104th Congress, 2d Session – – – – – – – – – – – – – House Document 104–215

AMENDMENTS TO THE FISCAL YEAR 1997 APPROPRIATIONS REQUESTS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA)

COMMUNICATION

FROM

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

TRANSMITTING

AMENDMENTS TO THE FY 1997 APPROPRIATIONS REQUESTS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA), PURSUANT TO 31 U.S.C. 1106(b)

MAY 16, 1996.—Referred to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed

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THE WHITE HOUSE,
Washington, May 16, 1996.

The SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

SIR: I ask the Congress to consider amendments to the FY 1997 appropriations requests for the Department of Agriculture (USDA). The proposed amendments include wildland firefighting resources for the Forest Service. In addition, several changes are proposed for the USDA budget as a result of the recently enacted 1996 Farm Bill (P.L. 104–127).

The details of these requests are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget. I concur with her comments and observations.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

Enclosure.

Estimate No. 11
104th Congress, 2nd Session

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

THE DIRECTOR

May 16, 1996

The President

The White House

Submitted for your consideration are amendments to your FY 1997 appropriations requests for programs in the Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The USDA program changes are largely due to the recently enacted 1996 Farm Bill (P.L. 104-127). The Farm Bill created a new conservation program, the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), that the Administration strongly supported. EQIP is a direct-spending program funded at $200 million per year that subsumes authorities for a number of discretionary USDA conservation programs. Therefore, two amendments are proposed that would eliminate funds requested in the FY 1997 Budget for these discretionary programs. The same activities will be funded through EQIP. In total, these amendments would reduce the pending requests by $78 million in budget authority.

In addition, the Farm Bill provisions for USDA's Crop Insurance program make unnecessary $75 million in previously proposed discretionary funds for the Farm Service Agency (FSA). An amendment is proposed that would reduce the FSA appropriations request accordingly. The Farm Bill also permits user fees collected by the Agricultural Quarantine Inspection (AQI) program that are in excess of $100 million to be available without further congressional action. This will enable USDA to respond more quickly to increases in demand for these inspection services. Therefore, an amendment is proposed that would reduce the appropriations request for the AQI program within the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

The Farm Bill provided a number of authorities for new programs that did not exist when the FY 1997 Budget was prepared, and requests are now proposed to fund several of the higher-priority programs among them. Specifically, $10 million is requested to provide grants to low-income rural communities to construct vital facilities such as health clinics and fire stations; $500,000 is requested to establish the new National Natural Resources Conservation Service Foundation, which will promote partnerships between the Federal Government, States, and private interests to improve conservation of natural resources; and $5 million is requested to increase funds proposed for the Farm Bill's grazing lands conservation initiative.

The Farm Bill also transferred the National Aquaculture Research Center in Stuttgart, Arkansas, and an aquaculture facility in Marion, Alabama, from the Department of the Interior to USDA, and $2.5 million is proposed to provide resources for these facilities consistent with the conclusion of an ongoing USDA evaluation of their relative merits. In addition, the Farm Bill authorized a task force to recommend modernization, construction, consolidations, and closures in the system of Federally-funded agricultural research facilities, and $150,000 is requested to initiate this effort.

The Farm Bill increased the mandatory authorization for the appropriated entitlement for nutrition assistance for Puerto Rico by $31 million and authorized new appropriated entitlements of $5.3 million in nutrition assistance for American Samoa and $2.5 million for a Community Food program. Therefore, an amendment is proposed to fund these revised mandatory spending levels.

Contingent emergency funding of $110 million is proposed for wildland firefighting costs of the Forest Service in USDA. The 1996 fire season is off to an early start, with recent major wildfires and continuing dry conditions in the Southwest. Since the 1996 fire season extends through the Fall into FY 1997, it is likely that FY 1997 appropriations for firefighting will be absorbed before the 1997 fire season begins next calendar year. The contingency funds requested here will provide assurance that funds will be available for the 1997 fire season. The $110 million requested by this amendment, or any portion thereof, would be available only upon your transmittal of a subsequent request to the Congress designating the specific amount requested as an emergency requirement, pursuant to the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended.

I have carefully reviewed these proposals and am satisfied that they are necessary at this time. Therefore, I join the Secretary of Agriculture in recommending that the proposals be transmitted to the Congress.

Sincerely,

Alice M. Rivlin
Director

Enclosures

Agency:	DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Bureau:	DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION
Heading:	Advisory Committees (USDA)
FY 1997 Budget Appendix Page:	135
FY 1997 Pending Request:	$706,000
Proposed Amendment:	$150,000
Revised Request:	$856,000

This proposal would provide funding for the task force to study Federally-funded agricultural research facilities, authorized by the 1996 Farm Bill (P.L. 104-127). Within two years, the task force will report a ten-year strategic plan to the Secretary of Agriculture and Congress regarding modernization, rehabilitation, consolidation, and closure of agricultural research facilities constructed with Federal funds.

