

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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RURAL AMERICANS WOULD BE AIDED BY DOLE-GRASSLEY LEGISLATION

Washington, DC -- Legislation to assist rural Americans displaced by a decline in the agricultural economy has been introduced in the Senate today by Senators Bob Dole (R-KS) and Charles Grassley (R-IA).

"It is no secret that farm problems have been severe in recent years," Sen. Dole said. "Yet, we need to keep in mind that the crisis in rural America is as severe for local businesses and entire communities as it is for farmers."

The Dole-Grassley legislation, known as "The Agriculture in Transition Act", would assist farmers and others who are faced with the loss of their primary source of income as a result of the decline in the agricultural economy by helping to prepare them for other economic opportunities.

In introducing the legislation, Sen. Dole said, "The needs of rural Americans differ from their city counterparts. In recognition of the unique circumstances facing rural Americans, nearly every farm state has implemented some form of special outreach and counseling system for their farmers."

"There has been interest by many members of Congress from rural areas, as well as governors - Governor Hayden of Kansas, Governor Branstad of Iowa, Governor Orr of Nebraska and others - in ensuring that the proposed new Worker Readjustment Program (WRAP) in the Administration's trade bill be fully available to displaced farmers and farm families."

"I especially want to commend our own governor in Kansas, Mike Hayden, for his role in working through this initiative and for bringing the idea to the attention of the President and the Republican leadership in Congress."

Said Sen. Dole, "While the Administration's proposal correctly identifies readjustment services needed during the

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current period of economic transition, we need to assure that these services are available to rural Americans in addition to traditional industrial and manufacturing workers."

At a recent meeting of the Republican Task Force on Farm and Rural America considerable attention was focused on the need to make rural development issues a top national priority. Dole noted that Republican governors, senators and congressmen attending that meeting indicated a key aspect of a revitalized national focus on rural development should include the need to create new jobs and diversify economic activities in rural areas.

U.S. farm exports have declined 29-percent in volume, from 162 million metric tons to 114 million tons, and 41-percent in value, from \$44 billion to \$26 billion, since reaching their peak levels in 1981, according to Dole. "I would stress that this loss in export volume and value represents a significant economic loss to farmers and others in rural America. Every \$1 billion in farm exports generates 35,000 jobs and creates another \$1.4 billion of economic activity in the United States," he said.

The legislation would authorize a formula-based allocation of funds to the governors of the most severely distressed farm states. Funds would be targeted for use in developing and funding the specially tailored basic readjustment services which would be effective in bringing dislocated farmers into the worker adjustment training programs supported under states' existing structures.