot freely compete in those markets and we don't have the moral authority to object when we are subsidizing our farmers. Several provisions of this Farm Bill will qualify as ''price-distorting'' practices and the World Trade Organization can be expected to impose trade sanctions on American farm products, and this would have a devastating effective on U.S. exports.

Even though we were unsuccessful in the effort to change the Farm Bill and capture many lost opportunities it is now clear that it is past time to modernize our farm policies. I am hopeful that this flawed bill and process nonetheless will help usher in a new era of agricultural support and protection for this new century.

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of the conference report on H.R. 2646, The Farm Security Act.

First, all Members should support H.R. 2646 because it represents a return to truth in agricultural budgeting. In 1996, Congress approved the Freedom to Farm Act, which attempted to eliminate farm payments. In the following years, Congress was then forced to appropriate $33.5 billion dollars to farm support programs, in form of ''emergency'' payments that are not accounted for in the budget. Freedom to Farm failed, as I and others who opposed the bill believed it would. Today, we can correct that error.

Why do America's agricultural communities and economy need federal assistance to remain healthy? At this time, there are two very important reasons. First is the reality of heavy agricultural subsidization around the world, including by the trading partners who criticize our policies. Editorials and rhetoric notwithstanding, the fact remains that America's agricultural producers are the most technologically advanced and efficient in the world and have the benefit of some of the most productive agricultural land in the world. In a global agricultural economy truly free of subsidization, America's farmers would not need subsidies to remain profitable. However, from developed nations to emerging economies, agricultural production across the world is incredible subsidized, resulting in a vicious cycle of increasing subsidies and falling prices that cascades around the globe.

For example, the EU's Common Agricultural Policy, CAP, is notorious for its subsidization levels, which are generally much higher than

America's. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, OECD, the EU spent $21 billion more than the U.S. on farm support, including emergency payments, in 1999. Frankly, for our European friends to then issue press releases decrying H.R. 2646 is hypocritical. The solution to the vicious cycle of global agricultural subsidies is cooperative international negotiations, not unilateral action by the U.S. Congress to drastically reduce our subsidies, which would not likely be followed by our friends around the world.

Exports are the second economic arena where American farmers are hit extremely hard by global financial conditions far beyond their control. The strength of the dollar relative to other currencies, a result of our international standing, resilient economy, and political stability, makes imports from other countries—especially those with weak currencies—relatively cheaper and our exports of all kinds relatively more expensive. The increasing instability of Asian and Latin American nations in the last five years has greatly exacerbated this situation, leading the dollar to perceptions of risk by investors around the world.

With the levels of efficiency and productivity inherent in American agriculture, American farmers should be exporting more commodities and livestock, but they are prevented by the global financial equivalent of a flood. A strong dollar is a good thing, but a deluge of global dollar demand can be very damaging to our exporters. Currently 25 percent of Texas agriculture is exported, much of it shipped through the Port of Houston in my district.

Although I represent an urban and suburban district, I am acutely aware that agriculture is the second largest sector of the Texas economy, ranking only behind energy and petrochemicals. Further shocks to Texas agriculture will reverberate around the state and limit Texas' potential for future growth. As I mentioned earlier, agricultural exports are important for the Port of Houston, where they rank second to energy and petrochemicals in terms of export value and tonnage. America's agricultural economy is not isolated from the larger economy, and I would urge other urban and suburban members to look into how businesses in their own districts and regions would be adversely affected by a crash in the farm economy—which might well happen if the Farm Security Act fails to be enacted soon. Already agricultural banks and lenders are reluctant to continue their relationships with hundreds of thousands of American farmers without a clear statement of farm policy from Congress.

In short, I support the conference report on H.R. 2646 because it represents a return to truth in budgeting and will maintain the viability of Texas farmers in a global economic environment characterized by heavy agricultural subsidies around the world and an extremely unfavorable export environment.

In closing, I would like to also mention two of the most controversial issues in the 2002 Farm Bill debate: conservation and payment limitations. Contrary to the rhetoric by opponents of farm support, significant changes for the better have been made in both of these areas. First, conservation spending in the conference report is increased by 96 percent over current levels. The final level of $17.1 billion over 10 years represents a $1.3 billion increase over the House-approved level and a significant movement by the House conferees who had provided an 80 percent increase in their version of the Farm Bill. Second, the maximum payment allowed by the conference report is $190,000 less than the maximum allowed in the House version and $100,000 less than current law. Currently a small number large producers have been able to obtain over-sized payments beyond their necessity, and I believe great progress is being made to remedy that situation in this conference report.

For those who recognize the great important of the agricultural economy and support increasing conservation programs like the Conservation Reserve Program and Wetlands Reserve Program, the conference report represents a win-win situation. For those who want to support farmers faced with higher levels of subsidization abroad and monetary trade barriers without allowing certain individuals to game the system, this conference report represents a win-win situation. Unfortunately, those who do not recognize the importance of the agricultural economy will probably never fail to find fault with federal farm policy, even though their ultimate goal—a complete phase-out—was tried in 1996 and miserably failed.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the conference report on H.R. 2646, the Farm Security Act, and send this bill to the Senate and to the President's desk.

