

House, Senate Action On River Legislation Is Win For National Corn Growers

ST. LOUIS, Mo. — The National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) applauded passage by the U.S. House and Senate of the 2001 Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill that includes important river-related provisions championed by the NCGA.

The House passed the bill 301-118, and the Senate passed the bill 57-37.

"The NCGA has worked hard for the river-related provisions in the bill," said NCGA President Lee Klein of Battle Creek, Neb. "Congress obviously understands the needs of America's farmers when it comes to our country's rivers and the important role river navigation

plays in the movement of grain and other agricultural commodities."

Among the provisions of the bill, NCGA supports are \$2.1 million for the Upper Mississippi River Navigation Study, and \$4.7 million for preconstruction design and engineering on five locks on the Upper Mississippi River and two on the Illinois River. This bill also includes an important provision regarding the management of the Missouri River.

Congressional passage of the Missouri River management provision (Section 103) put to rest, for now, a battle between Sen. Kit Bond (R-MO) and Sen. Tom Daschle (D-SD). An amendment

sponsored by Daschle would have given the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service authority to proceed with implementing a "spring rise" on the Missouri River next year. But Sen. Bond, primary sponsor of the Section 103 language, argued that a spring surge or "controlled flood" could bring disastrous floods on the Missouri River and disrupt navigation on both the Missouri and Mississippi rivers.

"Again, Congress recognized and validated Sen. Bond's concerns," Klein said. "However, there is a good possibility that President Clinton will veto the bill simply because of election year politics regarding the Section 103 provision. NCGA will push to see that the presi-



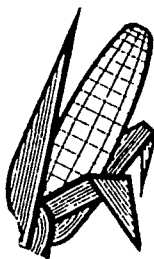
dent does not veto a bill containing language that he has signed four times previously."

"It is vital that Congress and the Administration focus on our deteriorating river infrastructure," said Klein. "Without these necessary improvements, the United States stands to lose its competitive edge as the world's leading corn exporter to the emerging competition in countries like Brazil and Argentina."

Klein also applauded Congress for appropriating sought-after funding targeted for the Upper Mississippi River Navigation Study and improvements on the Mississippi and Illinois rivers.



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Ag Industry Seeks Higher Funding In FY-2002

NCGA joined a coalition of ag industry groups as a signatory to a letter urging higher levels of funding for ag programs during FY-2002 and beyond. The letter, addressed to Sen. Lugar and Rep. Combest, requesting their help in the FY-2002 Budget Resolution.

"Specifically, we respectfully request you to urge the Budget Committee to provide additional funding in FY-2002 and beyond equal to at least the same level of emergency economic assistance which applied to the 2000 crop," the letter stated. "To facilitate the development of new legislation, it is important for the budget resolution to provide sufficient funding to enable the authorizing committees to develop effective agricultural policies."

Funding of the farm bill will be one of the key issues facing the budget committees this year.

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