

American Fisheries Society * American Fly Fishing Tackle Association * American Sportfishing Association * Archery Trade Association * Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies * Berkley Conservation Institute * Boone & Crockett Club * Conservation Force * Delta Waterfowl Foundation * Ducks Unlimited Izaak Walton League of America * Mule Deer Foundation * National Shooting Sports Foundation Orion the Hunter's Institute * Pheasants Forever * Public Lands Foundation * Quail Forever * Quality Deer Management Association * The Nature Conservancy * The Wildlife Society * Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership * Trout Unlimited * Whitetails Unlimited * Wild Sheep Foundation Wildlife Forever * Wildlife Management Institute

April 13, 2012

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
U.S. Senator
Chair, U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Pat Roberts
U.S. Senator
Ranking Member, U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee
109 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Stabenow and Roberts:

Our organizations represent millions of hunter and angler conservationists, scientists, and outdoor enthusiasts who are closely following the important debate over the upcoming Farm Bill reauthorization. We appreciate your bipartisan cooperation last summer in concluding draft Farm Bill recommendations for the so-called Super Committee, and urge you to continue in that vein to support strong conservation provisions robustly funded, as reauthorization proceeds through regular order. We write you today to respectfully request that you include a strong sodbaver provision in the next Farm Bill, modeled on the provisions of the Senate floor-passed version of the Farm Bill passed December 14, 2007, H.R. 2419, the Food and Energy Security Act of 2007.

Farmers have long been some of the nation's foremost conservationists. As you move forward to write a new Farm Bill, it will be important to include effective economic support programs that will allow farmers to continue farming in uncertain times and ensure that farmland will not be developed for other uses that are incompatible with conservation. At the same time, it will be equally important to link those support programs to basic, sensible conservation provisions, such as sodbaver, to encourage responsible stewardship of agricultural land and direct program benefits to acreage that is most suited for crop production. With budget pressure on existing USDA conservation programs increasing, linking basic farm support programs to reasonable conservation requirements makes sense.

In conclusion, we strongly believe it is vital that the Farm Bill include effective economic support programs and that those programs be coupled with a strong sodbaver provision. Doing so will promote continued excellent stewardship of America's farmlands and foster production of crops, clean water and abundant populations of fish and wildlife. Thank you for your sincere consideration of our request, and we look forward to working with you in the coming months to achieve that goal.