



National Association of Conservation Districts

May 8, 2017

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue,

Congratulations on your recent confirmation as the 31st United States Secretary of Agriculture. As you begin your tenure as secretary, the National Associations of Conservation Districts (NACD) would like to highlight a regulatory hurdle that is among our top priorities for 2017: removing the requirement for NRCS program participants to obtain a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and annually register with the System for Award Management (SAM).

NACD represents America's 3,000 conservation districts and the 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. Districts work with millions of cooperating landowners and operators to help them conserve and protect land and water resources across all private lands and many public lands in the United States.

Through face-to-face, hands-on conservation planning with landowners, conservation districts have seen how the SAM and DUNS reporting requirements have imposed burdens on farmers, ranchers, and private forest owners who protect and improve America's natural resources by participating in federal conservation programs. Obtaining a DUNS number and annually registering with SAM is a time consuming and often difficult-to-navigate process that disincentivizes landowners from participating in voluntary, incentive-based conservation altogether.

President Donald Trump's April 25 executive order – "Promoting Agriculture and Rural Prosperity in America" – said it was "in the national interest to ensure regulatory burdens do not unnecessarily encumber agricultural production." Regulatory burdens, like SAM and DUNS, not only force agricultural producers to take time away from producing our nation's food, fuel, and fiber, but can also curtail the multitude of environmental benefits that participation in USDA's conservation programs provide rural and urban residents alike.

The farmers, ranchers, and foresters who use NRCS assistance to implement conservation were never the intended audience for these reporting regulations. We urge you and your team to review

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and remove these unnecessary burdens from the shoulders of American producers. Doing so will allow our nation's agricultural producers to work with both NRCS and their local conservation districts to put needed conservation on the ground.

We appreciated your remarks in Nevada, Iowa, on Friday, May 5 where you stated your desire to reduce the onerous paperwork farmers face as they work to improve their land through NRCS programs. We look forward to working with you on this and other top priorities to continue advancing conservation across our nation's working lands.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brent Van Dyke".

Brent Van Dyke
President