

APR 17 2000
Laid Over Under Rule 25

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 123

BY MUNDIE

1 A House Concurrent Resolution requesting that the President
2 of the United States, the United States Secretary of
3 Agriculture, and the United States Congress
4 immediately take all actions necessary to reevaluate
5 and amend the 1996 "Freedom to Farm Bill" in order to
6 preserve family farms.

7 WHEREAS, family farm agriculture traditionally has
8 been the foundation of this nation's economic
9 prosperity, providing the basis for a system of
10 production unmatched in the world for its abundant and
11 efficient production of food, feed grains, and animal
12 products, and contributing billions of dollars in
13 revenue each year to the nation's economy from export
14 sales; and

15 WHEREAS, in 1996 Congress enacted the Federal
16 Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act (FAIR),
17 commonly referred to as the "Freedom to Farm Bill",
18 contained in Pub. L. No. 104-127 and Pub. L. No. 104-
19 180; and

20 WHEREAS, the effect of the 1996 Federal
21 Agricultural Improvement and Reform Act, has been to
22 unfairly prevent American producers from competing in
23 a global market against foreign competitors supported
24 by their governments; and

25 WHEREAS, since the passage of the federal
26 legislation, farmers have suffered from crisis
27 conditions caused by disasterously low prices and
28 devastating swings in market prices for commodities,
29
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1 including livestock, that has at times plummeted to
2 below Depression-Era levels; and

3 WHEREAS, since the passage of the "Freedom to Farm
4 Bill", agricultural production contracting,
5 integration of production and processing, and mergers
6 and consolidation of agribusinesses have increased,
7 thereby exacerbating the desperate financial
8 conditions faced by family farmers by limiting their
9 opportunities to market agricultural commodities; and

10 WHEREAS, for families who have farmed land for
11 generations, the "Freedom To Farm Bill" has come to
12 mean the freedom to leave their farms or face economic
13 ruin; and

14 WHEREAS, 385 delegates from across the United
15 States attending the American Farm Bureau's 81st
16 annual convention in January 2000, called for the
17 implementation of a countercyclical income support
18 policy to supplement farm program payments, based on
19 revenue history that would provide farmers formal
20 income support during severe economic times, and
21 called for a complete re-examination of the current
22 farm law to ensure that adequate financial support is
23 available for all farmers; and

24 WHEREAS, the Honorable Congressman Charles
25 Stenholm, Ranking Minority Member of the House of
26 Representatives' Committee on Agriculture and
27 recipient of the American Farm Bureau's "Golden Plow"
28 award has stressed that American agriculture cannot
29 wait until 2002, when the federal legislation expires,
30 in order to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with American

1 producers in developing risk management strategies;
2 and

3 WHEREAS, the House of Representatives' Agriculture
4 Committee is considering proposals to create a farm
5 safety net in order to protect producers against price
6 or income loss, as well as production loss; NOW
7 THEREFORE,

8 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, THE
9 SENATE CONCURRING, That the President of the United
10 States, the United States Secretary of Agriculture,
11 and the United States Congress immediately take all
12 actions necessary to reevaluate and amend the Federal
13 Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act in order to
14 address critical issues facing agriculture and to
15 preserve family farms; and

16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the United States
17 Senate's Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee
18 and the United States House of Representatives'
19 Agriculture Committee work toward immediately passing
20 legislation that creates a farm safety net for
21 agricultural producers facing desperate financial
22 hardship, including a countercyclical income support
23 policy as supported by the American Farm Bureau; and

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this
25 Resolution be sent by the Chief Clerk of the House of
26 Representatives to the President of the United States;
27 the United States Secretary of Agriculture; the
28 President of the Senate of the United States; the
29 United States Attorney General; the Speaker of the
30 House of Representatives of the United States; the

1 Chairperson and Ranking Member of the United States
2 Senate's Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and
3 Forestry; the Chairperson and Ranking Member of the
4 United States House of Representatives' Committee on
5 Agriculture; and members of Iowa's congressional
6 delegation.

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