



National Association of Conservation Districts

March 25, 2009

The Honorable Kent Conrad
Chairman
Senate Budget Committee
624 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Conrad:

On behalf of the nation's 3,000 conservation districts across the United States, I am writing you about the conservation funding included in the recently passed 2008 Farm Bill. This legislation included mandatory funding for several conservation programs to address natural resource concerns and protect our air, water, soil and habitat. The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) urges you not to cut funding for any of the Farm Bill Conservation Programs.

NACD represents the nation's conservation districts and their governing boards. Established under state law, conservation districts are local units of state government charged with carrying out programs for the protection and management of natural resources at the local level. Conservation districts work with federal, state, and other local agencies to provide programs and technical assistance to landowners and other partners to address natural resource issues.

Farm Bill Conservation programs provide critical assistance to farmers, ranchers and forest landowners to address natural resource issues on their operations. The conservation practices and technical assistance must be tailored to their crop production type, landscape, soil type, water resources, habitat needs and many other issues that vary across the United States. Conservation programs may allow producers to take environmentally sensitive land out of production, provide cost-share funds to make structural improvements in their operations, or incentives to undertake new management practices. Most of these programs only provide a partial payment for the conservation practice, so producers must also provide part of the funding.

The 2008 Farm Bill was finalized in June of last year and we believe it is important for the new law to be fully implemented and the conservation programs to be implemented without financial reductions in the fiscal year 2010 budget. Congress approved this legislation less than a year ago, now is not the time to make changes.

Please protect this critical funding in the fiscal year 2010 budget and allow the conservation programs to maintain funding as approved by Congress in 2008.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Robinson', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Steve Robinson
President

National Headquarters
509 Capitol Court, NE, Washington, DC 20002
Phone: (202) 547-6223 Fax: (202) 547-6450
www.nacdnet.org