

# MONTHLY POLICY REVIEW

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*To help all of you better digest this material, I have condensed articles on one-paragraph summaries. I have tried to eschew editorial comment, but where compelled to make a comment I have enclosed it at the end in [brackets]. I can find many of these sources if you would like to look at the articles in more detail. Remember, March will have a focus article, and I am still looking for suggested themes.*

## NATIONAL

**Dwindling Surplus** (AP 1/23/2002) – The Congressional Budget Office’s latest surplus projection is \$1.6 trillion for the decade beginning in 2002, down from \$5.6 trillion estimate last year. Tax cuts, increased spending, government debt, recession, and “changes in how CBO projects federal tax collections and spending” contribute to the difference. Deficits are expected in 2002 and 2003, but then surpluses the remaining years, culminating in a projected \$641 billion surplus in 2012.

**Key Pieces of Leftover Legislation** (AP 1/22/2002) –

Patients’ Bill of Rights: passed House and Senate, awaiting compromise talks.

Bankruptcy overhaul: passed House and Senate, awaiting compromise talks.

Economic Stimulus: passed House; blocked from Senate vote.

Election Reform: passed House, awaiting Senate vote.

Trade Authority: passed House, awaiting Senate action.

Energy Bill: passed House, awaiting Senate action.

Farm Bill: passed House, awaiting Senate action.

Campaign Finance: passed Senate, House supporters trying to force the bill to the floor.

**Budget for FY2003** (Washington Times 1/18/2002) – President Bush’s budget proposes a net spending boost of nearly 8%, including up to \$15 billion more for homeland defense and sharp cuts elsewhere to keep the deficit below \$100 billion. The budget emphasizes public health response systems, bioterrorism response, airline safety, and border enforcement. The Washington Times reports that scientific research, especially related to anti-terrorism technologies, “will be substantially more.” The budget will be submitted to Congress the first week of February.

The President’s priorities are related to national security and economic recovery. He is expected to make a big push to resuscitate the economic stimulus package that died in the Senate in December. He will also add an initiative to restrain lawsuits and emphasize free trade, education reforms, energy policy, and charitable giving. He also will push for prescription drug coverage for senior citizens and will likely contend with Social Security, welfare changes, and a new farm bill.

**Homeland Security** (AP 1/23/2002) – Federal health officials are focusing upon preparation at the state and local levels for dealing with potential bioterror threats. The newly created Office of Public Health Preparedness has authority to direct the bioterrorism effort across agencies. Plans include creating a half-dozen new regional laboratories, helping cities plan for distributing antibiotics, develop reporting systems, help hospitals prepare better, and developing better public information.

(AP 1/23/2002) – Tom Ridge, Homeland Security Director, stated that new money outlined in President Bush’s State of the Union speech, will go toward future costs and not meet the needs of past expenditures by cities for anti-terrorism preparations, although there may be some flexibility to use funds toward overtime expenses. The majority of new money will be directed “for such items as new personnel, hazardous materials equipment, bioterrorism training and emergency communication systems.” The government is also developing a new system for issuing terrorism threat warnings.

(Washington Post 1/16/2002) – The new Transportation Security Administration is being developed, building the biggest new government agency since World War II. Included among issues with which the new agency must contend are standards for training, identification of baggage screeners, air marshals, and other security personnel, and implementation of congressionally-mandated baggage screening and passenger identification.

**Education Bill Signed** (AP 1/08/2002) – The education reform bill was signed into law in January. Included in the Bill is an effort to develop a new partnership between the federal government and the states. Some, such as West Virginia’s superintendent of education, said that federal-state dialogue “has been needed for a long time.” The education bill requires states to test public school students in grades 3-8 annually in reading and math, provide annual ‘report cards’ comparing their scores to other schools, and requires new teacher certifications. Students in failing schools would receive tutoring or transportation to another public school. Additional provisions allow failing schools to be re-staffed. The bill also includes increased funds for education, up to \$26.5 billion, an increase of \$7.9 billion over last year. The bill results from a bipartisan effort, including Rep. John Boehner (R-OH), Sen. Judd Gregg (R-NH), Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-MA), and Rep. George Miller (D-CA).

