



National Association of Conservation Districts

January 30, 2008

Senator Herb Kohl
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development and FDA
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
330 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Bob Bennett
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development and FDA
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
431 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman and Ranking Member:

The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) represents the nation's 3,000 conservation districts and 17,000 men and women who serve on their governing boards. Conservation districts are local units of government established under state law to carry out natural resource management programs at the local level.

Conservation districts work at the local level on a variety of conservation programs with state and federal partners. In partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), conservation districts help landowners in the development of conservation practices on their property. A key program to the development of conservation planning is Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA). Funded under the Conservation Operations account, the CTA program provides a funding base ensuring utilization of the best technical and scientific knowledge when working with landowners to design and implement conservation plans.

Funding for the CTA program remains critically low as demand for conservation planning across the country increases. Adequate funding for CTA ensures that each local conservation district has the flexibility to address natural resource concerns that are unique to their state or local area.

NACD respectfully supports a funding level of **\$888.890 million** for the Conservation Operations account in the FY 2009 Agriculture Appropriations Bill. Funding at this level will help ensure that the needs of local landowners are met when applying conservation practices on their land. Most importantly, this funding will provide for continued availability of the conservation practices that ensure the countless public benefits of clean water and healthy soils.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. We look forward to working with you as we continue to provide the benefits of conservation programs across the country.

Sincerely,

Steve Robinson
Acting President

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