This proposal would increase FY 1997 outlays by $150 thousand.

Agency:	DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Bureau:	AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE
Heading:	Agricultural Research Service
FY 1997 Budget Appendix Page:	139
FY 1997 Pending Request:	$726,353,000
Proposed Amendment:	$2,500,000
Revised Request:	$728,853,000

The 1996 Farm Bill (P.L. 104-127) transferred the National Aquaculture Research Center in Stuttgart, Arkansas, and the Claude Harris National Aquaculture Research Center in Marion, Alabama, from the Department of the Interior to the Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service. While the relative value of these facilities is still being evaluated, this amendment would provide resources to be allocated to the facilities consistent with the conclusions of an on-going USDA review of their relative merits.

The proposed amendment would increase FY 1997 outlays by $2 million.

Agency:	DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Bureau:	ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE
Heading:	Salaries and Expenses
House Doc. Page:	11
FY 1996 Pending Request:	$339,033,000 (definite) $125,000,000 (special fund, indefinite)
Proposed Amendment:	-$125,000,000 (special fund, indefinite) $100,000,000 (special fund, definite)
Revised Request:	$339,033,000 (definite) $100,000,000 (special fund, definite)

(In the appropriations language under the above heading, in the first proviso, delete "amounts" and substitute $100,000,000, and delete "without further appropriations".)

This proposal would amend the pending request to reflect provisions of the 1996 Farm Bill (P.L. 104-127) concerning the availability of funds for the Agricultural Quarantine and Inspection (AQI) Program. The Act provides that fees and other collections in excess of $100,000,000 be available for the provision of AQI services without further appropriation.

The proposed amendment would reduce FY 1997 discretionary outlays by $25 million.

Agency:	**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**
Bureau:	**FARM SERVICE AGENCY**
Heading:	**Salaries and Expenses**
FY 1997 Budget Appendix Page:	**161**
FY 1997 Pending Request:	**$820,495,000 (definite)** **$75,000,000 (indefinite)**
Proposed Amendment:	**-$75,000,000 (including language)**
Revised Request:	**$820,495,000 (definite)**

(In the appropriations language under the above heading, delete the proviso, ":Provided further, That for sales commission payments to reinsurance companies not paid from the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation Fund, such sums as may be necessary".)

The 1996 Farm Bill (P.L. 104-127) provides full mandatory funding for sales commission payment to reinsurance companies from the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation Fund. Therefore, this discretionary request for FY 1997 is no longer needed.

The proposed amendment would reduce FY 1997 discretionary outlays by $75 million.

Agency:	DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Bureau:	FARM SERVICE AGENCY
Heading:	Agricultural Conservation Program
FY 1997 Budget Appendix Page:	164
FY 1997 Pending Request:	$75,000,000
Proposed Amendment:	-$75,000,000 (including language)
Revised Request:	---

(Delete the appropriations language under the above heading.)

The 1996 Farm Bill (P.L. 104-127) replaced this discretionary program with a new mandatory program, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Therefore, this discretionary request for FY 1997 is no longer needed, since program activities will be funded through the EQIP.

The proposed amendment would reduce FY 1997 discretionary outlays by $31 million.

Agency:	DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Bureau:	NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
Heading:	Conservation Operations
FY 1997 Budget Appendix Page:	181
FY 1997 Pending Request:	$657,910,000
Proposed Amendment:	$5,000,000
Revised Request:	$662,910,000

The 1996 Farm Bill (P.L. 104-127) provided new authority for Private Grazing Land Conservation Assistance and a Grazing Technical Assistance Self-Help program. This proposed amendment would augment the funds requested in the FY 1997 Budget for a Grazing Lands Initiative. Funds would be used to strengthen technical assistance to owners and operators of private grazing lands, improve conservation of wildlife and fish habitat, increase water quality, and help establish a coordinated and cooperative Federal, State, and local conservation program for management of private grazing lands.

The proposed amendment would increase FY 1997 outlays by $4.5 million.

Agency:	**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**
Bureau:	**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE**
Heading:	**Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program**
FY 1997 Budget Appendix Page:	**187**
FY 1997 Pending Request:	**$2,681,000**
Proposed Amendment:	**-$2,681,000 (including language)**
Revised Request:	**---**

(Delete the appropriations language under the above heading.)

The 1996 Farm Bill (P.L. 104-127) replaced this discretionary program with a new mandatory program, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Therefore, this discretionary request for FY 1997 is no longer needed, since program activities will be funded through the EQIP.

The proposed amendment would reduce FY 1997 discretionary outlays by $1 million.

HEADING:	DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BUREAU:	NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
HEADING:	National Natural Resources Conservation Service Foundation
FY 1997 Budget Appendix Page:	189
FY 1997 Pending Request:	---
Proposed Amendment:	$500,000
Revised Request:	$500,000

(Insert the above heading and the appropriations language that follows immediately after the material under the heading "Rural Clean Water Program":)

For a grant to establish the National Natural Resources Conservation Foundation authorized in sections 351-360 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-127), $500,000.