**Farm Bill** (Oklahoman 1/13/2002; New York Times op-ed 1/21/2002) – Farm support payments are currently based upon “Production Flexibility Contracts”. These are payments tied to major commodities based upon production in the late 1980s, regardless of whether the farm still produces the crop or not. Payments were intended to be phased out over ten years. The current farm bill increases those payments. One major issue with these payments is that they are concentrated in a few hands. In Oklahoma, 6% of the farms received 50% of the payments, and 81% of the payments went to 20% of the farms. Legislators are considering caps on these payments, but loopholes in the Freedom to Farm legislation (1996) will make limits difficult to enforce.

**National Energy Policy** (AP 1/22/2002; Washington Times 1/18/2002) - President Bush has pegged the National Energy Policy as a matter of national security and economic health. The plan advocates more domestic production of energy, including coal, nuclear, and development of oil reserves from the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). His plan received the endorsement of the Teamsters. Both look toward technology as the means to safe, clean development of resources.

Senator John Kerry offered an alternative plan that emphasizes raising fuel-economy standards for cars, offers tax incentives for hybrid and hydrogen fuel-cell vehicles and more energy-efficient homes, invests more in mass transit, and sets a target of 20% of domestic electricity originating from renewable sources.

(Washington Post op-ed 1/14/2002) - Spencer Abraham, U.S. Secretary of Energy, notes that despite Enron's and PG&E's bankruptcy, deregulation is working. Gasoline and electricity prices dropped, there were no trading panics or price spikes with Enron's collapse, and 51,000 megawatts of new electricity was added in 2001.

(AP 1/09/2002; AP 1/18/2002) - The Bush administration is shifting from an eight-year \$1.5 billion program to produce highly fuel-efficient cars toward investment in hydrogen fuel-cell technology, dubbed "Freedom Car". The program is a joint venture with General Motors, Ford, and DaimlerChrysler. In recent years, the cost of fuel cells has dropped sharply, and with increased investment in this area, hopes are that such vehicles could be widely available within a decade. Success for the effort requires not just the development of the vehicles themselves, but a transition away from the fossil-fuel based infrastructure, which could be a much more daunting task.

Critics see this program as an attack on the Gore-sponsored fuel efficiency "Partnership for a New Generation of Vehicles" and note that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) announced that it will not raise fuel efficiency standards for 2004; it had been blocked from considering increases since 1996.

(Washington Post op-ed 1/22/2002) - John Podesta, former Chief of Staff for President Clinton, argues for doing both – increasing near-term fuel efficiency and improving long-term measures not dependent upon oil. He also notes the need to reduce urban sprawl, which would increase fuel efficiency.

## **AGENCY NEWS**

**NASA Unveils New 'Natural Hazards' Web Site** (NASA 1/16/2002) – NASA's Earth Observatory team will track five categories of natural hazards: wildfires, severe storms, floods, volcanic eruptions, and major air pollution events (dust storms, smog, and smoke), and provide images available via the web at <http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/NaturalHazards/>. Their goal is to help people visualize where events are occurring and possibly help mitigate their effects. NASA plans to expand the categories to include earthquakes, coastal erosion, and landslides. (<http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Newsroom/NasaNews/2002/200201167309.html>)

**Interior Silent on Corps Plan** (Washington Post 1/14/2002) – The Department of Interior failed to submit comments on a controversial proposal by the Army Corps of Engineers that would relax a series of wetlands protection rules. The Fish and Wildlife Service drafted comments “denouncing the plan as scientifically and environmentally unjustified”, but these were not forwarded by Gale Norton, Secretary of the Interior. Interior blamed the mix-up on the failure of the Senate to confirm assistant secretaries or agency directors for the mining office and wildlife service. The EPA did submit objections.

**National Climate Service** (Washington Times 1/09/2002) – The Senate version of the Energy Policy has been stuffed with all sorts of other goodies. It turns out there is a whole bunch of stuff on climate change, and a new National Climate Service (NCS). The NCS would be established within NOAA, and would do computer modeling, issue forecasts and warnings, and developing assessment methods. Proponents say the NCS will make U.S. climate science ‘policy relevant’, while critics dismiss it as unworkable. They also note the additional bureaucracy being created – a climate-science czar in the Office of Science and Technology Policy and a National Office of Climate Change Response within the Executive Office of the President. [Note: The NCS includes elements for observational systems, quality control of climate products, access to information, and sharing and dissemination including Federal agencies, State, local government, and the academic community.]

