



## National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition

### ATT: FARM BILL VOTES

June 19, 2012

Dear Senator:

As you prepare to vote on amendments to the Agriculture Reform, Food, and Jobs Act (S. 3240), the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition provides the following list of amendments that we urge you to support or oppose. On behalf of our forty farm, conservation, and rural member organizations, NSAC supports policies that expand opportunities for family farmers to produce good food, sustain the environment, and contribute to vibrant communities. We urge you to vote for amendments that support these opportunities and oppose those that undermine them by voting according to the list below. Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

Ferd Hoefner  
NSAC Policy Director

### AMENDMENTS TO SUPPORT

- **Brown (OH) (SA 2445) – Rural Economic Development and Beginning Producers**  
Creating jobs in rural America and ensuring the success of the next generation of farmers are national priorities, yet the committee-passed bill fails to make an adequate investment in rural economic development and in the future of American agriculture. This amendment would fund critical rural development and beginning farmer and rancher programs.
- **Durbin-Coburn (SA 2439) – Crop Insurance Reform**  
Current crop and revenue insurance premium subsidies in the crop insurance title are unlimited. This amendment would ensure a fiscally responsible farm safety net by reducing by 15 percentage points the annual crop insurance premium subsidies for program participants whose adjusted gross annual income exceeds \$750,000 (\$1.5 million for most married participants). This amendment would save close to \$1.3 billion over ten years, and would ensure that millionaires pay closer to 50 percent of their own insurance costs.
- **Chambliss (SA 2438) – Highly Erodible Land and Wetlands Conservation**  
To receive commodity subsidy payments or conservation assistance, producers for decades have been required to meet basic conservation requirements that protect the natural resources on which productivity and future food security depend. Crop insurance premium subsidies, the largest subsidy and the only one slated to grow under the terms of the bill, currently do not have that same requirement. This amendment would extend basic conservation requirements in the commodity title to crop and revenue insurance programs.

## AMENDMENTS TO SUPPORT CONTINUED

- **Gillibrand (SA 2156) – Limit Crop Insurance Company Subsidies**

This amendment would modestly reduce the excessively high government subsidy to crop insurance companies and would use the savings to eliminate the cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program in the committee-passed bill. The savings would also fund the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program.
- **Grassley-Johnson (SD) (SA 2167) – Payment Limits on Marketing Loan Payments**

The committee-passed bill includes important reforms to limit Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) payments in the commodity title. Yet there are no limits on marketing loan gains and loan deficiency payments, leaving the reform incomplete. This amendment would limit those subsidies at \$75,000 per person or entity per year (\$150,000 for married couples).
- **Merkley-Feinstein-Sanders-Kerry (SA 2382) – Organic Crop Insurance**

Crop insurance is the center of the new farm safety net, but it does not work for organic farmers. Organic farmers pay a higher premium yet USDA does not pay organic farmers at the organic price after a loss for all but four crops. This amendment would direct USDA’s Risk Management Agency to complete the development of the organic price series to rectify the problem.
- **Akaka (SA 2440) – Highly Fractionated Land**

This amendment would revise the definition of “highly fractionated land” to allow loans to be made to federally recognized tribes to purchase highly fractionated land for both areas that are densely and sparsely populated.
- **Akaka-Thune (SA 2396) – Establishment of a USDA Office of Tribal Relations**

The amendment would permanently establish an Office of Tribal Relations within the Office of the Secretary of Agriculture, ensuring Tribal Consultation and Tribal Access to USDA programs and spurring job creation and economic development in rural communities across America.
- **Ayotte (SA 2195) – GAO Crop Insurance Fraud Reporting**

This amendment would require the Government Accountability Office to conduct a study and submit a report to Congress on the fraudulent claims filed and benefits provided through crop insurance programs.
- **Blunt (SA 2246) – Military Vets Training**

The committee-passed bill establishes a new position within USDA charged with assisting military veterans in accessing federal programs and facilitating their entry into farming. This amendment would allow that new position to enter into contracts with federal, academic, and non-profit institutions in order to provide agricultural training tailored for military veterans.

## AMENDMENTS TO OPPOSE

- **Lee (SA 2314) – Repeal of Conservation Programs**  
This amendment would repeal the Conservation Reserve Program and the Conservation Stewardship Program. Collectively, these two programs help producers conserve critical natural resources on more than 75 million acres of farm and ranch land in the U.S.
- **Chambliss (SA 2432) – Anti-New Markets for Farmers**  
Farmers are responding to skyrocketing demand for local food by increasing production, creating new markets, and launching new businesses. This amendment would undermine growth in local and regional markets by eliminating funding for the Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program.
- **Toomey (SA 2217) – Anti-Small Business Regulatory Assistance**  
Organic agriculture is one of the fastest growing sectors of agriculture, creating jobs in rural America and providing economic opportunity for farmers. Organic farmers must adhere to strict regulations to be certified, and a small cost-share (up to \$750 per year per operation) is provided to assist small and mid-sized businesses meet certification costs. This amendment would eliminate the program that provides cost-share assistance.
- **Moran (SA 2443) – Anti-Beginning Farmer Training**  
This amendment would divert critical funding from the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP), a successful beginning farmer training and education program, to fund state farm safety training programs. Robbing USDA's sole beginning farmer grant program, already underfunded, to fund an unrelated program is unfair and unwise.
- **Ayotte (SA 2192) – Anti-Value-Added Producer Grants**  
The Value-Added Producer Grants program is a successful, job-creating competitive grants program that enables farmers and farmer-owned businesses or cooperatives to develop value-added, producer-owned enterprises. This amendment would effectively remove farm coops from participating in the program and would shut the program down for a year or more by requiring an Office of Inspector General audit *before* any more grants are made.
- **DeMint (SA 2268) – Prohibition on Loan Guarantees**  
This amendment would prohibit the Secretary of Agriculture from funding any Loan Guarantees. It would shut down all FSA guaranteed farm loan programs and be detrimental to a number of Rural Development programs, including the Community Facilities Program and the Business & Industry Loan Program.