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NEWSLETTER

101-1232

2 November 1989

Washington

DC

AT YOUR CONGRESSMAN'S INVITATION, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Clayton Yeutter, and the Mexican Secretary of Agriculture, Jorge de la Vega, met in McAllen last week to discuss matters of mutual interest. The two Secretaries and your Congressman had some very productive discussions about border issues, particularly in agriculture trade which all three of us wish to see increased and strengthened.

While in McAllen, we attended the final session of the annual meeting of the Texas Soil & Water Conservation District Directors. All three of us addressed the gathering of district directors and it was a great opportunity for conservation officials throughout our state to hear about Mexican concerns for soil and water conservation--directly from the Mexican Secretary of Agriculture. My own speech to the assembly focused on conservation policies being studied by the Congress as part of our 1990 Farm Bill hearings.

Secretary Clayton Yeutter took the opportunity while in McAllen to mention the USDA commitment of \$5.5 million in additional monies for FY 1990 to help expand the delivery of potable water to border colonias--a decision which we applaud and appreciate. The Secretary also spoke about the upcoming construction of the world's first kenaf newsprint mill which will be located in the Rio Grande Valley.

Kenaf International had previously announced it would soon break ground on a \$35 million newsprint mill eight miles west of Raymondville in Willacy County, and Secretary Yeutter spoke with great praise about this effort--a praise that I enthusiastically share since my own efforts with Kenaf International stretch back several years.

The mill will produce about 30,000 tons annually of newsprint made from the fibre of the kenaf plant. The mill will employ some 160 people when it commences full operation in 1991. These are permanent jobs adding to the economic vitality of the region. This is unique because it represents a successful joint effort at utilizing a renewable agricultural resource in a commercial venture which will supply newsprint to publishers.

We are proud to have this novel industrial facility in our area. It represents the new cutting edge on commercialization of renewable agricultural resources, and we look forward to the eventual completion of the mill and the first day of kenaf paper production.

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HOSPITAL TRAUMA CARE is expensive any way you look at it. Over the last two decades, hospitals have developed special services designed to provide immediate emergency care to people who have suffered traumatic injuries, usually through accidents. These so-called **Trauma Care Centers** can make the difference between life and death for accident victims.

All along the U.S. and Mexico border, hospital trauma centers have been experiencing financial difficulties in the treatment of non-resident aliens. It is not unusual for a border-area hospital to treat a large number of patients who may be illegally within the U.S. Almost always the hospital must write-off the cost of this medical care because the patient cannot pay and invariably has no medical insurance.

Your Congressman is co-sponsoring legislation in the U.S. House (introduced by Rep Bill Lowery of California) which would provide monetary grants to hospital trauma centers (through our U.S. Department of Health & Human Services) to help these trauma centers cover the costs of providing medical care to illegal aliens who might be the victims of traumatic injuries. **The grants would go to hospital centers which incur medical costs with respect to undocumented aliens in an amount constituting not less than 15 percent of the total patient care.**

Doctors and nurses provide instant care to anyone who has suffered a traumatic accident. We are a compassionate people and nothing less would be acceptable. Hospital trauma centers save lives--and it is our responsibility to help them out financially, especially when it is later discovered the patient is an undocumented alien not eligible for any U.S. government payment assistance such as Medicaid.

The legislation I am supporting would help our hospital trauma centers stay in business despite the inability of aliens to pay for medical assistance. From Los Angeles to Miami, trauma centers face reimbursement problems that threaten trauma care for all patients. **The legislation would recognize immigration-related problems as a federal responsibility not to be shouldered alone by hospital trauma centers**, and it would provide a measure of financial support to those trauma centers which work for all of us when traumatic injuries threaten our lives.

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VISITORS FROM HOME. Mr and Mrs Miley Dove Sr of Lytle; Cynthia M. Jasso of Edinburg; Mr and Mrs Matt M. Davis of Charlotte.

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