WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Testifying today before the House Subcommittee on Conservation, Credit, and Rural Development, U.S. Sen. Bill Armstrong (R-Colo.) took his sodbuster bill one step closer to final passage by the Congress.

The legislation, which would prohibit payment of any kind by the federal government for crops grown on newly plowed fragile grasslands, is supported by "virtually every major conservation and agriculture organization," Armstrong said.

The House subcommittee considered the House version of the sodbuster bill, H.R. 1077, sponsored by Rep. Hank Brown (R-Colo.), which is identical to the Armstrong bill in the Senate, S. 663.

The Colorado Senator encouraged the House subcommittee to act quickly on the legislation, saying, "Nearly 250 million acres of fragile grasslands are in danger of being plowed under and blown away unless Congress acts quickly to stop subsidizing the sodbusters."

"The Soil Conservation Service estimates that we lose more than five billion tons of the best topsoil every year," Armstrong said, "more than at any time during the dustbowl days of the 1930's."

Armstrong spoke for the bill before the Senate Agriculture Committee April 19.

- 30 -