## STATE / LOCAL

**State Budgets hit hard** (New York Times 1/11/2002; AP 1/23/2002) – between reduced income from tax cuts and the recession and increased expenses for security and medical costs, many state budgets face shortfalls in the present and coming fiscal year. Unlike the federal government, most states are required to maintain a balanced budget. This has contributed to massive cuts in some states, such as that required to cover a \$2.8 billion shortfall in New Jersey. Total shortfalls are on the order of \$40 - \$50 billion, or about 10% of total states' budgets.

**Sullivan wins First District seat** (AP 1/09/2002) – Republican state Representative John Sullivan won a special election to fill Rep. Steve Largent's Oklahoma first congressional district seat. Largent is stepping down to run for governor. Sullivan received 54% of votes cast.

**Democrats propose alternative tax plan** (Oklahoman 1/09/2002) – Rep. Clay Pope (D-Loyal) presented a tax reform plan to the House Democratic caucus. The proposal would eliminate the franchise tax, corporate income tax, and estate tax. It would simplify the state income tax to a flat-tax 4.63 percent rate on taxable federal income, based upon the model used in Colorado. Some services taxes, not more than 4.5% (equivalent to the state sales tax), would be implemented to make the reform revenue-neutral. Governor Keating proposed eliminating state income tax and implementing a 5.9% tax on services in its place. The issue of sales taxes on groceries was left undetermined. Given the projected budget shortfall this year, neither tax reform plan is expected to move quickly. In an Oklahoman editorial (1/14/2002), the editors argue that a restructuring of county government and our educational system is necessary in order to achieve tax reform.

**State Tax Hike challenged** (Oklahoman, 1/27/2002) – Oklahoma's Board of Equalization certified that state revenues will be lower in 2002 than last year, triggering an automatic increase in state income tax rates from 6.75 (scheduled to decrease to 6.65%) to 7%. Corporation Commissioner Denise Bode, as part of Oklahomans Against Tax Hikes, filed a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the increase. The 1998 legislation that lowers the tax rate includes a provision that if revenues decrease, as certified by the Equalization Board, then the tax rate will return to the original 7%. The lawsuit alleges that the provision is in violation of constitutional changes from State Question 640 and that it illegally delegates taxing authority to the executive branch.

**Water sale to Texas goes dry** (Oklahoman 1/11/2002, 1/14/2002) – Governor Keating and leaders from the Chickasaw and Choctaw tribes backed off of a water sale deal with Texas. Oklahoma placed the value at \$339 million over 100 years (present dollars), while Texas offered only \$174 million. Opponents in Little Dixie fear selling the water will undermine their economic development potential, while advocates state that revenues from water sales would boost the region. While the deal is dead right now, much of the work that has been done could breathe new life into it in the future.

**Rural water district board votes not to sell water to poultry producer** (Oklahoman 1/22/2002) – An Ottawa County rural water district board reversed an earlier decision to sell water to Simmons Foods in Arkansas. Citing concerns of poultry-related pollution, the board voted 5-0 to deny the sale. This follows protests by local residents at a board meeting two weeks prior to the decision. The region is suffering from the effects of runoff from other Arkansas and Missouri-based poultry operations, damaging rivers and lakes throughout northeastern Oklahoma.

**Overlap studied in 7 environmental agencies** (Oklahoman 1/09/2002) – At the request of the Office of State Finance, seven agencies – Department of Agriculture, Conservation Commission, Department of Environmental Quality, Water Resources Board, Department of Mines, Corporation Commission, and Department of Wildlife Conservation – are meeting with a consultant to eliminate duplication and overlap of programs. Options include merging functions into one or more agencies, shifting programs between agencies, and consolidating functions. A report is expected by June. Legislative leaders indicate a reluctance to consolidate or shift responsibilities in the upcoming legislative session.

**Technology Summit** (Oklahoman 1/08/2002) – State technology leaders met in a summit on January 11, organized by the Governor's Science and Technology Advisory Council. About 300 industry leaders were present, representing information technology, telecommunications, biotechnology firms, software designers, and advanced materials developers. They plan to pressure lawmakers for tax incentives and more investment capital. "It's not that Oklahoma has a bad reputation," one software developer remarked. "It has no reputation at all." The group cited insufficient capital, a lack of advanced engineering talent and a shortage of experienced business managers as obstacles. The summit was the first of what is anticipated to be an annual event.