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this farm bill. This is a good bill that meets the needs of America's farmers and the American consumer. It certainly does not solve all the problems we have in agriculture, but it sure does take a big step forward. A vote for this farm bill is a vote for an affordable food policy. American families can continue to enjoy the fact that their food is the most affordable, safe, and abundant in the world.

I am particularly pleased with the new counter-cyclical program. Over the last five years, we've seen record lows for farm outputs and record highs for farm inputs. The counter-cyclical program will help farmers bridge these problems and help secure high quality, low cost food for our nation.

I also am pleased with the new emphasis that this legislation places on value-added agriculture. More than anything else we can do, giving greater incentives to family farmers to add value to their commodities will create new opportunities to survive and remain profitable. Producing ethanol, preserving the identity of commodities for niche markets, expanding biodiesel production, and a whole range of new and exciting farming ventures will reinvigorate the farming community and create new employment opportunities on the farm and in the agricultural industry as a whole.

In closing, let me thank Chairman COMBEST, the committee's ranking member Mr. STENHOLM and all the conferees for their good work. I urge my colleagues to reject the motion to recommit and adopt the farm bill conference report.

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to support to the Farm Bill Conference Report.

We owe Representatives STENHOLM, CLAYTON, and Chairman COMBEST a great deal for their leadership.

This bill provides $6.4 billion in nutrition programs.

Restores food stamp benefits for legal permanent residents, children, and the disabled.

Includes provisions to simplify and streamline the Food Stamp Program so needy families can get food with less red tape.

As opposed to what some have claimed, this bill is good for California.

California is the largest agricultural State, but we mostly produce fruits and vegetables, otherwise known as specialty corps.

The conference report provides for the largest investment in conservation ever—$17.1 billion—fully 80 percent above the levels of the Boehlert conservation amendment to the 1996 Farm Bill.

Let us also remember that farmers are workers too—equally deserving of good wages and benefits.

They are the soul of our Nation. They feed us. They keep our Nation alive.

Support farmers, the working poor, and our dairy and cattlement—support the conference report on the farm bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BALDACCI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this Conference Report on the long-awaited Farm Bill legislation. As a member of the House Agriculture Committee, I want to thank my colleagues and those in the other body for their tireless work to produce this much-needed reauthorization of agriculture programs.

I am especially proud of the successful effort to create a National Dairy Program to benefit producers across the country. I strongly support providing much needed assistance to dairy farmers, and I am pleased that farmers in all states will have a safety net to protect their operations when prices are low, as they are right now. Dating back to December of last year, the Dairy Program would have provided approximately $3 million in payments to farmers in my home state of Maine through the month of May. Since milk prices are expected to remain low, this Dairy Program will help stem the tide of small family farmers forced to sell their operations, just as the Dairy Compact once did.

Furthermore, I would like to thank my colleagues for their support in extending the Senior Farmers Markets Program. This is a critical program that benefits farmers and low-income seniors alike. Through State coupon programs, farmers' markets will have a steady base of customers, and America's elderly will have a reliable source of locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables. It's a win-win situation, and I am pleased that this Farm Bill will continue to fund these local efforts.

Finally, I would like to comment on the historic boost in conservation spending contained in this bill. My district in Maine will benefit greatly from the generous increases in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Farmland Protection Program, and Forest Land Enhancement Program, to name a few. In a state that grows few program crops, the emphasis on conservation program in the Farm Bill will help my farmers to adopt good stewardship practices on their lands and protect wildlife habitats and local watersheds.

Again, I want to thank the Conferees and all my colleagues on the Agriculture Committee for their hard work in seeing this Farm Bill through to completion. I look forward to the Senate's ratification of the Conference Report and the President's signature on the bill. The programs and assistance outlined in this legislation will help to secure the farmers of America and ensure the health and growth of our nation's food supplies.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support for the Farm Security Act of 2002 conference report. I want to commend Chairman COMBEST and all of the conferees for their diligence and efforts on behalf of our Nation's farmers.

This conference report is an example of what can be accomplished when Congress decides to work towards a compromise to benefit all parties involved. Not only will his conference report provide crop supports through fixed and countercyclical payments, loan rates and target prices; but it will also create yield updates available to producers across the country; and a strong farm safety net

In addition, the conference report before us today will provide the large increase in farm bill history for voluntary conservation measures taken by farmers and landowners. In fact, an 80 percent increase in budget support over current levels will be allocated for important environmental and conservation programs.

