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FEDERAL UPDATE

Congress to Restart Farm Bill After Presidents' Day Recess

Congress adjourned for its Presidents' Day recess without naming conferees in the House for negotiating yet another version of the Farm Bill. However, the Senate did name its conferees to the bill before leaving town which, in addition to Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Tom Harkin of Iowa and Ranking Member Saxby Chambliss of Georgia, include Democrats Max Baucus of Montana, Kent Conrad of North Dakota, Patrick Leahy of Vermont, Blanche Lincoln of Arkansas and Debbie Stabenow of Michigan. Republicans include Richard Lugar of Indiana, Charles Grassley of Iowa, Thad Cochran of Mississippi and Pat Roberts of Kansas.

Lawmakers are negotiating a revised version of the Farm Bill because President Bush has threaten to veto both the House and Senate versions of the bill because he believes the spending is too high in either bill, which has delayed conference discussions. To address the White House concerns and move conference discussions forward, House Agriculture Committee Chairman Colin Peterson (D-MN) recently worked closely with USDA officials to identify a more fiscally palatable package. The Senate was not included in the discussions which led to a feisty meeting between lawmakers in both chambers earlier this week, fading hopes of passing a conference report before the 2002 Farm Bill expires on March 15th. However, on Thursday evening, House and Senate lawmakers along with USDA officials met to reach a preliminary funding agreement to jumpstart conference discussions. As of press time, they planned to finalize the funding compromise package by February 17th.

The National Trust continues to have positive meetings with House and Senate Agriculture staff to ensure the strongest historic preservation language possible is included in the final conference report.

Award Nominations Sought for Historic Preservation-led Strategies to Enhance Economic Development

The Economic Development Administration (EDA), U.S. Department of Commerce recently announced the EDA Excellence in Economic Development Awards 2008 to recognize exemplary economic development accomplishments in your communities.

In particular, EDA announced the new nomination category of Excellence in Historic Preservation-led Strategies to Enhance Economic Development. Nominations submitted in this category would demonstrate significant use of regional historic assets (including heritage tourism) to advance innovative economic development strategies resulting in higher-skill, higher-wage jobs and substantial private capital investment. EDA is accepting nominations through April 16, 2008.

If you have any questions please contact Barbara Earman in EDA's Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs Division at 202-482-4521. The Awards 2008

nomination brochure is available for you to review and download on <http://www.eda.gov/PDF/EDAawardsbrochure2008.pdf>. Eligibility and evaluation criteria are discussed in the brochure.

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Public Policy Weekly Bulletin

February 15, 2008 — Volume 3, Issue No. 4

Congress, State Legislatures, the Federal government, and the Courts.