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wilderness protection that we are leaving for the generations to come.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
October 21, 1999.

NOTE: S. 323, approved October 21, was assigned Public Law No. 106–76. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Statement on Signing the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2000

October 22, 1999

Today I have signed into law H.R. 1906, the ''Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2000.''

The Act provides $14.1 billion in discretionary budget authority for programs of the Department of Agriculture and the Food and Drug Administration, including the Special Supplemental Feeding Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); food safety programs; and various programs to protect and support rural communities.

The Act also provides $8.6 billion in emergency funds to assist our Nation's farmers and ranchers who are suffering through the second year in a row of low commodity prices and, for many, crop and livestock losses from severe drought and flooding. My Administration will work hard to ensure that these funds are distributed to farm families as soon as possible; however, because the Congress wrote some of the programs in a complex manner, farmers and ranchers need to understand that, for my Administration to implement them fairly, some of the assistance will take some time to provide. This is the second year in a row that substantial additional Federal assistance has been needed, on top of our regular farm programs, due to deficiencies in the 1996 Farm Bill—further evidence that the 1996 Act simply does not provide an adequate farm safety net.

I continue to be concerned that the income assistance in the Act I have signed today is provided through supplemental Farm Bill income support payments, and therefore is not targeted to producers most in need. These payments are made based on past production, which may have no relation to the crops grown or the market situation facing producers this year, and in some cases payments are made to individuals who are no longer farming. There is now, however, an urgent need for farm assistance, and so I have approved H.R. 1906. But I once again call on the Congress to work with my Administration to fix the 1996 Farm Bill permanently so American producers have the assurance of an adequate farm income safety net, while they continue their work to feed us all.

While the Act's funding for crop and livestock losses from natural disasters has been increased over the amount in the Senate bill, it still will not adequately meet the devastating farm losses in many parts of the country. In addition, H.R. 1906 cuts farm loans by 25 percent from last year, which is simply untenable as we head into a crop year when farmers and lenders alike are saying that they will need even more Federal financing help than last year. The Act also does not include emergency conservation funds to help farmers and rural communities affected by Hurricane Floyd to clear their fields and streams of debris and restore their small waterways. My Administration will work in the remaining days of this session of Congress to secure funding for these and other urgent, unmet needs. In addition, I have asked the Vice President to work with the Department of Agriculture to implement, within existing authorities, measures to improve the operation of various conservation programs.

The additional crop insurance subsidies provided in the Act will help producers afford higher coverage next year, but I call on the Congress to pass long-term crop insurance reform before adjourning this year, to improve this important component of the farm safety net.

The Congress has not provided the full amount of my requested increase for the WIC program, thereby failing to ensure that we can achieve the goal of full participation of 7.5 million women, infants, and children in this vital program. I also remain opposed

to the provision that modifies the nonimmigrant farm worker program, known as the H–2A program, because it virtually eliminates the credibility of the recruitment process that protects legal U.S. farm workers. The Act also makes significant cuts in a number of high-priority conservation programs, including the Wetlands Reserve and Environmental Quality Incentives Programs, and fails to fully fund implementation of the Clean Water Action Plan and important bioenergy and bioproducts research and development. In addition, the Act fails to fund the Farmland Protection Program, a valuable conservation program that has received bipartisan support in the past and would have prevented the conversion of farmland and the loss of a way of life in rural communities.

I am concerned that the Act frustrates initiatives to improve customer service in USDA county offices, for example by blocking the Secretary of Agriculture's new Support Services Bureau designed to modernize administrative functions, at a time when farmers and rural residents truly need upgraded assistance. Since the first days of my Administration, the Vice President and I have made improved customer service and greater administrative efficiency a top priority, which we will continue to pursue at the USDA.

I am concerned that, with the exception of the school breakfast pilot projects, H.R. 1906 prohibits the use of Food and Nutrition Service funds for research and evaluation of nutrition programs. The research needs of these important programs should continue to be addressed in the context of the programs' administration. I am asking the Secretary of Agriculture to look into this matter and to work with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget on the most effective approach to address my concerns.

