



National Association of Conservation Districts

November 27, 2006

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
U.S. Capitol Room S-128
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jerry Lewis
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
U.S. Capitol Room H-218
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Robert Byrd
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
U.S. Capitol Room S-125A
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable David Obey
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
1016 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members,

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.

Through natural resource conservation, a wide range of soil, water, air and habitat benefits are provided to the general public. These benefits are achieved through proper land and water management and the adoption of conservation practices through the Conservation Technical Assistance Program and Farm Bill Conservation Programs.

Throughout the country, the demand for Conservation Technical Assistance continues to increase from all agricultural constituencies including farmers, ranchers, forest landowners, range and grassland managers and landowners in developing urban areas. Because of changes in land ownership, land use, and other growing natural resource concerns, funding is increasingly the critical component in continuing these benefits.

To ensure this critical assistance continues to be available, NACD encourages your support of at least the Senate level of funding for the Natural Resource Conservation Service's Conservation Operations – \$835.331 million – in the Fiscal Year 2007 Agriculture Appropriations Bill. Conservation Operations funds the Conservation Technical Assistance Program as well as additional important conservation projects. This funding is essential to provide technical planning and implementation expertise to

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landowners, including those that may not be seeking any other financial assistance for resource conservation.

The programs under the Farm Bill Conservation Title are clearly having a positive impact on the environment. The demand for these programs is increasing, yet Congress has continually redirected Farm Bill conservation program funding to pay for other programs. In order to continue to meet these demands and growing environmental pressures on landowners, conservation programs must be fully funded and technical assistance must be accessible to all landowners seeking assistance.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. We look forward to continuing working together for the benefit of natural resource conservation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Wilson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bill Wilson
President