More importantly, this conference report will provide needed assistance to our onion farmers in Orange County, NY. These farmers have experienced over 5 years of devastation crop and market losses, due to rain, flood, hail, high winds and drought. The assistance to be provided in this conference report will allow family farmers the opportunity to continue to farm. I thank Speaker HASTERT and Chairman COMBEST for their efforts on behalf of our hard working Orange County farmers.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this farmer and conservation friendly farm bill.

Mr. CONDIT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in qualified support of the conference report to H.R. 2646, The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act.

While California is the top agricultural state economy in the United States, the bulk of this legislation's spending—$47.8 out of $73.5 billion—benefits only 9 percent of California's agriculture value. Again, it will be those midwest states that only produce 20 percent of the total value of U.S. agriculture that benefit most from federal farm legislation.

The National Dairy Program is another unfortunate aspect of the bill which threatens California's thriving dairy economy. While our dairy herds continue to increase in size, production and efficiency, we will be drawn into a national program designed to address region-specific problems in other parts of the country, specifically the Northeast. There is simply no reason to meddle in a healthy national market to the benefit of only a few. $2 billion, which would have been better spent on research or nutrition, will be distributed to regions that contribute the least to our national economy.

It was with great diligence and constant effort that gains were accomplished for the State of California. Specialty crop producers received more assistance in this bill than any other farm legislation passed by Congress to date.

Specialty crops have been especially successful at accessing foreign markets. This bill supports these international efforts by providing technical assistance to combat trade carriers, as well as increasing funding for the Market Access Program. Country of origin labeling will be mandatory for fruits, vegetables, fish, meat and peanuts in two years. This is a consumer-right-to-know issue that brings us to parity with labeling practices of other countries.

While California growers are as burdened as other producers in this country by environmental regulations, traditional farm conservation programs have historically been unresponsive to unique specialty crop conservation issues and practices. Increased funding for EQUIP and the Farmland Protection Program; a Water Conservation Program to address ground water and irrigation issues; and the Conservation Security Program all provide more conservation benefits to California than ever before. Of particular interest to Central Valley farmers, this bill requires a study on providing insurance to farmers suffering losses due to regulatory droughts caused by government failure to deliver on CVPIA contracts.

Our attempts to heighten awareness of the unique needs of specialty crops, and to craft legislation that is responsive to the needs of specialty crop producers, will continue. Progress should be marked by commodity spending that is proportional to those products' market share, productivity and efficiency. We should focus on achieving benefits in farm policy that accrue to as many taxpayers as possible.

Although this farm bill makes strides towards helping California farmers, many challenges beyond the farm bill remain if agriculture is to remain viable in California. Specifically, water issues, regulatory reform, and fair treatment of Central Valley agriculture interests will continued to be the key battles for California agriculture.

All the farm-friendly agricultural policy has been, and will continue to be undercut if we do not have a sufficient and reliable water supply. Agricultural leaders must take every opportunity to place this goal at the centerpiece of not just our agricultural policy, but of our water policy, our budgetary policy, our infrastructure policy, our economic development policy and our environmental policy. For example, progress on CALFED must be predicated on progress on increased water storage opportunities. Inclusion of environmental restoration projects in state and federal budgets and in state water bonds must be conditioned upon funding for water storage projects. Infrastructure improvements in California must include improvements to our water delivery systems, including increased water storage.

Since being elected to the Congress, I have pursued every opportunity for regulatory reform—bringing common-sense into our regulatory process. Examples abound of senseless waste of our government resources, our natural resources, and of tremendous economic impact to business in the name of environmental protection. Our government regulators owe it to the public to avoid these consequences, where possible. Even so, economic impacts will be felt where sound scientific principles have shown a need. Unfortunately, and all too often, environmental protection regulations have produced obscured consequences in order to provide minimal, and at times, unproven benefit to the environment. In some instances, we've had to rein in federal agencies with budget control language or with demanding a change in policy. We've even had to rein in the Congress by passing the Unfunded Mandates Reform bill, which requires the Congress to assess the impact of proposed legislation on state and local governments. The fight is far from over. Legislation, which I have introduced, the Private Sector Mandate Information Act, would require Congress to consider the impact to private business of its proposed laws. Passage of this legislation, which requires federal agencies to engage in a ''risk assessment/cost benefit analysis'' of their proposed regulations, is also essential.

We must demand equity and fair treatment of Central Valley and agricultural interests. Unfortunately, examples abound of the agricultural industry and of our region being treated unfairly. For example, I voted against NAFTA and other trade agreements because our U.S. negotiators traded away our agricultural interests in an effort to save our ''favored'' industries, such as high-tech. This is not ''free'' trade, but ''unfair'' trade. Our air pollution and water pollution laws are illustrative of the unfair treatment that our region receives. Bay Area interests pressured state and federal agencies to challenge our use of irrigation water and agricultural pesticides and have challenged our dairy production practices. These same Bay Area interests have gotten state and federal agencies to look the other way when Bay Area refineries discharge pollutants into the SF Bay. Also, Bay Area legislators successfully obtained an exemption from the SMOG II program, while at the same time, forcing the program in our area.

