

I have the figures from our Commissioner of Agriculture. I am going to submit them for the record. But the preliminary figures that we have been scrambling to get in the last few weeks, from L.S.U., and from our research centers and extension service centers, say it is a minimum of a \$700 million loss just in Louisiana.

I know Texas is still struggling. The people just got back to Galveston yesterday. We still cannot get into Cameron Parish, which is the parish closest to Texas, along our border, because it is that devastated and flooded. We only have 10,000 people who live there, but it is a great farming and ranching community. Yes, I admit our numbers are not completely in from Cameron. But it doesn't take a month to get numbers from Richland Parish. It doesn't take a month to get numbers from Madison Parish. I suggest somebody who works for the Department of Agriculture might want to spend a little time looking at central and north Louisiana so we can get our numbers in.

I thought not only would they do that, they would have declared a disaster and we would have a program to help. You know what I found out when I came back? We had created a program in the last farm bill—that is the good news. The bad news is the regulations have not yet started to be written.

Let me be clear. We passed a bill. There is a new program. They have started very briefly to write these regulations but, according to the testimony I received—I am going to submit the full testimony for the RECORD—the regulations are “not imminent.”

I will wrap up. I ask unanimous consent for 2 more minutes.

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

Ms. LANDRIEU. The Under Secretary said—when I said, Could these regulations be written in 3 months? Could they be written in 6 months? Could they be written within the year?—Let me just say, Senator, “they are not imminent.”

I said, What exactly does that mean? So our farmers have nowhere to ask for help?

Well, that is about it.

That answer is not acceptable to this Senator. If we are dealing with a credit crisis and can, in 5 days or 7 days, put together a \$700 billion bailout for the financiers who bet on the price of cotton and soybean and wheat and sweet potatoes and sugarcane, we most certainly can spend a few days and a few billion dollars supporting the men and women who actually grow it.

That is why I am going to spend some time today, tonight, tomorrow and the next day, until I hear from the leadership—the Republican leadership, the Democratic leadership, or from the leadership at the White House—about what we can possibly do to get some help to farmers in the middle of the country who need our attention.

The program that will help them, the regulations have not been written.

They can't even apply until next year. They have to go to the bank next week. When they go to the bank, if we don't do something here, the bank is going to say I can't lend you money because I can't get it from the elevator, the elevator can't get it from the importer or exporter, and it is a chain event that will result for the people whom we all represent—who have not borrowed one penny inappropriately, who were not engaged in subprime mortgages. All they do is work hard before the Sun comes up and as it goes down they are still working; who pay their bills and pay their mortgages. In their time of need this Congress is going to walk out without leaving a few pennies on the table for them? I don't think so.

I have brought this to the attention of the Appropriations Committee in a letter I wrote several weeks ago. I guess the letter was not written strongly enough to get the attention we needed, so I am going to continue to speak and make phone calls and hold meetings and organize as best I can a group of Senators and House Members who represent the southern part of this country and the breadbasket of America, the central interior part, to say while we are bailing out the financial coasts, we have our energy coast, which is a whole other speech that I could give, underwater, our rigs are toppled, now our crops are down in the field down in the south, in the gulf coast, and we cannot even get a quorum in a meeting to take care of this.

Let me say generally, the chairman of the Agriculture Committee, TOM HARKIN, has been very sensitive. I brought this matter to him and he conducted a joint hearing with me, so I thank publicly Senator HARKIN. I thank KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON for phone calls and meetings. I thank BLANCHE LINCOLN. I am sure there will be other Senators who can recognize the damage done, not just to Louisiana but to their States as well, and recognize that the program we have, the regulations have not been written and it is not going to help.

Let me also mention Senator KENT CONRAD who helped design that program. He has said to me, and will probably speak on this, that he recognizes the program that has been designed is not sufficient and we do need special help.

I am going to conclude by saying I will be back on the floor in the morning and many times throughout this weekend as we work through these major bills on defense, homeland security, the Wall Street bailout. But I am going to continue to press for some appropriate immediate relief, targeted and specific to the counties and to the parishes and farmers and farm communities that need the most help. Certainly these Americans who have done nothing wrong but work hard and just got caught in a confluence of terrible rains and bad storms can get the help they need.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SANDERS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2008

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Commerce Committee be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 6063 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 6063) to authorize the programs of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and for other purposes.

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

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Nelson of Florida and Vitter substitute amendment, which is at the desk, be agreed to; the bill, as amended, be read the third time and passed, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate, and any statements related to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

The amendment (No. 5648) was agreed to.

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under “Text of Amendments.”)

The amendment was ordered to be engrossed and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill (H.R. 6063), as amended, was read the third time, and passed.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, we have just passed the NASA reauthorization bill. It is noteworthy that next week, October 1, is the 50th anniversary of the start of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and if my colleagues will recall, that was 1958. My colleagues may remember what was happening. The Soviet Union had surprised us by putting into orbit the first satellite, Sputnik, and America, in the midst of the Cold War among two superpowers, was absolutely shocked that we were behind in our technology; that we could not be premier. Then, lo and behold, 3 years later, they shocked us again by putting the first human in orbit, Yuri Gagarin, for one orbit when, in fact, we only had a rocket, the Redstone, that could get a human into suborbit. Then, we put Alan Shepard and subsequently Gus Grissom in suborbit, and then, in the meantime, the Soviet Union put Titov into several orbits. Of course, the