**Job outlook at colleges in state bleak** (Oklahoman 1/13/2002) – At least half the state colleges indicate they will not fill vacant positions or will replace them with adjunct instructors. Cameron is considering canceling some eight-week courses, and Tulsa Community College will cancel classes with low enrollments.

**State Must Support Weather Center** (Oklahoman editorial 1/07/2002) – The Oklahoman supports \$20 million state funding to complete its share of the Weather Center funding. As they state: "Some government spending boost the private sector and is justified by need rather than political whim." The Oklahoman does not view this as pork-barrel politics.

## **BUSINESS / TECHNOLOGY**

**Farm income to drop 20 percent** (AP 1/11/2002) – The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimated that net farm income would fall to \$40.6 billion in 2002, down from \$49.3 billion in 2001, without additional federal aid. Wheat farms are most at-risk, with an average decline of \$10,000 per operation according to USDA estimates. Federal legislators have provided supplemental assistance in each of the last four years. Last year, \$21.1 billion federal assistance was provided, which would drop to \$10.7 billion this year. This means actual farm income, without assistance, is expected to rise \$1.7 billion. Since 1992, government payments have accounted for an average of 28% of net farm income. [Commentary: Only in Washington can a \$1.7 billion increase be a 20% decline!]

**Farmers planting less wheat** (AP 1/11/2002) – Following a general downward trend since farm production controls ended in 1996, fewer acres of wheat were planted this winter. The 41 million acres planted is the lowest since 1971. Kansas' 9.4 million acres is its lowest acreage since 1957. Depressed wheat prices are the cause of the decline, with many farmers switching to more lucrative crops such as soybeans. Even with the decline, half the annual wheat crop is exported each year.

**Biotech crop plantings increase** (AP 1/10/2002) – Genetically engineered crop plantings increased 20% overall last year, and are expected to post an additional 10% increase this year. In the United States, two thirds of the soybeans, 70% of cotton, and 26% of corn is genetically modified. The most popular modifications make plants resistant to insects or weed killers. Genetically modified soybeans are resistant to weed killers such as Roundup, meaning that only one application is needed for an entire growing season. [Commentary: Critics of genetic engineering cite unknown environmental and health risks, but fewer chemical applications may prove a positive environmental effect.]

**WeatherBank provides Olympics forecasts** (Oklahoman, 11/25/2001) – Edmond-based WeatherBank is the first private company to get a contract to provide weather forecasts for Olympic site venues. The company will provide detailed forecasts for various skiing, bobsledding, and luge events, including forecasts of visibility. WeatherBank moved to Edmond in 1995, from its former home in Salt Lake City and already had the Olympic venues as clients.

**WalMart poised to become world's largest company** (AP 1/23/2002) – WalMart is on pace to record more than \$220 billion in revenue for the 2001 fiscal year, which would dethrone Exxon from the top of Fortune Magazine's list of world's biggest corporations. This is the first time a retailer has dominated the list of manufacturers. Some suggest this as an indication of the shift to a service economy, but part of it is based on the global economic slowdown in manufacturing.

**Palm splits software, hardware** (AP 1/22/2002) – Palm Inc. announced that it will separate its software and hardware operations into two companies. The planned separation is designed to attract more Palm OS licensees. Analysts say the move will help Palm better compete against rivals such as Microsoft's Pocket PC operating system.

**Gates unveils new digital home device** (AP 1/08/2002) – Microsoft unveiled Mira, a concept device that puts a home PC onto a mobile platform. Content is displayed on a hand-held tablet; future versions will display on flat-screen televisions.

**Web site helps weather watchers** (Oklahoman 12/02/2001) – Newsok.com offers a desktop application “that will keep Oklahomans informed of their ever-changing weather like never before”. The application, called Inews, sits on a desktop monitoring a feed of weather and news information. The application shows temperature, radar, wind direction and speed, humidity, and temperatures across the nation. It will also produce a crawl across the screen to alert for weather warnings or breaking news.



## **WEATHER**

**El Nino may be returning** (NOAA 1/10/2002) – NOAA’s Climate Prediction Center announced that signs of a developing El Nino have been observed. Enhanced cloudiness and precipitation over the equatorial central Pacific has been observed for the first time since the 1997-1998 El Nino episode. The onset would likely occur in the next 3-6 months, although NOAA cautions that it is too early to predict the magnitude or duration of a potential event. NOAA’s long-range prediction of the previous event led to mitigation efforts, saving an estimate \$1 billion from losses.

