

The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 98) to amend chapter 443 of title 49, United States Code, to extend the aviation war risk insurance program, and to amend the Centennial of Flight Commemoration Act to make technical and other corrections.

AMENDMENT NO. 249

(Purpose: To strike section 2 relating to the Centennial of Flight Commemoration Act (36 U.S.C. 143 note; 112 Stat 3486 et seq.)

Mr. ENZI. I understand Senator THOMPSON has an amendment at the desk. I ask for its consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI), for Mr. THOMPSON, proposes an amendment numbered 249:

Strike section 2.

Amend the title so as to read: "An Act to amend chapter 443 of title 49, United States Code, to extend the aviation war risk insurance program."

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I rise in support of H.R. 98, which would reauthorize the aviation war risk insurance program for five years. As U.S. troops embark on strikes against Yugoslavia, it is important that we make sure to provide the Administration all of the tools necessary to carry out our foreign policy interests.

The Aviation Insurance Program insures U.S. air carriers against losses resulting from war, terrorism or other hostile acts. Program insurance is available when a carrier's commercial insurance is canceled, or is unavailable at reasonable rates. First, however, the President or his designee must determine that a flight is essential to the foreign policy interests of the United States.

We must act on this legislation now. Otherwise, the Aviation Insurance Program will expire at the end of March. I cannot overemphasize its importance. During Operation Desert Storm, for instance, the program insured more than 5,000 flights provided by commercial airlines in support of the Department of Defense, as part of the Civil Reserve Air Fleet. U.S. carriers simply would not be able to participate in the Civil Reserve Air Fleet if they could not insure against high risks of loss or damage.

I want to emphasize another important point. The Senate recently approved legislation that, among other things, would reauthorize the Aviation Insurance Program for two months. H.R. 98 would reauthorize the program for five years. In the event that the legislation containing the two-month extension is enacted into law after H.R. 98 is enacted into law, the two-month provision should not trump the five-year provision. In other words, it is our intent that the Aviation Insurance Program is reauthorized for five years.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation to reauthor-

ize the aviation war risk insurance program for five years.

Mr. ENZI. I ask unanimous consent that the amendment be agreed to, the bill then be referred to the Commerce Committee; I further ask consent that the bill then be immediately discharged, the Senate proceed to its consideration, the bill be read the third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements relating to the measure appear in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Amendment (No. 249) was agreed to.

The bill (H.R. 98), as amended, was read the third time and passed.

Mr. ENZI. I finally ask unanimous consent that the amendment to the title, which is at the desk, be agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The title was amended so as to read: "An Act to amend chapter 443 of title 49, United States Code, to extend the aviation war risk insurance program."

MAKING OF RISK MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

Mr. ENZI. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 756 introduced earlier today by Senator LINCOLN and Senator HUTCHINSON

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 756) to provide adversely affected crop producers with additional time to make fully informed risk management decisions for the 1999 crop year.

There being no objection the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, this bill addresses a crop insurance crisis that is plaguing my home state of Arkansas.

As many of you know, the outlook for the agricultural economy is very bleak for many parts of the country. As farmers in Arkansas and other states making their planting decisions for the upcoming growing season, they were offered what seemed to be a light at the end of the tunnel. A crop insurance policy entitled CRCPlus.

CRCPlus is a supplemental crop insurance policy available only from America Agrisurance, Inc. and is offered on corn, cotton, grain sorghum, soybeans, wheat and rice in several states. For Arkansas' rice growers, the original CRCPlus policies offered what appeared to be a financially viable risk management tool by adding a privately backed 3 cents per pound to the underlying federal Crop Revenue Coverage (CRC) policies. This placed the guaranteed fall price for rice at a level above projected prices. With commodity

prices depressed across the board, a large number of farmers decided to switch to growing rice based on this "too good to be true" offer.

At a time when the agricultural climate in Arkansas is devastated to begin with, these policies were a last ray of hope for hundreds of farmers. Now, essentially, American Agrisurance has pulled the rug out from under these families. On March 1, the company reneged, saying it would reduce the additional guarantee of coverage from 3 cents to 1 1/2 cents per pound. This announcement came after the sales period for crop insurance was closed, leaving many producers with a product they would not have otherwise purchased. Many producers felt they had been misled and I tend to agree. I am very thankful to Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman and Risk Management Agency Director, Ken Ackerman for their assistance in opening the cancellation period for crop insurance over the last two weeks so that the affected producers had more time to evaluate whether to keep the CRCPlus policies. This extra time eased the mind of many producers in my state during a very troubling period. During this extended cancellation period many producers reevaluated the cost/benefit ratios calculated at the 1 1/2 cent level rather than the 3 cent level. Several producers canceled their policies with American Agrisurance, but many producers decided that the coverage offered was still sufficient to provide protection during a very volatile growing season and opted to stick with American Agrisurance and the CRCPlus policy. I wish the story ended here.

American Agrisurance has since indicated that due to a problem with its reinsurers, they may not be able to live up to the additional 1 1/2 cents of coverage on policies currently held by many producers. The company is reviewing its financial status and will announce on March 25th whether or not the 1 1/2 cent policies will be honored. This situation has further clouded the outlook for producers and left them wondering what to believe and who to trust.

Regardless of the company's excuses for its actions, it is now imperative that farmers who were wronged by this company be able to withdraw their business. I have been working with the Administration, the distinguished Chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Lugar, and several other members of the Senate Agriculture Committee to draft legislation that addresses our producers' needs. This bill allows the Department of Agriculture to reopen the crop insurance sales period so that producers affected by the uncertainty of the CRCPlus situation can transfer to another approved insurance provider.

