

Ferdie J. Deering

from DAILY OKLAHOMAN

Sept. 28, 1976

More Weather Modification Money Needed, Not Just More Research

WE always elect men of good judgment and sound fiscal sense to serve as our representatives in Congress, don't we?

These wise congressmen failed to approve a request for \$5 million to help local weather modification districts obtain more rain from clouds, as provided in a bill introduced last March by Rep. Glenn English, D-Okla.

These same congressmen appropriated funds to help the Federal Crop Insurance Corp. pay out "somewhere between" \$283 million and \$557 million this year for crop losses, much of it due to insufficient rainfall.

Additional millions have been paid to farmers as disaster aid, largely in areas where FCIC won't sell crop insurance because risk of drouth is great. Farmers have lost additional millions to drouth for which no payments were made.

It would be too much to expect that \$5 million for cloud seeding would have avoided all these drouth losses, but the economics are impressive when it has been demonstrated that timely and skillful cloud seeding can increase rainfall and alleviate drouth.

Although the federal government has at least a dozen agencies engaged in research on weather, none has been of much help in utilizing cloud seeding. They want more money to keep on researching, but generally bureau officials oppose utilization.

Last week, Congress was working on another bill to create another agency to spend another \$1 million on weather modification research

and \$200,000 on activity. Western Oklahoma needs more money than that to seed clouds to normalize rainfall.

Rep. English's bill proposed that federal funds be routed through local conservation districts on a 60-40 basis to help finance local operations. Farmers want local control.

Soil Conservation Service officials in Washington influenced the House committee to put the plan on the shelf. Obviously, they were taking cues from bureaus that are concerned about study money more than they are about rainfall.

The cheapest water we can get is from the skies. Where several counties are included, it costs only a few cents per acre per year to set up and operate ground-based silver iodide cloud-seeding generators.

Oklahoma laws allow local districts to vote assessments to finance weather modification, but in August two northwestern Oklahoma counties voted down proposals on the ballot.

This seems to indicate that people do not yet fully comprehend the urgent need for more rainfall and more water, or else they do not understand the potential value of modern technology for producing additional rainfall from passing clouds.

It is obvious that if we are to get any substantial amount of cloud seeding done, a system of financing must be devised that will be acceptable and feasible, with local control.

As long as voters turn down small assessments and Congress prefers to perpetuate repetitive studies and disaster aid, there does not seem to be any likelihood that a general plan to obtain low-cost water from the skies has a chance.

BELLMON HAILS PLAN

DAILY OKLAHOMAN

Sept. 29, 1976

Ford Sent Weather Bill

Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — The Senate sent to the President Tuesday a weather modification bill which Oklahoma Sen. Henry Bellmon said would "provide the means for existing weather modification knowledge to be applied in an effective, coordinated manner."

The bill, which was cosponsored by Bellmon and Sen. James Pearson, R-Kan., calls for a one-year study of weather modification and for development of a national weather modification policy.

Noting that drouth is "one of the most menacing threats the human race has ever faced," Bellmon said, "The problem is especially serious now that the world's food supply and population are in close balance."

Bellmon said the bill "will provide

the means for existing weather modification knowledge to be applied in an effective, coordinated manner with results monitored to add to the growing body of knowledge in the field.

"For the first time, (the bill) will bring together the presently widely dispersed federal effort in the weather modification field," said Bellmon. Currently, many federal agencies have jurisdiction over weather modification programs.

The Senate had previously passed a similar bill May 21 but the House last week made some changes before it passed the bill. The Senate agreed to the changes Tuesday by a 77-0 vote, clearing the measure for the President.

The bill authorizes \$1 million for the study and \$200,000 for weather modification activities.

*This bill has since
been signed into law.*