



National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition

Att: Farm Bill

September 10, 2013

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Reid, Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker Boehner, and Minority Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of our forty farm, rural, and conservation organizations, the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition urges you to work together to get a comprehensive, balanced, and reform-oriented food and farm bill to conference as quickly as possible. The farm bill is critical legislation that affects multiple sectors of the economy that are negatively impacted by the current open-ended process. Putting together a comprehensive farm bill reauthorization that can pass in both houses and be signed into law by the September 30 expiration of the current farm bill, or at least by very soon thereafter, must be a top priority for September.

To pass a bill, it will be necessary to expand and unite the constituencies served by the bill. Key ingredients of such an approach include enhancing policies and investments in the final conference bill that advance the broad public and bipartisan interest in rural development, conservation, renewable energy, local food systems, organic farming, agricultural research, and beginning, veteran, and minority farmers. Also key will be including all of the best available farm and crop insurance subsidy reforms, excluding radical changes to the SNAP program and the Packers and Stockyards Act, and dropping extraneous non-germane issues.

If Congress is unable to complete its job on the farm bill by September 30, a relatively small handful of important farm bill conservation, nutrition, and export programs will come to a screeching halt on October 1. We strongly advise against temporarily shutting down these farm bill programs, and we urge you to work together to extend those programs via the short-term CR or by other appropriate means.

Now is the time to work on a full and fair farm bill in conference and to get the job done. We have communicated our more detailed issue-by-issue views with the committees and stand ready to assist in any way we can. We look forward to continuing to work towards a comprehensive farm bill that expands opportunities for family farmers to produce good food, sustain the environment, and contribute to vibrant communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ferd Hoefner". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Ferd Hoefner
NSAC Policy Director

cc: All Senators and Representatives