

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

February 15, 2008

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
The Capitol  
H-232  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Boehner  
House Minority Leader  
The Capitol  
H-204  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Collin Peterson  
Chairman  
House Committee on Agriculture  
1301 Longworth Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bob Goodlatte  
Ranking Minority Member  
House Committee on Agriculture  
1305 Longworth Building  
Washington, DC 20515

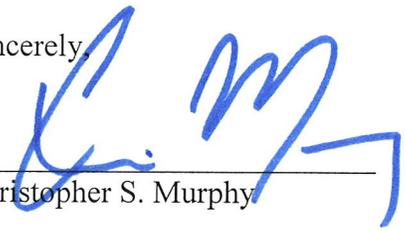
Dear Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader Boehner, Chairman Peterson, and Ranking Member Goodlatte,

We urge you to ensure that the final version of the farm bill includes a significant new investment in funding for USDA's voluntary conservation incentives programs. The Farm, Nutrition, and Bioenergy Act passed by the House includes \$4.8 billion in new spending on conservation programs over the next five years, while the Food and Energy Security Act passed by the Senate provides \$5.1 billion. We urge you to ensure that the final bill includes a minimum of \$5.1 billion in new conservation spending.

Our farmers are eager to share in the cost of protecting our environment, but currently two out of three farmers are turned away by the USDA when they apply to participate in conservation programs due to insufficient funding. As a result, we continue to lose thousands of acres of valuable farmland, wetlands, grasslands, and private forest lands, and our efforts to clean up rivers, lakes, and bays are falling further behind schedule. While \$5.1 billion in new spending for conservation programs is still not sufficient to meet farmer demand for conservation assistance, it represents a critical step in the right direction. We cannot and should not ask American farmers to choose between their bottom line and the smart, sensible preservation of the land they safeguard.

In order to ensure sufficient support for final passage of a conference report by the full House, we believe that the final farm bill must include at least \$5.1 billion in new funds for these programs. If some of the House- or Senate-approved tax provisions do not endure through conference, it is critical that other offsets be found to ensure that the farm bill provides a minimum of \$5.1 billion in new conservation funding.

Sincerely,

  
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Christopher S. Murphy

  
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Jim Ramstad

  
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Mike Thompson

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
David G. Reichert

Bob Filner  
Donald Wayne

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Robert Wyle  
Bang Fook

Dain Pinn

Mukul H Mukul

Carol Shea-Poore

Lain Cupps

Jim McDevitt

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Dorise

Maal Udall

Kirsta E. Gillibrand

Shirley Zell

Jim Oberstar

Pete de Fazio

Dana Rohrabacher

Lynn Woolsey

Edward J. Markey

Bill Delahunt

Betty M. Allyn

Van Vance

Milo Costello

Augustus

John Lewis

Greg M. King

Ed Palantieri

R. P. Dwyer

Henry A. Wapman

Nick Pongas

Rosa D. DeLauro

Earl Blumenauer

Frank A. DeBiondo

Ron Kind

Scott Garrett

Cheryl Stange

John W. Olver

Rick Holt

Stocles

Allyson J. Schwartz

Joe Courtney

Agis Pantiö

J. Saxton

Wayne T. Goldust

Ellen O'Rourke

Jammy Baldwin

Steve Lefkowitz

Peter Welch

John Hall

Tom Ull

Ben Chandler

Pat J. D.

Maureen Pinsky

Patrick J. Kennedy

Jim Langrish

Kath Ellison