

December 18, 2012

Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow
Senate Committee on Agriculture
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC, 20510

Ranking Member Pat Roberts
Senate Committee on Agriculture
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC, 20510

Chairman Frank Lucas
House Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Collin Peterson
House Committee on Agriculture
1305 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Reducing Conservation Reserve Program Acres in the Farm Bill Fiscal Cliff Package

Dear Chair Stabenow, Ranking Member Roberts, Chair Lucas and Ranking Member Peterson:

As the 112th Congress comes to a close and discussions continue regarding the possibility of a five-year Farm Bill, the National Grain and Feed Association and undersigned State and Regional Affiliates extend our genuine appreciation to you for your leadership and extensive efforts in securing important reforms to the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

In particular, we commend the House Committee on Agriculture's (H.R. 6083) inclusion of a more expedited schedule for reducing the annual acreage caps in the CRP to eventually reach 25 million acres, as well as for mandating that the U.S. Department of Agriculture give contract holders the freedom to begin restoring to production – prior to contract expiration and without penalty – qualifying CRP acres that can be farmed in an environmentally sustainable way. When conferencing both the Senate and House versions of the legislation, we respectfully urge that the Senate recede to the House CRP language. However, we do urge you to consider extending the mandatory CRP early out language to apply to additional fiscal years beyond FY 2013.

The importance of allowing productive farmland enrolled in the CRP to be restored to production without harsh economic penalties certainly has been magnified by this summer's drought conditions that have gripped America's most important crop-production regions. Given current weather projections, it appears that the 2013 growing season also may experience dryer and warmer than normal growing conditions, with limited opportunity to rebuild extremely tight grain and oilseed stocks. The legislative language contained in the House version of the Farm Bill is extremely timely and urgently needed.

We thank you for your leadership in taking steps to right-size the CRP, while preserving its role in protecting truly environmentally sensitive land and wildlife habitat.

Sincerely,

Agribusiness Association of Iowa
Agribusiness Council of Indiana/Indiana Grain and Feed Association
California Grain and Feed Association
Grain and Feed Association of Illinois
Kansas Grain & Feed Association
Michigan Agri-Business Association
Midsouth Grain Association
Minnesota Grain and Feed Association
Missouri Agribusiness Association
Montana Grain Elevator Association
National Grain and Feed Association
Nebraska Grain and Feed Association
North Dakota Grain Dealers Association
Ohio AgriBusiness Association
Oklahoma Grain and Feed Association
Rocky Mountain Agri-business Association
South Dakota Grain & Feed Association
Southeastern Grain & Feed Association
Tennessee Feed & Grain Association
Texas Grain and Feed Association
Wisconsin Agri-Business Association Inc.