I am pleased that the Act provides significant rural development loans and grants to help our rural communities diversify economically and improve their quality of life. The Act also includes a significant portion of the increase I requested for my Food Safety Initiative to reduce food-borne illnesses. In addition, the Act establishes mandatory livestock price reporting for certain meat processors, which will expand information to livestock producers and particularly will help smaller producers improve their ability to get a fair price in the marketplace. However, I am concerned with the Act's preemption of State price reporting requirements, which is compounded by the lack of funding in the Act to implement the new Federal requirements. My Administration will seek additional funding for these purposes.

There are a number of provisions in the Act that may raise Constitutional issues. These provisions will be treated in a manner that is consistent with the Constitution.

- Section 722 of the Act specifies that funds may not be used to provide to any non-Department of Agriculture employee questions or responses to questions resulting from the appropriations hearing process. To the extent that this provision would interfere with my duty to "take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed," or impede my ability to act as the chief executive, it would violate the constitution, and I will treat it as advisory.
- Section 735 of the Act purports to constrain my ability to make a particular type of budget recommendation to the Congress. This provision would interfere with my constitutional duty under the Recommendation Clause, and I will treat it as advisory.
- Finally, there are provisions in the Act that purport to condition my authority or that of certain officers to use funds appropriated by the Act on the approval of congressional committees. My Administration will interpret such provisions to require notification only, since any other interpretation would contradict the Supreme Court ruling in INS v. Chadha.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
October 22, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 1906, approved October 22, was assigned Public Law No. 106–78. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Memorandum on an Interagency Task Force on Nonprofits and Government

October 22, 1999

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Supporting the Role of Nonprofit Organizations: Interagency Task Force on Nonprofits and Government

The United States is the most generous Nation on Earth. In 1998, an estimated $175 billion was given by American individuals, communities, foundations, corporations, and other private philanthropies to a wide variety of causes and organizations. Individuals accounted for 85 percent of all contributions in 1998 and their giving has increased by almost one-third since 1995. And over the next 20 years, approximately $12 trillion in wealth is expected to be transferred from one generation to the next—more than $1 trillion of which will flow to nonprofit organizations through charitable giving.

In many cases it is nonprofit organizations that convert philanthropy into results—helping people in need, providing health care and educating our Nation's youth. The nonprofit sector is an integral component of our national life, encompassing more than one and a half million organizations with operating expenditures in excess of $600 billion. But more telling than the dollar figures is the new spirit of service and civic activism that nonprofits of every kind are now exhibiting. We are today in the midst of a nonprofit boom, a time when the activities of this sector are becoming ever more creative and entrepreneurial.

Nonprofits are uniquely able to identify problems, mobilize fresh thinking and energy, care for those in need on a human scale, and promote social change at the community level. As this sector grows in size and importance, there is an ever greater opportunity to forge partnerships that include Government, nonprofit groups, businesses, and citizens to address pressing public problems. There are already many ways that nonprofits work closely with the Federal Government. For example, Federal grant programs from the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health assist nonprofit research institutions that search for cures to cancer. And the Corporation for National Service works with nonprofits throughout the Nation to provide after-school and tutoring programs. Our challenge in this time of burgeoning social entrepreneurship is to encourage Government, nonprofits, and others to work together more meaningfully.

Therefore, today I direct the Assistants to the President for Domestic Policy and Economic Policy and the Chief of Staff to the First Lady to convene an Interagency Task Force on Nonprofits and Government ("Task Force"). The purpose of this Task Force will be twofold: first, to identify current forms of collaboration between the Federal Government and nonprofits; and second, to evaluate ways this collaboration can be improved.

Structure of the Task Force

The Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy, the Assistant to the President for Economic Policy, and the Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff to the First Lady will jointly Chair the Task Force. The Office of the Vice President, the Office of Management and Budget, and the Council of Economic Advisers will be regular participants.

The Task Force shall be composed of the following members:

(1) Secretary of the Treasury
(2) Attorney General
(3) Secretary of the Interior
(4) Secretary of Agriculture
(5) Secretary of Commerce
(6) Secretary of Labor
(7) Secretary of Health and Human Services
(8) Secretary of Housing and Urban Development
(9) Secretary of Transportation
(10) Secretary of Education
(11) Administrator of the Small Business Administration
(12) Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation for National and Community Service

The Chairs of the Task Force may add such other officials and independent agencies as they deem appropriate to further the purposes of this effort or to participate in