



## National Association of Conservation Districts

January 23, 2012

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow, Chairman Lucas, Ranking Member Roberts, & Ranking Member Peterson:

On behalf of the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD), thank you for recognizing the significant value of conservation in supporting America's long-term environmental and economic stability. In working to draft a common sense framework to start the year's Farm Bill debate, you demonstrated strong bipartisan, bicameral support for locally-led conservation efforts.

NACD represents America's 3,000 conservation districts that work with millions of cooperating landowners and operators to help them manage and protect land and water resources on private and public lands in the United States. Established under state law, conservation districts share a single mission: to work cooperatively with federal, state, and other local resource management agencies, as well as private sector interest to provide technical, financial, and other assistance to help landowners and operators apply conservation to the landscape. NACD believes that the best way to promote conservation is through locally-led efforts.

We fully recognize the need to get our nation's financial house in order, and we understand that means cuts to Farm Bill programs. We appreciate the ongoing efforts of Committee leadership in working to come up with a strong, balanced plan that fairly recognizes the critical value of locally-led conservation. Thank you for your continued commitment to protecting critical conservation program funding and supporting program consolidation for increased efficiency and ease of use for producers.

Investing in conservation simply makes sense. Not only do Farm Bill conservation programs play a key role in supporting clean air, clean water, and productive soils, they also help producers avoid unnecessary regulation and support our nation's long-term economic and food security. As we face increased pressure to produce food, feed, fuel, and fiber for a growing population, we simply must invest in natural resource conservation.

NACD has been working closely with the House and Senate Agriculture Committees over the past months, and we welcome the opportunity to continue providing input throughout the process. We look forward to being a strong participant and partner in working to pass a principle-driven, balanced Farm Bill in 2012 that supports a locally-led, voluntary, incentive-based approach to conservation delivery.

Sincerely,

Gene Schmidt  
NACD President

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