

June 2, 2009

Senator Herb Kohl
Chairman
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and
Drug Administration and Related Agencies
Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
129 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20150

Senator Sam Brownback
Ranking Member
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and
Drug Administration and Related Agencies
Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
190 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Kohl and Ranking Member Brownback:

We the undersigned farm, forestry, conservation and environmental organizations urge you to maintain the mandatory spending levels for conservation programs as provided in the 2008 Farm Bill and to reject the Obama Administration's proposed cuts to the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Wetlands Reserve Program, Farmland Protection Program, Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, Agricultural Management Assistance Program, and Healthy Forest Reserve Program. We also encourage you to increase funding for conservation technical assistance and to prohibit the Administration from administratively ending the CRP Public Access program.

The decisions on the farm bill funding were not without a great amount of debate. Congress approved the Food, Conservation and Energy Act twice over the vetoes of President Bush. We are disappointed that President Obama's budget continues the unfortunate pattern of proposing cuts to conservation programs below mandatory levels established in the farm bill, in this case asking for over \$500 million in cuts for FY 10 plus additional long-term permanent cuts. Demand for participation in conservation programs routinely far outstrips available funding, and this proposal will only exacerbate that problem as well as undermine conservation practice adoption on-the-ground.

We urge you to maintain the mandatory conservation funding levels as agreed to last year in the 2008 Farm Bill and reject the proposed one-year and permanent cuts.

Sincerely,

American Beekeeping Federation
American Farmland Trust
American Forest Foundation
American Honey Producers Association
American Soybean Association
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
American Mushroom Institute

Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Defenders of Wildlife
Ducks Unlimited
Environmental Defense Fund
Environmental Working Group
Izaak Walton League of America
Land Trust Alliance
Louisiana Wildlife Federation
Mississippi River Trust
National Association of Conservation Districts
National Association of State Foresters
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Audubon Society
National Cattlemen's Beef Association
National Conservation District Employees Association
National Corn Growers Association
National Cotton Council
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Farmers Union
National Milk Producers Federation
National Pork Producers Council
National Sorghum Producers
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
National Turkey Federation
National Wildlife Federation
National Woodland Owners Association
Natural Resources Defense Council
Partners for Sustainable Pollination
Pheasants Forever
Pollinator Partnership
Public Lands Council
Quail Forever
Society of American Foresters
The Nature Conservancy
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Trout Unlimited
USA Rice Federation
Union of Concerned Scientists
United Egg Producers
Western Growers
Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
Wildlife Mississippi
World Wildlife Fund