

April 16, 2012

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow,
Chairwoman
The Honorable Pat Roberts,
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Agriculture,
Nutrition and Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC, 20510

The Honorable Frank D. Lucas,
Chairman
The Honorable Collin Peterson,
Ranking Member
House Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC, 20515

Dear Chairmen Stabenow and Lucas, Ranking Members Roberts and Peterson:

As you renew food and farm policy, we urge you to renew our conservation compact with farmers by linking conservation compliance to all income support programs, including premium subsidies for crop and revenue insurance.

In exchange for a publicly funded safety net, farmers have for decades committed to adopt land management practices that reduce soil erosion and protect wetlands. Farmers managing more than 140 million acres of highly erodible land have implemented practices that reduced the amount of soil washed into streams from these lands by 40 percent. Wetland protections have helped slow the loss of valuable wetlands. This compact has served farmers, taxpayers and the environment very well and should be renewed in the 2012 Farm Bill.

Weakening or eliminating this compact would have devastating impacts on water quality, wetlands, and grasslands at a time when the pressures on our land and water could not be greater. As you develop the 2012 Farm Bill, we urge you to renew and extend conservation compliance to all income support programs, including eligibility for premium subsidies for crop and revenue insurance. Doing so will benefit farmers and taxpayers going forward.

Sincerely,

American Farmland Trust
American Rivers
Defenders of Wildlife
Environmental and Energy Study
Institute
Environmental Working Group
Izaak Walton League of America
National Sustainable Agriculture
Coalition

National Wildlife Federation
Natural Resources Defense Council
Pollinator Partnership
Sierra Club
Southern Environmental Law Center
Soil and Water Conservation Society
Union of Concerned Scientists
World Wildlife Fund