Elected officials from this region must demand fairness to the Central Valley and to agriculture. From budgetary fairness, fairness in our regulatory laws and regulations, and in trade agreements, we must be vigilant in this cause.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the conference report on the farm bill. The conference report's provisions on sugar will impose an undue burden on the working people in my congressional district.

The conference report fails to reform the sugar price support program so as to accommodate the interests of consumers and workers in the Chicago area. Of even greater concern, it takes a bad sugar program and makes it even worse by repealing the sugar forfeiture penalty and imposing marketing allotments.

Employment in the Chicago confectionery industry has fallen 11 percent since 1991. The sugar program has contributed to this decline. Sugar price supports and import quotas keep the cost of U.S. sugar at least twice as high as the world price. Besides raising consumer prices, increasing taxpayer costs and threatening the environment, the price gap creates an artificial incentive to move domestic food and confection manufacturing operations offshore. And this has happened in my own back yard in Chicago with the announcement of plant shutdowns by candy makers.

By repealing the forfeiture penalty, the conference report will effectively increase price supports.

By imposing a complicated system of production controls, the conference report will further disrupt the marketing of sugar and raise sugar prices for consumers.

Mr. Speaker, the people hurt by the conference report provisions on sugar will be ordinary taxpayers, consumers and workers who do not get subsidies or protection like wealthy sugar producing companies do. That is not right. And so I must oppose the conference report.

Mr. OSE. Mr. Speaker, I am troubled by various provisions in the Farm Security Act of 2002 (H.R. 2646). Today, I would like to mention one specific provision, which appears in

four titles in the bill—in Titles I, Commodity Programs (Sec. 1601); Title II, Conservation (Sec. 2702); Title VI, Rural Development (Sec. 6103); and Title X, Miscellaneous (Sec. 10105). As Chairman of the Government Reform Subcommittee on Energy Policy, Natural Resources and Regulatory Affairs, I have responsibility for oversight over regulatory reform and paperwork reduction measures. This includes compliance with the due process notice and comment provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) and the centralized review and approval provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA).

H.R. 2646 exempts certain Agriculture regulations both from the APA's due process protections for affected parties and the PRA's required review and approval by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Under the PRA, OMB is charged with assuring practical utility to all information collections imposed on the public. Also, the PRA includes a public protection clause, which assures that the public cannot be penalized for not providing information in unauthorized paperwork.

The Department of Agriculture has one of the worst track records in terms of compliance with the PRA. In fact, Agriculture has had the most or second most number of violations of the PRA in each of the last several years—116 in Fiscal Year (FY) 1999, 96 in FY 2000, and 67 in FY 2001. On April 11, 2002, an Agriculture witness at our Subcommittee's annual hearing on the PRA was unable to answer our questions about its mis-management of the paperwork it imposes on the public. Agriculture promised explanations by the next day; however, I have received nothing to date. In addition, last May, I wrote OMB Director Daniels and Interior Secretary Norton asking them to work with Agriculture to eliminate duplication of reporting, especially for farmers. Sadly, there are no results to date.

The Joint Explanatory Statement of the Committee on Conference includes no justification for this significant change in regulatory and paperwork promulgation procedures. This is unacceptable.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the conference report to H.R. 2646, the Farm Security and Rural Improvement Act of 2002.

I believe this compromise contains the best possible commodity title for Southern agriculture.

Reforming the farm bill effective for this year has been a top priority for Georgia producers. Since passage of the 1996 farm bill, my producers have fully utilized planting flexibility, and the result has been a major shift in acreage from feed grains and oilseeds to cotton. Because producers wanted farm program benefits to more accurately reflect their most recent plantings, it was imperative that they have the option to update their bases. As this was a popular provision in the House bill, the Senate included it in their bill, and the conference report contains the measure.

For the first time in my Congressional career, peanut producers, shellers, and manufacturers joined together in proposing a peanut program dramatically different from the decades-old quota program. Due to their unity, trade concerns, and political realities, the House Agriculture Committee took the proposal under serious consideration. The conference report retains these reforms by putting the peanut program on par with traditional commodity programs and fairly compensates holders of quota for their losses under the new program, which will infuse over $500 million into the State of Georgia.

Of particular concern to Southern producers was the strict, burdensome payment limitations contained in the Senate bill. The Senate bill failed to take into consideration regional differences in farm size and structure, and would have yielded many unintended consequences. In anticipation of the Senate provision, producers in Georgia this year prepared land to substitute other corps, such as corn and soybeans, for cotton. The net effect, had the Senate provision been adopted, would have been a wreck of Midwestern crop markets. We did compromise with the Senate in the conference report on payment limitations, but not to the extent that would compromise agriculture in this country.

