

June 19, 2013

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner and Leader Pelosi:

As you consider amendments to the Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management Act of 2013, the undersigned organizations write to urge your support of amendment #13 authored by Rep. Mike Thompson, D-Calif., and Rep. Jeff Fortenberry, R-Neb.

The Thompson-Fortenberry amendment provides one of the most significant reforms to crop insurance in many years by relinking conservation compliance with premium subsidy assistance. Conservation compliance has had tremendous impact on the landscape over the past two and a half decades, conserving 295 million tons of soil each year and protecting between 1.5 million and 3.3 million acres of wetlands.

Ninety-five percent of commodity crop farmers are already in conservation compliance, meaning relinking with crop insurance will have minimal impact on farmers. However, as the Congress eliminates the direct payment program in this farm bill, it only makes sense that these conservation benefits are maintained in exchange for taxpayer investment in crop insurance premium subsidy assistance.

Some assert that conservation compliance is simply another regulatory burden for farmers. This could not be further from the truth. Conservation compliance provides farmers many options to help maintain basic conservation on the land while remaining eligible for crop insurance premium assistance. And for farmers historically underserved by crop insurance and trying to get into the program for the first time, conservation compliance provides multiple years for them to take the necessary steps to remain eligible.

The Thompson-Fortenberry conservation compliance amendment provides a workable approach that respects private property rights while allowing farmers to manage their farm for both economic productivity and environmental sustainability. This meaningful reform has the support of farm, conservation, crop insurance and taxpayer groups alike, and will ensure a strong and viable farm and natural resource safety net for years to come.

June 19,2013

Thompson-Fortenberry Amendment #28 Support, P.2

We appreciate your work to expeditiously move a comprehensive 5-year farm bill, and we hope you will support the Thompson-Fortenberry amendment #13 to build upon a proud 25-year legacy of stewardship.

Sincerely,

American Association of Crop Insurers
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Farmland Trust
American Society of Agronomy
American Soybean Association
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Audubon
Crop Science Society of America
Ducks Unlimited
Environmental Defense Fund
Izaak Walton League of America
Land Improvement Contractors of America
National Association of Conservation Districts
National Association of Resource and Conservation Development Councils
National Corn Growers Association
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Farmers Union
National Wildlife Federation
Pheasants Forever
Pollinator Partnership
Quail Forever
Soil and Water Conservation Society
Soil Science Society of America
The Nature Conservancy
The Wildlife Society
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Wildlife Management Institute
World Wildlife Fund