

## **House Passes Disaster Aid Package; Senate Delays Until 2018**

Friday, December 22, 2017

By Mary Jane Buerkle

The U.S. House of Representatives on Thursday passed a supplemental appropriations bill designed primarily to address disaster losses, but also includes policy that would bring cotton back into the commodity title of the Farm Bill.

However, the Senate failed to garner enough votes to bring the bill to the floor, so the legislative package will be taken up again after the first of the year.

“We are encouraged by the House’s advancement of the bill, and greatly appreciate the work by so many of our friends in Congress, including House Agriculture Committee Chairman Mike Conaway, Rep. Jodey Arrington, and Rep. Mac Thornberry, to continue our pursuit of this goal to bring cotton back into Title I of the Farm Bill,” PCG President Johnie Reed said. “However, we are disappointed that the Senate left town with unfinished business, especially considering that those who have been dealing with these hurricanes and other natural disasters need relief. We look forward to working with our friends in the Senate to finish this bill and get it to President Trump’s desk. Our growers need a long-term, viable safety net to ensure a strong future for the cotton industry.”

PCG’s Steve Verett and Kody Bessent spent time in Washington, DC last week, meeting with key Congressional leaders about this policy package, and also the USDA, continuing talks on another Cotton Ginning Cost-Share Program.

“We’re still advocating relentlessly on these initiatives for the cotton industry, and all of these policy items are still alive,” Bessent said. “This is where the relationships we’ve built throughout Congress and governmental agencies come into play, and we will continue our work to accomplish our ultimate goal of restoring cotton’s safety net.”

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## **Our View: Christmas Reflection**

Wednesday, December 20, 2017

From Farm Policy Facts

Christmas is a time of reflection, and a time of giving and receiving – whether we deserve and understand the gifts or not. It’s called grace.

This Christmas, we’d like to thank the farmers of this nation, who generously bless us all – friends and strangers alike – with the fruits of their labor.

Farmers’ fields and pastures are why we have great open spaces in this nation and the picturesque countryside most citizens can enjoy with a short drive from their homes.

Because of farmers’ efficiency, we spend less of our incomes on food than citizens of any other nation. And in return, we have the most abundant and safest food supply in the history of mankind.

Unlike most other countries, America has never known widespread hunger thanks to the consistency of our farmers and ranchers. Year in and year out – in good times and bad – they start each season with a seed of hope and a hearty resolve, and it flowers from there.

It’s incredible, actually. Farmers toil in one of the riskiest enterprises on the planet, just to feed and clothe the rest of us.

They compete with foreign treasuries, trade barriers, and highly volatile markets. They never know when Mother Nature will strike and destroy a season’s worth of labor. But even when they lose a crop to freeze or a flood, they are back out the next season to try again.

And their work does more than just put food on our tables and conserve our landscape. It makes our economy hum.

More than 20 percent of the U.S. economy is directly or indirectly tied to the food and agriculture sectors. That’s 43 million jobs, \$1.9 trillion in wages, and \$894 billion in taxes.

Yet somehow, the policy that underpins it all represents less than 1% of federal spending.

We are truly blessed.

Thank God for farmers, who continue to grace us all.

## **NCC: Tax Reform Welcome, Stronger Farm Policy Needed**

Wednesday, Dec. 20, 2017

From the National Cotton Council

The U.S. cotton industry is pleased with passage of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (H.R. 1) – legislation it supported that can spur economic growth by 1) lowering taxes and 2) simplifying the code for America’s cotton producers and associated businesses.

National Cotton Council (NCC) President/CEO Gary Adams wrote to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) and House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI) thanking them for crafting and for shepherding through Congress a bill that will allow farm families to further invest in their operations and preserve that farm for future generations by allowing full and immediate expensing of capital purchases and doubling the estate tax exemption.

“As you know, many family farms are structured as pass-through entities, and we appreciate the provisions to specifically provide tax relief for these entities as well as a provision for cooperatives and their members given the loss of Section 199,” Adams stated in his letter. “The lowering of individual tax rates will further help alleviate the tax burden on farm families.”

