April 29, 2013

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
U.S. Senate  
328A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
U.S. Senate  
113 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Frank Lucas  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1301 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Collin C. Peterson  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1305 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senators Stabenow and Cochran and Representatives Lucas and Peterson:

As you know, diverse agricultural energy technologies such as advanced biofuels, biogas, bioproducts, biopower, energy crops, wind, solar and energy efficiency are poised for further strong growth. These technologies already make great contributions to the nation’s economic, environmental and energy security and will continue to do so in the coming years, provided that Congress maintains stable and successful policies that support their continued development and commercialization. America needs a new Farm Bill passed as soon as possible, with a strong Energy Title that includes robust mandatory funding.

The Energy Title programs contained in the 2002 and 2008 Farm Bills are vital components in the continued growth of these industries. Programs like the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP), Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP), Biorefinery Assistance Program (BAP) and Biobased Markets Program (Biopreferred) strongly support American agriculture and ensure broad public benefits to the entire country. Since some of these programs just got started, the next five years will be crucial for achieving success.

These programs are quite unique and are integral to a new Farm Bill. The U.S. Department of Agriculture is well prepared to continue their significant progress in advancing renewable energy, energy efficiency and biobased products for the agricultural, energy and forestry sectors.

Since 2009, thousands of direct and indirect jobs have been created or saved in rural areas by the Farm Bill’s Energy Title programs that benefitted almost 12,000 rural small businesses, agricultural producers, and advanced biofuel refineries across the country. This economic growth is occurring from a modest amount of federal money that leverages billions of dollars in private investment. Continued growth in new agriculture, manufacturing, and high tech jobs are at great risk without continued Federal investment.

The outstanding benefits of Energy Title programs flow from a very modest investment. They accounted for only 0.7 percent of overall spending in the 2008 Farm Bill. As longstanding agricultural safety net
programs come under increasing budgetary pressure, these energy investments create new opportunities for producers and rural communities to cut input costs and further diversify their income.

We recognize the fiscal challenges facing your committees as a new Farm Bill is drafted this year. However, for the reasons noted above, we urge you to ensure the vital Energy Title programs are re-authorized and afforded significant mandatory funding over the life of the legislation, matching or exceeding the $800 million over five years in the Senate Farm Bill passed last year. Helping to grow the economy with these cost effective and transformative programs will ease fiscal challenges in the years ahead while simultaneously addressing other critical national priorities. Polls show these policies are very popular with the American people.

We commend you for your leadership on all of these important issues and pledge to work with you to craft farm and energy policies that work for all of agriculture, clean energy industries and America.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

25x'25 Alliance
ACEEE - American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy
Advanced Biofuels Association
Advanced Biofuels USA
Advanced Ethanol Council
Ag Energy Coalition
Airlines for America
Algal Biomass Organization
American Biogas Council
American Coalition for Ethanol
American Corn Growers Institute for Public Policy
American Council On Renewable Energy (ACORE)
American Security Action Fund
American Wind Energy Association
Association of State Energy Research Institutions

Bio Feedstock Industry Association
Biomass Power Association
Biotechnology Industry Organization
Distributed Wind Energy Association
Environmental and Energy Study Institute
Forest Landowners Association
Growth Energy
National Association of Clean Water Agencies
National Association of Conservation Districts
National Association of State Energy Officials
National Center for Appropriate Technology
National Farmers Union
National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA)
National Sorghum Producers
Renewable Fuels Association
Solar Energy Industries Association
Windustry
Regional and State Organizations
Adams Electric Cooperative
Agricultural Leaders of Michigan
Alabama Agribusiness Council
Alabama Environmental Council
Arkansas Advanced Energy Association
Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives
BayBio
Bio Nebraska Life Sciences Association
BIOCOM
BioForward
Biofuels Center of North Carolina
Blackbelt Cooperative of Alabama
Clean Energy Group
Clean Up the River Environment
Climate Solutions
Colorado Harvesting Energy Network
Dakota Rural Action
Delaware Interfaith Power and Light
East Tennessee Clean Fuels Coalition
Environmental Law & Policy Center
Florida BioFuels & Energy Association, Inc.
Fresh Energy
Georgia Agribusiness Council
Georgia Bio
Great Lakes Renewable Energy Association
Green State Solutions
Hoosier Environmental Council
Illinois Biotechnology Industry Organization - iBIO(R)
Illinois Rural Electric Cooperative
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Iowa Environmental Council
Iowa Interfaith Power & Light
Iowa Renewable Energy Association
Iowa Renewable Fuels Association
Iowa Solar/Small Wind Energy Trade Association
Iowa Wind Energy Association
Kentucky Governor’s Office of Agricultural Policy
LifeScience Alley

Regional and State Organizations (continued)
Maine Interfaith Power & Light
Memphis Bioworks Foundation, Regional AgBioworks Initiative
Michael Fields Agricultural Institute
MichBio
Michigan Agri-Business Association
Michigan Environmental Council
Michigan Land Use Institute
Midwest Energy Alternatives Project
Mississippi Agricultural Industry Council
Mississippi Association of RC&D Councils
Mississippi Biomass and Renewable Energy Council
Mississippi Cattlemen's Association
Mississippi Solar Energy Society
Missouri Dairy Association
Missouri Energy Initiative
Missouri Forest Products Association
Missouri Soybean Association
Nebraska Ethanol Board
New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light
North Carolina Association of Professional Loggers
North Carolina Biosciences Organization
North Dakota Alliance for Renewable Energy
North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives
Northwest SEED
Pennsylvania Biomass Energy Association
Powder River Basin Resource Council
RENEW Wisconsin
Rocky Mountain Farmers Union
Rural Advantage
Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative
South Carolina Biomass Council
South Carolina Clean Energy Business Alliance
South Dakota Biotech Association
South Dakota Renewable Energy Association
Southeast Agriculture & Forestry Energy Resources Alliance (SAFER)
Southeast Energy Efficiency Alliance
Southern Alliance for Clean Energy (SACE)
Strategic Biomass Solutions
Tennessee Renewable Energy & Economic Development Council
Texas Renewable Energy Industries Association
The Catfish Institute
Vermont Energy Investment Corporation
Virginia Forest Products Association
Western Organization of Resource Councils
Windependence