

**Archery Trade Association * Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Boone and Crockett Club * Campfire Club of America
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation * Dallas Safari Club * Delta Waterfowl
Ducks Unlimited * Izaak Walton League of America * Mule Deer Foundation
National Rifle Association * National Shooting Sports Foundation
National Trappers Association * North American Grouse Partnership
Orion – The Hunter's Institute * Pheasants Forever * Pope and Young Club
Quality Deer Management Association * Ruffed Grouse Society * The Wildlife Society *
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership * Trout Unlimited * Wild Sheep Foundation
Wildlife Forever * Wildlife Management Institute**

June 28, 2012

The Honorable Frank Lucas
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Collin Peterson
Ranking Member, Committee on Agriculture
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Lucas and Ranking Member Peterson,

Our organizations represent millions of hunter and angler conservationists, scientists and outdoor enthusiasts, who are closely following the important debate over the upcoming farm bill reauthorization. We appreciated your bipartisan cooperation last summer while drafting farm bill recommendations for the Super Committee and urge you to continue in that vein and support strong conservation provisions as reauthorization proceeds through regular order. We write you today to respectfully request that you include the Protect Our Prairies Act (H.R. 5879) introduced by Representatives Kristi Noem (SD-R) and Tim Walz (MN-D) as part of your 2012 Farm Bill mark.

Farmers have long been some of our nation's most important land stewards and conservationists. As you move forward to write a new farm bill, it will be important to include effective economic support programs that will allow producers to continue farming during market and weather volatility. At the same time, it will be equally important to include basic, sensible conservation measures like the Protect Our Prairies Act, which includes a Sodsaver provision. Sodsaver encourages responsible stewardship of our nation's native grasslands and directs program benefits to acreage best-suited for crop production. Given today's budgetary constraints, combining basic farm support programs with reasonable conservation measurements is common sense and cost effective.

The Protect Our Prairies Act mirrors a Sodsaver amendment filed by Senators John Thune (R-SD), and Mike Johanns (R-NE), which was included in the Agriculture Reform, Food, and Jobs Act of 2012 (S. 3240). The Congressional Budget Office estimates Sodsaver could save America's taxpayers nearly \$200 million over the next 10 years. Therefore, this legislation not only promotes sound land stewardship and sustainable agriculture but it also saves money.

In conclusion, we strongly believe it is vital that the 2012 Farm Bill include effective economic and risk support programs, while maintaining effective conservation measures like Sodsaver. Doing so will promote continued stewardship and sustainability of America's farmlands and foster production of crops, clean water and abundant populations of fish and wildlife. We strongly encourage you to include the Protect Our Prairies Act in your farm bill mark.

Thank you for your sincere consideration of our request, and we look forward to working with you in the coming months to achieve these goals.

cc: Members of the House Committee on Agriculture