This farm bill not only brings predictability to federal farm policy but also greatly expands and improves our soil and water conservation programs. The federal investment in these programs is increased by more than 80% above current program levels and costs $2 billion over the House-passed bill, adding $17.1 billion into conservation programs over the next 10 years. The bill makes needed changes to the CRP and EQIP programs to make them more usable and accessible to all producers in all regions of the country.

As the title suggests, The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act makes significant investments in, and improvements to our rural development programs. These programs are important to sustaining rural communities by investing in programs that will aid in the development of rural infrastructure and create jobs in rural areas. The trade title of the conference report is designed to comport with the United States' international trade obligations under the WTO, and thereby to promote more free and fair trade for the future. It reauthorizes important programs related to trade, including the Food for Progress and Food for Peace Programs.

The conference report illustrates to the research community that Congress recognizes the critical need for research and makes a significant new investment in research programs that will help reap rewards for producers and society for many years to come.

The forestry title strengthens the commitment of Congress to sustainable forest management practices. In addition to assisting states in carrying out programs of forestry research, the forestry title provides enhanced community fire protection by directing the Administration to coordinate with local communities in implementing rural fire protection and control strategies. It also enables the Administration to undertake a variety of activities aimed at preventing fires on both federal and non-federal lands.

For the first time, the farm bill contains an energy title to further our investment in energy research and encourage the production of biodiesel and fuel grade ethanol.

This conference report seeks to ensure access to an adequate diet and the fruits of a productive agricultural economy to all eligible Americans. This farm bill includes a number of changes to simplify the food stamp program, gives greater flexibility, remove unnecessary barriers to participation, and increase assistance to working families.

The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 provides for the very basic elements of life that we take for granted: food on the table provided by our nation's farmers, food stamps for those who cannot afford nourishment, grants to communities to provide safe and adequate quantities of drinking water, grants to help rural residents access their local television stations, and grants to provide training to rural firefighters and emergency personnel.

Serving as a conferee on this bill over the past 10 weeks has not been an easy task, but I am pleased to see the conference come to a close. I can say with clear conscience that every aspect of this bill was thoroughly debated. As with any bill the Congress submits to the President, it's not perfect, but it is the best possible bill that could be reported out of conference. We have fought the good fight and have a balanced bill—regionally and substantively—that will contribute to the betterment of agriculture.

I thank LARRY COMBEST and CHARLIE STENHOLM for their diligence in guiding the Committee in the spirit of bipartisanship and for providing the necessary leadership over the past 2 years in getting this bill done.

To my farmers back home, you can stop watching and waiting on Washington—get in the fields and plant.

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the Farm Security Act conference report (H.R. 2646). I appreciate the work of the Agriculture Committee to bring a bill to the floor, but this effort falls short of real reform for our farm programs and seriously infringes on our trade policy.

I supported the Freedom to Farm Act in 1995. It set us on a path—slow but steady—toward removing the heavy and costly hand of government in managing crop programs. Subsidies were to become a thing of the past. Unfortunately, this bill reverses that course. It sets us on a path toward increased and never-ending taxpayer subsidies of basic commodities.

In addition, this legislation is incompatible with our commitments to the World Trade Organization, and I am not alone in this opinion. Let me read some excerpts from a Congressional Research Service report that was issued just a few days ago:

> The 1994 Uruguay Round Agreement on Agriculture commits member countries of the World Trade Organization (WTO) to discipline their domestic agricultural support programs . . . The goal of the Agreement is to ''establish a fair and market-oriented agricultural trading system'' through a series of reforms that also require WTO members to lower barriers to agricultural imports and to reduce their farm export subsidies. The [Uruguay Round Agreement on Agriculture] was unprecedented in that it was the first time (after seven previous trade rounds) that countries promised to make substantial changes in their domestic agricultural policies to facilitate more open trade.

The report further states:

> WTO members bring to the new negotiating round a divergence of viewpoints on how to handle domestic farm supports. These range from countries that will seek continuing and deeper reductions in farm subsidies, to those that are likely to defend their internal subsidies as necessary for various national policy reasons. Meanwhile, Congress is now widely expected to adopt a new farm bill that would provide billions of dollars in new farm subsidies annually (i.e., above current service policy projections).

These new subsidies, and their potential to perpetuate market distortions, undermine the U.S. argument in the Doha round that the world's agricultural subsidies should be further disciplined, critics argue. A number of foreign officials, and some U.S. analysts, have pointedly noted that the likely new U.S. farm policy raises questions about the sincerity of the U.S. negotiating position.

We should not be undermining our negotitating efforts at the WTO, and this conference report will unfortunately do just that.

Further, I am extremely disappointed that this final agreement requires mandatory country of origin labeling for meat, fruits, vegetables, fish, and peanuts. In order to meet the threshold of being labeled a "USA product," it must be born, raised and processed in the United States.

