



## National Association of Conservation Districts

March 16, 2010

The Honorable Herb Kohl  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural  
Development and FDA  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Sam Brownback  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural  
Development and FDA  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman and Ranking Member:

The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) represents 3,000 local conservation districts across the country and on the Pacific islands. These districts are local units of government established under state law to carry out natural resource management programs at the local level and have 17,000 producers and others interested in promoting conservation serving on their governing boards. Conservation districts work with private landowners to carry out conservation programs, including the Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) program under the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). These programs help provide the necessary technical and financial assistance to landowners and land managers for the continued maintenance of healthy, productive lands.

We respectfully request **\$960.678 million** in funding for the NRCS Conservation Operations account in the Fiscal Year 2011 Agriculture Appropriations Bill, which is \$36.949 million above the President's request. This increase is justified because the demand for conservation planning across the country continues to increase. Funding at this level is critical to the delivery of Farm Bill conservation programs and will help ensure that the best technical and scientific knowledge is available when designing and implementing conservation plans with landowners. Most importantly, it will provide for the continued availability of the conservation practices that ensure the countless public benefits of clean water and healthy soils.

Successful conservation efforts begin at the local level with technical assistance and funding from federal, state and local governments and the private sector. This requires strong public, private partnerships and the NRCS is an essential federal partner and resource in helping landowners plan and develop conservation practices on their property.

Restoration efforts of national significance in the Chesapeake Bay, Great Lakes, Mississippi River Basin, and the Trinity River are prime examples of locally led conservation efforts that benefit from technical assistance.

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

Sincerely,

Steve Robinson  
NACD President