Farmers are on the verge of planting, so a swift response is necessary to clear

up the confusion over their insurance protection. As the daughter of a seventh generation Arkansas farm family, I truly understand that in situations like this it's the farmer who gets left holding the bag. Each year, farmers go out on a limb and make critical planting decisions based on obligations and promises. My heart goes out to all who have made plans based on these policies. I urge my colleagues to act quickly on this matter so that a wrong can be righted in America's heartland. Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

Mr. ENZI. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read the third time, and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the bill appear in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (S. 756) was considered read the third time and passed, as follows:

S. 756

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. CROP INSURANCE OPTIONS FOR PRODUCERS WHO APPLIED FOR CROP REVENUE COVERAGE PLUS.

(a) **ELIGIBLE PRODUCERS.**—This section applies with respect to a producer eligible for insurance under the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1501 et seq.) who applied for the supplemental crop insurance endorsement known as Crop Revenue Coverage PLUS (referred to in this section as "CRCPLUS") for the 1999 crop year for a spring planted agricultural commodity.

(b) **ADDITIONAL PERIOD FOR OBTAINING OR TRANSFERRING COVERAGE.**—Notwithstanding the sales closing date for obtaining crop insurance coverage established under section 508(f)(2) of the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1508(f)(2)) and notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation shall provide a 14-day period beginning on the date of enactment of this Act, but not to extend beyond April 12, 1999, during which a producer described in subsection (a) may—

(1) with respect to a federally reinsured policy, obtain from any approved insurance provider a level of federally reinsured coverage for the agricultural commodity for which the producer applied for the CRCPLUS endorsement that is equivalent to or less than the level of federally reinsured coverage that the producer applied for from the insurance provider that offered the CRCPLUS endorsement; and

(2) transfer to any approved insurance provider any federally reinsured coverage provided for other agricultural commodities of the producer by the same insurance provider that offered the CRCPLUS endorsement, as determined by the Corporation.

PROTECTION FOR PRODUCERS OF AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES

Mr. ENZI. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 1212, just received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1212) to protect producers of agricultural commodities who applied for a Crop Revenue Coverage PLUS supplemental endorsement for the 1999 crop year.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the immediate consideration of the bill?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. ENZI. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read the third time, passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 1212) was read the third time, and passed.

THE CALENDAR

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. ENZI. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration en bloc of the following bills reported by the Energy Committee:

S. 278, Calendar No. 41; S. 291, Calendar No. 46; S. 292, Calendar No. 47; S. 293, Calendar No. 42; S. 243, Calendar No. 45; S. 334, Calendar No. 63; S. 356, Calendar No. 48; S. 366, Calendar No. 49; S. 382, Calendar No. 50; S. 422, Calendar No. 65; H.R. 171, Calendar No. 51; and H.R. 193, Calendar No. 52.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ENZI. I ask unanimous consent that the amendment numbered 250 to S. 293, which is at the desk, be agreed to, and the amendment numbered 251 to S. 243 be agreed to, any committee amendments where applicable be agreed to, the bills then be considered read the third time and passed, as amended, if amended, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to any of these bills appear in the RECORD with the above occurring en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONVEYANCE OF CERTAIN LANDS TO THE COUNTY OF RIO ARRIBA, NM

The bill (S. 278) to direct the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain lands to the county of Rio Arriba, New Mexico, was considered, ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, read the third time, and passed; as follows:

S. 278

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. OLD COYOTE ADMINISTRATIVE SITE.

(a) **CONVEYANCE OF PROPERTY.**—Not later than one year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior (herein "the Secretary") shall convey to the County of Rio Arriba, New Mexico (herein

"the County"), subject to the terms and conditions stated in subsection (b), all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to the land (including all improvements on the land) known as the "Old Coyote Administrative Site" located approximately 1/2 mile east of the Village of Coyote, New Mexico, on State Road 96, comprising one tract of 130.27 acres (as described in Public Land Order 3730), and one tract of 276.76 acres (as described in Executive Order 4599).

(b) **TERMS AND CONDITIONS.**—

(1) Consideration for the conveyance described in subsection (a) shall be—

(A) an amount that is consistent with the special pricing program for Governmental entities under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act; and

(B) an agreement between the Secretary and the County indemnifying the Government of the United States from all liability of the Government that arises from the property.

(2) The lands conveyed by this Act shall be used for public purposes. If such lands cease to be used for public purposes, at the option of the United States, such lands will revert to the United States.

(c) **LAND WITHDRAWALS.**—Land withdrawals under Public Land Order 3730 and Executive Order 4599 as extended in the Federal Register on May 25, 1989 (54 F.R. 22629) shall be revoked simultaneous with the conveyance of the property under subsection (a).

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I am very pleased that the Senate has again passed legislation to convey unwanted federal land to Rio Arriba County, New Mexico. While identical legislation passed the Senate last summer, it was unable to get through the House of Representatives due to political wrangling in the waning days of the 105th Congress.

Meanwhile, Rio Arriba has been waiting for access to this much-needed land and facilities. The vast majority of this Northern New Mexico county is in federal ownership. Communities find themselves unable to grow or find available property necessary to provide local services. This legislation allows for transfer by the Secretary of the Interior real property and improvements at an abandoned and surplus administrative site for the Carson National Forest to the County. The site is known as the old Coyote Ranger District Station, near the small town of Coyote, New Mexico.

The Coyote Station will continue to be used for public purposes, including a community center, and a fire substation. Some of the buildings will also be available for the County to use for storage and repair of road maintenance equipment, and other County vehicles.

Mr. President, the Forest Service has determined that this site is of no further use to them, since they have recently completed construction of a new administrative facility for the Coyote Range District. The Forest Service reported to the General Services Administration that the improvements on the site were considered surplus, and would be available for disposal under their administrative procedures. At this particular site, however, the land on