This is ridiculous. I grew up on a ranch in southern Arizona, and my family bought calves in Mexico to be raised and sold on our ranch. So I guess if I bought a small calf in Mexico and raised him for 5 years on my ranch in the United States, he would still never be a "U.S. calf." Even immigrants coming to the United States are allowed to obtain U.S. citizenship after 5 years, but no such luck for a calf. He would be treated like a future U.S. President under the Constitution. If you're not born here, you can't become President. And if a calf is born in Mexico—even if his mother is a "U.S. cow" that went through a cut border fence to have her calf in Mexico and returned a few days later—this calf will never be able to be labeled as a "USA product."

Is this what our national policy should be? I find this outrageous and am surprised that something like this is on the road to becoming law.

It was my hope that we would be able to fashion a new farm policy that helps the farmers, increases conservation efforts, reduces the price of food for the American people, and fulfills our obligations to our trading partners around the world.

Unfortunately, the conference report before us today does not accomplish these goals.

Mr. ISTOOK. Mr. Speaker, due to the death of my stepmother last night, I will miss the vote on the farm bill, as I am traveling to Fort Worth, TX, to be with my father and other family.

Had I been able to cast my vote on this bill, I would have voted "no."

The genuine problems of America's farmers and rural communities will never be fixed by these enormously-expensive subsidies. The biggest costs have nothing to do with helping family farmers. Although the House and Senate each voted that nobody should receive more than $275,000 per year in subsidies, the final bill says there's no limit on the amount! That typifies the problems with this bill.

American farmers, consumers and taxpayers need more free enterprise, not more big-government subsidies. I'll keep voting to help farmers by expanding world markets, diversifying agriculture, encouraging rural economic development and providing fairer tax treatment to farmers.

We have enormous expenses for the war on terrorism and for homeland security, and we've got to provide whatever it takes to protect America. But that's no excuse for huge escalation in other spending. We're undermining our future if we don't get better control over spending taxpayer's money. Unless we adopt the Balanced Budget Amendment to the Constitution, requiring a balanced budget in peacetime, we may never get spending back under control.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered.

There was no objection.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT OFFERED BY MR. KIND

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I offer a motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentleman opposed to the conference report?

Mr. KIND. In its present form I am, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. KIND of Wisconsin moves to recommit the conference report on the bill, H.R. 2646, to the committee of conference with instructions to the managers on the part of the House to—

(1) agree to the provisions in section 169(a) of the Senate amendment relating to payment limitations for commodity programs; and

(2) increase—

(A) the amounts within the scope of conference provided in title II of the conference report for conservation programs by an amount equal to 50 percent of any reduction in Federal spending resulting from agreement to the provisions referred to in paragraph (1);

(B) the amounts within the scope of conference provided in title IV of the conference report for nutrition programs by an amount equal to 15 percent of any such reduction;

(C) the amounts within the scope of conference provided in title VI of the conference report for rural development programs by an amount equal to 25 percent of any such reduction; and

(D) the amounts within the scope of conference provided in title IX of the conference report for energy programs by an amount equal to 10 percent of any such reduction.

Mr. KIND (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to recommit be considered as read and printed in the RECORD.

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

Mr. COMBEST. Mr. Speaker, I respectfully object, because this is the first time a lot of Members have seen this. There is no debate on this. Consequently, as short as it is, I think it should be read.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Objection is heard.

The Clerk will continue to read.

The Clerk concluded the reading of the motion to recommit.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to recommit.

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

RECORDED VOTE

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

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, the Chair will reduce to 5 minutes the minimum time for any electronic vote on the question of adoption of the conference report.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 172, noes 251, not voting 11, as follows:

[Roll No. 122]

AYES—172

Ackerman
Allen
Andrews
Baldacci
Baldwin
Barrett
Bass
Becerra
Bereuter
Berkley
Berman
Biggert
Bilirakis
Blumenauer
Bonior
Borski
Boucher
Brady (PA)
Brown (OH)
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardin
Castle
Chabot
Collins
Cox
Coyne
Crowley
Davis (CA)
Davis (FL)
Davis (IL)
Davis, Tom
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeMint
Deutsch
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Ehlers
Engel
Eshoo
Farr
Filner
Flake
Frank
Gallegly
Ganske
Goss
Green (TX)
Greenwood
Harman
Hefley
Hinchey
Hobson
Hoeffel
Hoekstra
Holt
Honda
Hostettler
Houghton
Hoyer
Inslee
Israel
Jackson (IL)
Johnson (CT)
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kelly
Kennedy (RI)
Kerns
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kind (WI)
Kleczka
Kucinich
LaFalce
Langevin
Lantos
Larson (CT)
Latham
Leach
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
LoBiondo
Lofgren
Lowey
Luther
Lynch
Maloney (CT)
Maloney (NY)
Markey
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (MO)
McCollum
McGovern
McInnis
McKinney
McNulty
Meehan
Meeks (NY)
Menendez
Miller, Dan
Miller, George
Mollohan
Moore
Moran (VA)
Morella
Myrick
Nadler
Neal
Nussle
Obey
Olver
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Pelosi
Petri
Pitts
Rahall
Ramstad
Rivers
Roemer
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Sanchez
Sawyer
Schakowsky
Schiff
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Shaw
Shays
Sherman
Slaughter
Smith (MI)
Smith (WA)
Solis
Stark
Stearns
Strickland
Stupak
Sununu
Tancredo
Tauscher
Thune
Tiberi
Tierney
Toomey
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Velazquez
Waters
Watson (CA)
Waxman
Weiner
Weldon (FL)
Wexler
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Young (FL)

