



National Association of Conservation Districts

December 2, 2014

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Mikulski and Chairman Rogers,

On behalf of the National Association of Conservation Districts and the nation's 3000 local soil and water conservation districts, I want to thank you for your continuing work to bring omnibus fiscal year 2015 (FY15) funding legislation before the Congress. It is imperative that the federal government remain operational so that the critical work of conserving and protecting our natural resources continues uninterrupted.

Regarding agriculture provisions, NACD continues to support the highest funding level for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Conservation Operations account, and we urge your support of the Senate-committee passed level of \$849.295 million. The 2014 Farm Bill already produced billions in savings from conservation programs, so we urge you to maintain farm bill conservation program spending at the FY15 authorization level. We do not support committee-proposed cuts to the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Watershed Rehabilitation Program.

Regarding interior and environment provisions, NACD continues to support the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) section 319 Nonpoint Source grants. While we hope to see this grant program grow in the future, we appreciate the committee's work to maintain the grants at fiscal year 2014 levels. NACD also supports the Forest Service's (FS) State and Private Forestry programs and we urge your support of the Senate-proposed level of \$232.653 million.

Thank you again for your work to bring the omnibus before the Congress, and for your continued support for natural resource conservation.

Sincerely,

Earl J. Garber
President