**Study Links El Nino To Deadly South American Disease** (NASA 1/17/2002) – NASA GSFC reports a link between the onset of El Nino and a deadly Bartonellosis outbreak in Peru. El Nino influences on South American Climate lead to increased numbers of sand flies, which carry the disease. By monitoring the onset of El Nino conditions, disease management practices may limit the number of people affected during the outbreak. NASA reports “the study marks the first time that researchers from two widely divergent disciplines of climatology and disease prevention have collaborated.” (I’m not sure what Scott Greene might say about this statement!).

<http://www.gsfc.nasa.gov/news-release/releases/2002/02-017.htm>

**New Method Greatly Improves U.S. Seasonal Forecasts** (NASA 1/15/2002) – William Lau, senior researcher at NASA GSFC, used changes in sea surface temperatures to improve seasonal precipitation predictions by 10-20%. The basins include the tropical Pacific, north Pacific, tropical Atlantic, north Atlantic, and Indian Ocean. Each has unique influences on the climate of the U.S. during each season. Using this technique, the team was able to successfully predict whether precipitation in a given region would be below, at, or above normal in 45% of the 49 years studied. The paper was presented at the annual AMS meeting in Orlando.

<http://www.gsfc.nasa.gov/news-release/releases/2002/02-013.htm>

**Seawinds Casts A Closer Eye On Tropical Cyclones** (NASA 1/14/2002) – Researchers at Florida State University, using NASA’s QuikSCAT satellite, have used signals from the scatterometer to derive vorticity fields that indicate developing tropical systems more than 40 hours earlier than traditional methods. The new techniques can highlight areas for the National Hurricane Center (NHC) to examine more closely for other clues, such as increased thunderstorm activity. In 2001, eight of the 17 tropical cyclones were detected an average of 43 hours before being classified as such by NHC. The false alarm rate was 35-40 percent. Fourteen of 17 Eastern Pacific systems were similarly identified, all the more critical because of fewer observational resources than are available in the Atlantic.

<http://www.gsfc.nasa.gov/news-release/releases/2002/02-012.htm>

## CLIMATE

**Global Cooling** (AP 1/14/2002) – Interior portions of Antarctica have cooled by about 1 degree Fahrenheit during the period 1985-1999. This stands in stark contrast to the overall reported global warming, and contradicts expectations from computer models that indicate polar areas would warm more than other regions. Several days later (AP 1/17/2002), researchers noted that ice in West Antarctica is thickening, reversing earlier estimates that the sheet was melting. The ice sheet may have ended a process of thinning begun at the end of the last ice age, 12,000 years ago, or it may go through a cyclical process of thinning and thickening as colder air gets transmitted through a thinner ice sheet, stopping melting and slowing the movement of the sheet.

(Washington Times, editorial 1/19/2002) – “Bipolar Disorder”: the Times states that “until warming models can account for a cooling Antarctica, the global warming hypothesis appears to be all wet.” The recent observations from Antarctica, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, pose “challenges to models of climate and ecosystem change.” Those who simplistically dismiss the changes as “not enough data” to make an accurate assessment, run the risk of undermining their own claims of global warming. As the Times points out, “if there are not enough data to describe the current climate situation in Antarctica, how is it possible there are enough data to describe the climate state of not just Antarctica, but the entire world, not simply today, but for the next several decades?” [Commentary: These recent findings will surely be used by some to undermine the validity of global warming hypotheses. With such a large portion of the federal climate research budget tied to global warming, if the concept gets discredited, funding could vanish with it.]

**Raw Empirical Data Not Everything In Climate Study** (UniSci 1/16/2002) – Dr. John Christy, Alabama’s State Climatologist, suggests that determining climate from observational records is analogous to determining who plays for the national championship in the BCS. After checking handwritten notes and data entries of cooperative observer data, he found data gaps and discontinuities that, when factored in, found a 0.4 degree C margin of error in temperature estimates. He notes this makes it impossible to state a definitive solution to “what was the hottest summer on record” – six of the 108 year fell within the margin of error. This has tremendous implications for reconstructing climate records used to detect global climate change.

<http://unisci.com/stories/20021/0116023.htm>

**Real-Time Assessment Of One State's Weather Upcoming** (UniSci 1/16/2002) – Paul Knight, State Climatologist for Pennsylvania, has led an effort to combine weather data collected by a variety of government departments in Pennsylvania, including FAA, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, and Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. The combined network produces 167 stations reporting real-time observations, supplemented by 160-180 cooperative observers reporting daily temperatures, precipitation, and snowfall. The team has concentrated upon putting data into a common format; it does not mention challenges in combining different types of instrumentation. Their next step is “to create real-time displays of the observations.”

<http://unisci.com/stories/20021/0116022.htm>

**Random Noise Could Have Affected Climate In Ice Age** (Physics News Update 1/16/2002) – Random noise, such as electrical static, can amplify a signal’s influence on its surroundings, through a process called stochastic resonance (SR). Researchers at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research in Germany have shown that SR may have contributed to abrupt and dramatic climate shifts during the last great Ice Age. The resonance may cause the climate system to switch between two states, based upon the northern extent of the Gulf Stream Waters, acting on a weak 1,500 year cycle.

<http://unisci.com/stories/20021/0116021.htm>

**Climate Change May Bring More Winter Floods, And A Drier Growing Season In California** (NASA 1/17/2002) – Norman Miller and Kathy Bashford from Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and Eric Strem of the NWS California-Nevada River Forecast Center used climate change scenarios as input into the NWS “River Forecast System” computer models to simulate river flow, soil moisture, and snowpack. Their findings suggest that 50% of the seasonal runoff in California will occur early in the year, resulting in higher streamflows in the winter and less stored water for the dry season.

<http://www.gsfc.nasa.gov/news-release/releases/2002/02-014.htm>

## **ENVIRONMENT**

**Power Plant Emissions** (New York Times 1/08/2002) – After review of new standards on power-plant emissions set by the Clinton administration, the Bush administration opted to continue those standards. The controversial rules apply to requirements for more stringent pollution controls when existing plants upgrade their capacity. Several skirt the issue by masking upgrades as routine maintenance, but 51 power plants have pending lawsuits over these actions. Under threats of litigation from Northeastern states attorneys general, and upon the recommendation of EPA Administrator Christie Whitman and Attorney General John Ashcroft, the Bush administration opted to stick with the more stringent emissions controls.

**Organic Matter and Chlorine** (AP 1/08/2002) - Organic matter, such as runoff from farms or lawns, may combine with Chlorine in water to produce compounds such as chloroform, posing a threat particularly to pregnant women. Home filters and bottled water can remove many compounds. The study is suggestive of a relationship, but not conclusive. The EPA has restricted some chemical levels, beginning January 1, but substantial cleanups and more buffer areas around water sources may be needed to reduce the scope of the problem.

**Brownfields cleanup** (AP 1/11/2002) - President Bush signed legislation to clean up thousands of polluted industrial sites. The plan allocates \$250 million a year to states, local governments, and Indian tribes to clean up sites known as brownfields.

**Environmental crimes** (AP 1/14/2002) - Criminal prosecutions of environmental laws has increased three-fold from 300 cases in 1998 to 900 cases last year. Changes are attributable to pressure from environmental leaders and lawmakers and Bob Muller, current Director of the FBI, who was then a U.S. attorney in Northern California.

**Missouri River study** (AP 1/09/2002) – A two-year study by the National Research Council concludes that “the ecosystem of the Missouri River will suffer irreversible damage without a return to a more natural ebb and flow.” Flood control measures and navigation channels have altered the river to such an extent, including eliminating over 200 miles and removing 98% of the sediment, that “the Big Muddy” faces the prospect of irreversible extinction of species within its waters. In order to reverse the trend, whole communities would need to be relocated. The Army Corps of Engineers is examining ways of mimicking the natural spring rise from snowmelt, which would likely cause flooding along some reaches.

**Everglades Restoration** (AP 1/09/2002) – A \$7.8 billion plan between the federal government and the State of Florida will increase fresh water flow into the Everglades. The restoration is controversial because of competing interests for the use of fresh water, particularly from growing municipalities, farm, and utilities. The water resources bill was passed by Congress in 2000 and required the federal government and Florida to negotiate a pact on water usage.