NOES—251

Abercrombie
Aderholt
Akin
Armey
Baca
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Ballenger
Barcia
Barr
Bartlett
Barton
Bentsen
Berry
Bishop
Blagojevich
Blunt
Boehlert
Boehner
Bonilla
Bono
Boozman
Boswell
Boyd
Brady (TX)
Brown (FL)
Brown (SC)
Bryant
Burr
Burton
Buyer
Callahan
Calvert
Camp
Cantor
Carson (IN)
Carson (OK)
Chambliss
Clay
Clayton
Clement
Clyburn
Coble
Combest
Condit
Conyers
Cooksey
Costello
Cramer
Crenshaw
Cubin
Culberson
Cummings
Cunningham
Davis, Jo Ann
Deal
DeLauro
DeLay
Diaz-Balart
Dooley
Doolittle
Dreier
Duncan
Dunn
Edwards
Ehrlich
Emerson
English

Etheridge
Evans
Everett
Ferguson
Fletcher
Foley
Forbes
Ford
Fossella
Frelinghuysen
Frost
Gekas
Gephardt
Gibbons
Gilchrest
Gillmor
Gilman
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Graham
Granger
Graves
Green (WI)
Grucci
Gutierrez
Gutknecht
Hall (OH)
Hall (TX)
Hansen
Hart
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Hayworth
Herger
Hill
Hilleary
Hilliard
Hinojosa
Holden
Hooley
Horn
Hulshof
Hunter
Hyde
Isakson
Issa
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jenkins
John
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Keller
Kennedy (MN)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Knollenberg
Kolbe
LaHood
Lampson
Larsen (WA)
LaTourette
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
Lucas (KY)
Lucas (OK)
Manzullo
Mascara
McCarthy (NY)
McCrery
McDermott
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
Meek (FL)
Mica
Miller, Gary
Miller, Jeff
Mink
Moran (KS)
Napolitano
Nethercutt
Ney
Northup
Norwood
Oberstar
Ortiz
Osborne
Ose
Otter
Oxley
Paul
Pence
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Phelps
Pickering
Platts
Pombo
Pomeroy
Portman
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Quinn
Radanovich
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reyes
Reynolds
Riley
Rodriguez
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ross
Rush
Ryan (WI)
Ryun (KS)
Sabo
Sanders
Sandlin
Saxton
Schaffer
Schrock
Scott
Sessions
Shadegg
Sherwood
Shimkus
Shows
Shuster
Simmons
Simpson
Skeen
Skelton
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Snyder
Souder
Spratt
Stenholm
Stump
Sweeney
Tanner
Tauzin
Taylor (MS)
Taylor (NC)
Terry
Thomas
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Thurman
Tiahrt
Towns
Turner
Visclosky
Vitter
Walden
Walsh
Wamp
Watkins (OK)
Watt (NC)
Watts (OK)
Weldon (PA)
Weller
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (SC)
Wynn
Young (AK)

NOT VOTING—11

Cannon
Crane
Fattah
Istook
Jefferson
Millender-McDonald
Murtha
Ros-Lehtinen
Roukema
Sullivan
Traficant

□ 1303

Ms. BROWN of Florida, Mrs. BONO, and Messrs. BAIRD, ARMEY, PICKERING, SAXTON, and LINDER changed their vote from ''aye'' to ''no.''

Ms. SOLIS, Ms. McCARTHY of Missouri, and Messrs. GALLEGLY, HOBSON, McINNIS, and DICKS changed their vote from ''no'' to ''aye.''

So the motion to recommit was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

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

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 280, nays 141, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 123]

YEAS—280

Abercrombie
Aderholt
Baca
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Baldacci
Ballenger
Barcia
Bartlett
Barton
Bentsen
Bereuter
Berkley
Berry
Bishop
Blagojevich
Blunt
Boehlert
Bonilla
Bono
Boozman
Borski
Boswell
Boucher
Boyd
Brady (PA)
Brown (FL)
Brown (SC)
Bryant
Burr
Buyer
Callahan
Camp
Cantor
Capito
Carson (IN)
Carson (OK)
Chambliss
Clay
Clayton
Clement
Clyburn
Coble
Combest
Condit
Cooksey
Costello
Cramer
Crenshaw
Cubin
Cummings
Cunningham
Davis, Jo Ann
Deal
DeLauro
DeMint
Diaz-Balart
Dicks
Dingell
Edwards
Ehlers
Ehrlich
Emerson
Engel
English
Etheridge
Evans
Everett
Filner
Fletcher
Foley
Ford
Frost
Gekas
Gephardt
Gilchrest
Gillmor
Gilman
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Goss
Graham
Granger
Graves
Green (TX)
Green (WI)
Greenwood
Grucci
Gutierrez
Gutknecht
Hall (OH)
Hall (TX)
Hansen
Hart
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Herger
Hill
Hilleary
Hilliard
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hoeffel
Holden
Hooley
Horn
Hostettler
Houghton
Hoyer
Hulshof
Hunter
Hyde
Inslee
Isakson
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jenkins
John
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kelly
Kennedy (MN)
Kerns
Kildee
Kilpatrick
King (NY)
Kingston
Knollenberg
LaFalce
LaHood
Lampson
Larsen (WA)
LaTourette
Leach
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Lipinski
Lowey
Lucas (KY)
Lucas (OK)
Luther
Lynch
Maloney (NY)
Manzullo
Mascara
Matheson
McCarthy (MO)
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum
McCrery
McGovern
McHugh
McIntyre
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Menendez
Mink
Moore
Moran (KS)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nethercutt
Ney
Norwood
Nussle
Oberstar
Olver
Ortiz
Osborne
Ose
Otter
Pascrell
Pastor
Pence
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Phelps
Pickering
Platts
Pombo
Pomeroy
Price (NC)
Putnam
Quinn
Radanovich
Rahall
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reyes
Reynolds
Riley
Rodriguez
Roemer
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Ross
Roybal-Allard
Rush
Ryan (WI)
Sabo
Sanders
Sandlin
Sawyer
Schaffer
Schakowsky
Scott
Serrano
Sessions
Sherwood
Shimkus
Shows
Shuster
Simmons
Simpson
Skeen
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (MI)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Snyder
Solis
Souder
Spratt
Stenholm
Strickland
Stump
Stupak
Sweeney
Tanner
Tauzin
Taylor (MS)
Taylor (NC)
Terry
Thomas
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Thune
Thurman
Tiahrt
Towns
Turner
Udall (NM)
Upton
Velazquez
Visclosky
Vitter
Walden
Walsh
Watkins (OK)
Watt (NC)
Watts (OK)
Weldon (FL)
Weldon (PA)
Weller
Wexler
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (SC)
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Young (AK)

NAYS—141

Ackerman
Akin
Allen
Andrews
Armey
Baldwin
Barr
Barrett
Bass
Becerra
Berman
Biggert
Bilirakis
Blumenauer
Boehner
Bonior
Brady (TX)
Brown (OH)
Calvert
Capps
Capuano
Cardin
Castle
Chabot
Collins
Conyers
Cox
Coyne
Crowley
Culberson
Davis (CA)
Davis (FL)
Davis (IL)
Davis, Tom
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLay
Deutsch
Doggett
Dooley
Doolittle
Doyle
Dreier
Duncan
Dunn
Eshoo
Farr
Ferguson
Flake
Forbes
Fossella
Frank
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Ganske
Gibbons
Harman
Hayworth
Hefley
Hobson
Hoekstra
Holt
Honda
Israel
Issa
Johnson (CT)
Johnson, Sam
Kennedy (RI)
Kind (WI)
Kirk
Kleczka
Kolbe
Kucinich
Langevin
Lantos
Larson (CT)
Latham
Lee
Lewis (CA)
Linder
LoBiondo
Lofgren
Maloney (CT)
Markey
Matsui
McDermott
McInnis
McKeon
McKinney
Mica
Miller, Dan
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Miller, Jeff
Moran (VA)
Morella
Myrick
Northup
Obey
Owens
Oxley
Pallone
Paul
Payne
Pelosi
Pitts
Portman
Pryce (OH)
Ramstad
Rivers
Rohrabacher
Rothman
Royce
Ryun (KS)
Sanchez
Saxton
Schiff
Schrock
Sensenbrenner
Shadegg
Shaw
Shays
Sherman
Smith (WA)
Stark
Stearns
Sununu
Tancredo
Tauscher
Tiberi
Tierney
Toomey
Udall (CO)
Wamp
Waters
Watson (CA)
Waxman
Weiner
Wolf
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—13

Burton
Cannon
Crane
Fattah
Istook
Jefferson
Millender-McDonald
Mollohan
Murtha
Ros-Lehtinen
Roukema
Sullivan
Traficant

□ 1311

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.

Stated for:

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, on May 2, 2002, due to a family commitment, I was unavailable for rollcall vote No. 123. Had I been here, I would have vote ''yea.''

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. Speaker, due to official business concerning water quality issues in my Congressional district, I missed rollcall votes 122 and 123. Had I been present I would have voted ''nay'' on rollcall 122 the motion to recommit and ''yea'' on rollcall 123 final passage.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Mollohan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title: