

OBJECTIONABLE PROVISIONS IN H.R. 2158

CONFERENCE AGREEMENT ON FY 1998 VA/HUD/INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS BILL

BILL LANGUAGE

- o \$5 million earmarked for a study on the cost-effectiveness of contracting with local hospitals in East Central Florida for the provision of non-emergent inpatient health care needs of veterans.
- o Prohibition on relocating the loan guaranty divisions of the Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Office in St. Petersburg, Florida to the Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Office in Atlanta, Georgia, because the conferees do not believe the VA has adequately justified the proposed relocation and has not provided a detailed cost-benefit analysis including comparison of savings for the cost of space and personnel.
- o \$10 million earmarked for demolition and replacement of the Heritage House in Kansas City, Missouri.
- o \$4 million earmarked for each of three areas -- a Native American area in Alaska, a rural area in Iowa, and a rural area in Missouri -- for rural economic development grants, to test comprehensive approaches to developing a job base through economic development, developing affordable low- and moderate-income rental and homeownership housing, and increasing the investment of both private and nonprofit capital.
- o \$99.6 million earmarked for 120 specific Economic Development Initiative grants as specified in the report language. [SEE REPORT PAGES 96-101]
- o \$15 million earmarked for the County of San Bernardino, California, for neighborhood initiatives.
- o \$3.5 million earmarked for the non-Federal cost-share of the levee project at Devils Lake, North Dakota.
- o Sec. 203 - Waives the requirement that the City of Oglesby, Illinois, hold public hearings concerning an environmental assessment for a warehouse project.
- o Sec. 206 - \$7.1 million transferring an earmark for a Kansas City industrial park at 18th Street and Indiana Avenue instead to the rehabilitation and infrastructure development associated with the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum and jazz museum at 18th and Vine.
- o Sec. 218 - Cancels the indebtedness of the Village of Robbins, Illinois, for HUD-guaranteed water and sewer bonds, including principal, interest, and any fees and other charges.
- o Authorizes and appropriates \$90 million additional funding for construction of a consolidated EPA research facility at Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, and raises the total construction cap on the project, including a child care center and computer center, to \$272.7 million.
- o Earmarks \$50 million for grants to Texas, requiring state matching of 20 percent, for improving water and wastewater treatment facilities for the colonias.
- o \$15 million earmarked for grants to Alaska to address drinking water and wastewater infrastructure needs.
- o Earmarks \$253.1 million for 39 specific wastewater and water treatment facilities and groundwater protection infrastructure, earmarked as stated in the report. [SEE REPORT PAGES 123-125]
- o Directs FEMA to make a grant of \$1.5 million to resolve issues under the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970 involving the City of Jackson, Mississippi.

- o Sec. 415 - "Buy America" protections.

REPORT LANGUAGE

[NOTE: Conferees state that they endorse all language in the House and Senate reports that is not explicitly contradicted in the conference agreement. Therefore, all earmarks and set-aside in the underlying reports remain valid unless reversed in the conference agreement.]

- o Earmarks \$6 million for the Musculoskeletal Disease Prevention and Treatment Research Center at the Jerry L. Pettis Memorial VA Medical Center in Loma Linda, California.
- o Explicit emphasis on report language regarding expanding an outpatient clinic in Williamsport, Pennsylvania; activation costs for construction projects at the medical centers in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, and Phoenix, Arizona; and the demonstration project involving the Clarksburg VA Medical Center and Ruby Memorial Hospital.
- o Urges VA to establish a community-based outpatient clinic in Brookhaven, New York.
- o Supportive language for the two-year pilot project in New England and Hawaii, funded through the Department of Defense, to explore improved and innovative methods of diabetes detection, prevention, and care.
- o Encourages VA to examine carefully the work in Detroit associated with Population and Resources Management Information Network, and to consider setting aside an appropriate amount of funds for development and analytical work associated with that system.
- o Earmarks \$98.4 million for 7 major construction projects of the VA, including a \$4 million add-on for a cemetery in Arizona. [SEE REPORT PAGES 89-90]
- o Earmarks \$1.5 million for expansion of the existing national cemetery in Mobile, Alabama.
- o Earmarks \$1.5 million to increase the number of niches at the columbarium at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific.
- o Earmarks \$48.3 million for 23 specific science and technology projects. [SEE REPORT PAGES 110-112]
- o Earmarks \$8 million of the funding set aside for research on EPA particulate matter standards to create "up to five university-based research centers focused on PM-related environment and health effects;" establishes certain governing criteria and guidelines for selection of these centers, although the report states the selection is to be competitive.
- o Earmarks \$76.5 million from the budget for environmental programs and management at EPA for 60 specific projects. [SEE REPORT PAGES 115-118] o Earmarks \$2.5 million of the EPA's hazardous substance Superfund to continue a study on the health effects of consuming Great Lakes fish, and 2 million for continued work on the Toms River, New Jersey cancer evaluation and research project.
- o Encourages EPA to implement a fixed-price, at-risk contracting proposal for cleanup of the Carolina Transformer Site in North Carolina.
- o Urges immediate construction at the Pepe Field Superfund site in Boonton, New Jersey.
- o Recognizes the acute need for additional water treatment capacity in San Diego County, California, although limited funds prevented the conferees from earmarking an amount for this project.
- o States awareness of San Diego's application for grant assistance through the U.S.-Mexico border programs

program for the South Bay Water Reclamation Facility, and urges that the matter be reviewed carefully for appropriate support.

- o Notes support for construction of the Jonathan Rogers plant in El Paso, Texas, and encourages EPA to provide an appropriate amount from the border infrastructure fund to support the project.

- o Earmarks \$500,000 from FEMA's emergency management planning funds for a comprehensive analysis and plan of evacuation alternatives for the New Orleans metropolitan area.

- o States awareness of proposals by the International Hurricane Center at Florida International University to apply advanced high-accuracy satellite laser altimeter surveying techniques to coastal and flood plain modeling and post natural disaster damage assessments, and urges FEMA to consider funding such proposals from discretionary funds.

- o Notes that Point Coupee Parish, Louisiana, faces the potential threat of multiple disasters, including weather-related threats, and urges FEMA to provide support for installation and testing of a prototype communications system.

- o Urges NASA to make available underutilized facilities at the Stennis Space Center for use by industry in launch vehicle development activities.

- o Earmarks \$19.65 million from NASA's aeronautics and technology funds for 9 specific projects. [SEE REPORT PAGES 131-132]

- o Earmarks \$5 million of NASA's mission support funds for facilities enhancements at Stennis Space Center.

- o Prohibition on relocating NASA aircraft based east of the Mississippi River (at the Wallops Island flight facility) to the Dryden Flight Research Center in California.

- o Earmarks \$1 million of National Science Foundation funds for the U.S./Mexico Foundation.