The 1996 Farm Bill (P.L. 104-127) establishes a new non-governmental National Natural Resources Conservation Foundation as a charitable and nonprofit corporation for scientific, charitable, and educational purposes. The Foundation may receive appropriations for three years to facilitate its establishment. The Foundation will promote partnerships between government and private interests in the promotion of natural resources on private lands.

The proposed amendment would increase FY 1997 outlays by $500,000.

AGENCY:	DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BUREAU:	RURAL HOUSING SERVICE
HEADING:	Community Facility Grant Program
FY 1997 Budget Appendix Page:	211
FY 1997 Pending Request:	---
Proposed Amendment:	$10,000,000
Revised Request:	$10,000,000

(Insert the above heading and the appropriations language that follows immediately after the material under the heading "Rural Housing Preservation Grants":)

For grants for essential community facilities in rural areas pursuant to section 763 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-127), $10,000,000.

This proposal would provide Federal cost-share assistance to low-income rural communities for the development of essential community facilities, such as hospitals, fire stations, and community centers. This new grant program, authorized in the 1996 Farm Bill (P.L. 104-127), would be used in conjunction with the existing direct and guaranteed loan programs for the development of these facilities. Grants will be targeted to the lowest-income communities. Communities that have lower population and income levels would receive a higher cost-share contribution through these grants, to a maximum contribution of 75 percent of the cost of developing the facility.

The proposed amendment would increase FY 1997 outlays by $1 million.

Agency:	DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE	
Bureau:	FOOD AND CONSUMER SERVICE	
Heading:	Food Stamp Program	
FY 1997 Budget Appendix Page:	240	
FY 1997 Pending Request:	$29,988,755,000	(Total request)
	$1,143,000,000	(Nutrition assistance for Puerto Rico)
	$2,500,000,000	(Benefit reserve)
Proposed Amendment:	$31,000,000	(Nutrition assistance for Puerto Rico)
	-$38,800,000	(Benefit reserve)
Revised Request:	$29,988,755,000	(Total request)
	$1,174,000,000	(Nutrition assistance for Puerto Rico)
	$2,461,200,000	(Benefit reserve)

(In the appropriations language under the above heading, delete "$2,500,000,000" and substitute $2,461,200,000" and delete "$1,143,000,000" and substitute $1,174,000,000.)

The 1996 Farm Bill (P.L. 104-127) increased the mandatory authorization for nutrition assistance to Puerto Rico for FY 1997 from $1,143,000,000 to $1,174,000,000. This amendment would modify the earmark for nutrition assistance for Puerto Rico to fund the new authorized level. The Farm Bill also authorized $5,300,000 in mandatory funding for nutrition assistance in American Samoa and $2,500,000 in mandatory funding for a new Community Food program. The benefit reserve would be reduced by $38,800,000. No change in the total request of $29,988,755,000 for the Food Stamp Program is needed.

The proposed amendment has no effect on discretionary outlays. The proposal would increase FY 1997 mandatory outlays by $39 million.

Agency:	DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Bureau:	FOREST SERVICE
Heading:	Wildland Fire Management
FY 1997 Budget Appendix Page:	247
FY 1997 Pending Request:	$385,485,000
Proposed Amendment:	$109,531,000 (contingent emergency funding)
Revised Request:	$495,016,000 (including contingent emergency funding)

(Insert the following new paragraph immediately after the existing language under the above heading:)

In addition, to cover necessary expenses for emergency rehabilitation, presuppression due to emergencies, and wildfire suppression activities of the Forest Service, $109,531,000, to remain available until expended: Provided, That these funds, or any portion thereof, shall be available only to the extent that the President notifies the Congress of his designation of any or all of these amounts as emergency requirements under the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended: Provided further, That the entire amount is designated by Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 252(b)(2)(D)(i) of such Act: Provided further, That such funds are available for repayment of advances from other appropriations accounts previously transferred for such purposes.

Based on projections for the calendar year 1996 fire season, there will be a shortfall of fire-related funding in FY 1997. The 1996 season has begun early, and, typically, the fire season lasts through the Fall (and into FY 1997). There already have been significant wildfires in Arizona and New Mexico this year. The budgeted FY 1997 fire suppression resources could be expended by the end of this calendar year, leaving little or no funding for fire suppression for the calendar year 1997 season.

To meet past funding shortfalls, the Forest Service has borrowed from the Knutsen-Vandenburg (K-V) trust fund. This fund collects deposits made by timber purchasers for reforestation and other forest health activities on cut-over areas on Federal lands. If FY 1996 fire suppression needs are funded from the K-V fund, amounts provided in this request could also be used to repay the K-V fund, to avoid shortfalls in needed reforestation resources.

The $109.5 million requested by this amendment, or any portion thereof, would be available only upon the President transmitting a subsequent budget request to the Congress designating the specific amount requested as an emergency requirement, pursuant to the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended.