

## ALERT!

### **Budget-Cutting Reconciliation Bill Passes the House Senate Vote Scheduled Late Tonight or Tuesday AM**

#### **CALL YOUR SENATORS NOW!**

Over the weekend, members of the Budget Reconciliation Conference Committee negotiated a deal resolving differences in their House and Senate Budget Reconciliation Bills. The Budget Reconciliation Bill now has been approved by the House and is expected to go to the Senate floor for a vote either tonight or tomorrow.

THE BILL CUTS MORE THAN \$1 BILLION FROM THE *CONSERVATION SECURITY PROGRAM* (CSP) PLUS ANOTHER \$760 MILLION BY ENTIRELY ELIMINATING THE *INITIATIVE FOR FUTURE AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS* (IFAFS) FOR THREE YEARS. These two programs, combined, make up a majority of the agriculture funding cuts—even though they represent only 1 percent of total agriculture spending! If the Senate approves the bill, IFAFS will be gone, and CSP will have at best enough left for a small sign-up in 2007 followed by consecutive years of little or no growth.

The bright spots in what is a very bad bill are that the cuts proposed by the House for the Food Stamp Program and for the Value-Added Producer Grant program were dropped from the final package. The bill nonetheless makes large cuts to the student loan program and a variety of programs that aid low-income children, families, and the elderly. While the bill does contribute \$42 billion to deficit reduction, all that gain will be more than wiped out by a pending \$60+ billion tax cut bill that primarily benefits wealthier citizens.

The House vote was close (212-206), but in the end only 9 Republican members voted no. The vote in the Senate is expected to be closer still, and will likely come down to the decisions of just one or two Senators. *The Senate is expected to take up the conference report this afternoon, with a vote expected tonight or tomorrow.*

**While calls to all Senators are very important, it is urgently important that these Senators hear from their constituents:**

Collins (ME), Snowe (ME)  
Chafee (RI)  
Specter (PA)  
DeWine (OH), Voinovich (OH)  
Coleman (MN)  
Talent (MO)  
Hagel (NE), Nelson (NE)  
Smith (OR)

**Call the toll-free number: 800-426-8073. Ask to be connected to your Senators, and tell them:**

**Please vote NO on the budget reconciliation conference report.** It unfairly targets the Conservation Security Program and Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems for huge cuts, AND it hurts low- income children, families, the elderly and disabled. Do not allow these one-sided sacrifices to be directed at agriculture, rural communities, and low-income Americans while Congress is preparing to give still more tax breaks to the rich.