

October 7, 2011

Dear Senator,

The undersigned organizations, representing millions of members across the country concerned about the future of grasslands, urge the Agriculture Committees and the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction to recognize the importance of grasslands to our economy, wildlife, and the American way of life as you recommend changes to farm bill programs as part of any deficit reduction plan.

Grasslands are of vital importance for raising livestock, supporting a robust hunting and recreation industry, and providing habitat for dwindling wildlife species - including grassland birds, some of which are exhibiting the fastest population declines in the country. Yet grasslands are rapidly shrinking, and with them, the ranching industry that depends on grassland for survival. The undersigned organizations have unified around the following farm bill priorities which we believe are critical for the health and survival of America's grasslands:

- 1) Re-establish soil and wetland conservation compliance provisions for crop insurance subsidies;
- 2) Adopt a strong national sodsaver provision to end existing public incentives for converting native grassland to cropland;
- 3) Ensure a strong grasslands component within working lands conservation programs; and
- 4) Maintain funding for easements on native grasslands

As our nation faces one of the most difficult fiscal climates in history, measures that benefit natural resources and save tax dollars—such as sodsaver and re-linking compliance to crop insurance—are critically important. In addition, grasslands provide vital services such as flood mitigation, water filtration, and carbon sequestration. Investing in grasslands through easements and working lands conservation programs will benefit all Americans.

As you work to find cost-saving measures within the farm bill, we ask you to please stand up for grasslands and the American ranchers, rural communities, outdoor enthusiasts, and sportsmen and women who depend upon and benefit from them.

Sincerely,

American Bird Conservancy  
American Prairie Foundation  
Audubon Dakota  
Audubon of Kansas, Inc.  
Cannon River Watershed Partnership  
Colorado Wildlife Federation  
Defenders of Wildlife  
Delta Waterfowl

Environmental Defense Fund  
Indiana Wildlife Federation  
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy  
Iowa Wildlife Federation  
Izaak Walton League of America  
Kansas Alliance for Wetlands and Streams  
Kansas B.A.S.S. Federation Nation  
Kansas Chapter of The Wildlife Society  
Kansas Wildlife Federation  
Living River Group  
Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation  
Minnesota Conservation Federation  
Montana Audubon  
National Audubon Society  
National Bobwhite Technical Committee  
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition  
National Wildlife Federation  
Nebraska Wildlife Federation  
North Dakota Wildlife Federation  
Northern Prairies Land Trust  
Pollinator Partnership  
Prairie Plains Resource Institute  
Prairie Rivers Network  
Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation, Inc.  
Quail Unlimited  
South Dakota Chapter of the Sierra Club  
South Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society  
South Dakota Wildlife Federation  
Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota  
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership  
The Minnesota Project  
The Nature Conservancy  
The Wildlife Society  
Western Nebraska Resources Council  
Wildlife Conservation Society  
Wildlife Management Institute  
World Wildlife Fund