

Committee earmarks \$1.2 billion for energy program

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A Senate-House Conference Committee Tuesday approved a modified version of a plan sponsored by Sen. Herman E. Talmadge to provide \$1.2 billion assistance in the next two years to rush production of energy from renewable farm and forest materials.

The Conference Committee, which has been working since last December to reconcile House and Senate differences in the Energy Security Act, tentatively reached agreement on a new title to the bill setting policies and programs for developing biomass energy. Implementation of the biomass provisions of the legislation would be shared by the Departments of Agriculture and Energy.

The title adopted last Tuesday sets national goals of biomass energy production of the equivalent of 60,000 barrels of oil per day by the end of 1982 and 10 percent of estimated gasoline consumption by 1990. USDA and DOE would be required to work together to achieve these goals.

A key provision of the new title adopted in conference is a program of direct and guaranteed Federal loans for construction of biomass fuel production plants — including on-farm and small scale commercial facilities — using agriculture and forestry materials as feedstocks.

Talmadge, chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, led the fight in the Senate to win a major role for farm and forestry biomass as an integral part of the Nation's overall energy program.

"I am delighted by the action of the Conference Committee in adopting the major thrust of my agriculture and forestry energy bill, which the Senate passed unanimously last December," Talmadge said. "I consider this a major

breakthrough in assuring that the vast potential of biomass energy will be exploited to help meet the country's energy needs and end our dependence on imported oil.

"This action clears the way to get the country moving at last on an all-out program to produce energy from renewable farm and forestry materials," Talmadge said. "This program can be implemented quickly. The technology to produce biomass energy already exists. A network of production plants can be in place in a relatively short time.

"In my opinion, this program will provide the most economical and practical means for significantly increasing domestic energy production over the next few years while a large-scale synthetic fuel industry is being developed," Talmadge said.

Under the Conference Committee's energy bill, USDA would have exclusive jurisdiction for all biomass energy projects (except those utilizing municipal waste) producing annually up to 15 million gallons of alcohol, or the energy equivalent. DOE would have exclusive jurisdiction for projects utilizing municipal waste and those producing more than 15 million gallons of alcohol or the equivalent annually, except projects utilizing forestry feedstocks and those owned and operated by agricultural cooperatives. USDA and DOE would share jurisdiction for projects falling in the latter two categories.

Financial assistance under the program — primarily in the form of loans and loan guarantees — would be provided through the Energy Security Reserve, a fund already created by Congress to finance alternative energy projects

For the two-year period

beginning this October 1, \$1,450,000,000 would be authorized — \$600 million each for USDA and DOE biomass energy projects and \$250 million for municipal waste projects. Up to one-third of all assistance provided under USDA jurisdiction would be for small-scale projects — those producing less than one million gallons per year.

Under the legislation, the President would have authority to alter, subject to Congressional veto, the division of the administrative responsibilities and funding as between USDA and DOE.

The financial assistance

provided under the new legislation would be in addition to ongoing USDA and DOE programs, including biomass energy production loans that Farmers Home Administration currently is authorized to make.

The Conference bill provides funding authority through FY 1984 of \$12 million annually to USDA for biomass research and \$10 million for biomass information — education programs under State Cooperative Extension Services.

An additional \$5 million would be authorized annually for 4 years for 10

biomass energy production models to demonstrate available technology for producing alcohol fuel and other forms of biomass energy.

The legislation would

prescribe timetables under which both the Agriculture and Energy Departments would be required to act to prevent delays in the implementation of the loan program.

Solar water heater workshop to be held

June 6,7

LANCASTER — Approximately 20 openings are available for a passive solar water heater workshop being sponsored by the Lancaster County Conservation District on Friday evening, June 6 and all day Saturday, June 7.

The cost of the workshop is \$20.00 which includes registration and a set of

plans and a construction manual.

Five passive solar water heaters will be constructed at the hands-on workshop on Saturday.

Anyone interested in attending the workshop may call the Lancaster County Conservation District at 299-5361 to make a reservation.

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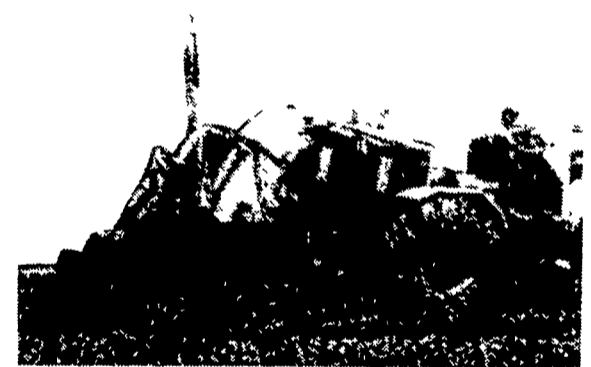
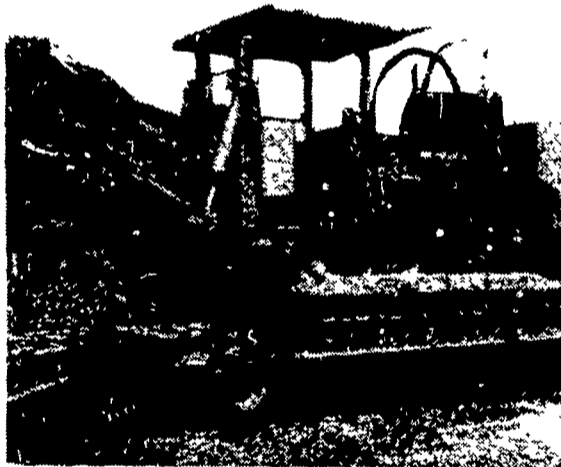
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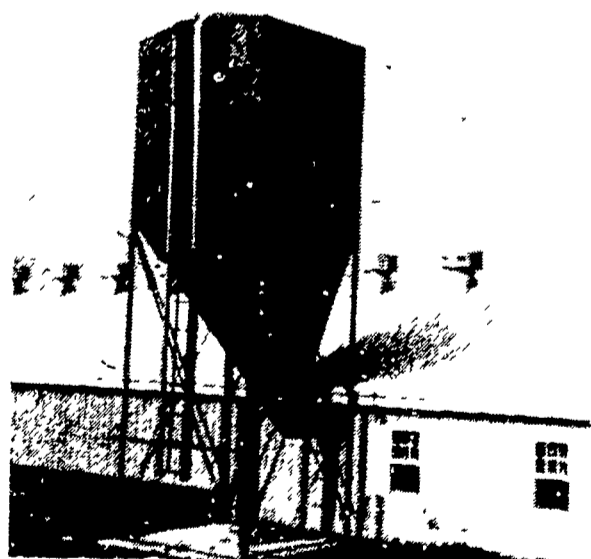


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