



WESTERN GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION

M. Michael Rounds
Governor of South Dakota
Chairman

Dave Freudenthal
Governor of Wyoming
Vice Chairman

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May 2, 2007

The Honorable Herb Kohl, Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration, And Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
119 Dirksen SOB
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert Bennett, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration, And Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
119 Dirksen SOB
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Kohl and Senator Bennett:

As the Subcommittee considers the fiscal year 2008 appropriations bill for the Department of Agriculture, the Western Governors' Association urges you to continue your past support for conservation programs. We certainly appreciate the current federal budgetary situation, but respectfully request that you give priority to funding the USDA conservation programs to the maximum extent possible since they provide important public benefits and are a cornerstone of western agriculture.

We note that the President's FY 08 budget proposal seeks to fully fund the Wetlands Reserve Program (for a total of about \$455 million and a full acreage enrollment goal of 2.275 million acres) and anticipates an expanded conservation title in the new farm bill. But we are concerned that some of these planned increases will come at the expense of several other programs in FY 08. For instance, we note that the Administration is proposing to cap the Conservation Security Program at \$316 million and to keep funding for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program at \$1 billion for FY 08.

Additionally, the President's FY 08 budget proposal would zero-out funding for the Grasslands Reserve Program, the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, and the Klamath Basin program, which together received \$89 million in FY 06.

In short, we value all of the conservation programs and find it makes little sense to increase one at the expense of another.


The Honorable Herb Kohl
The Honorable Robert Bennett
May 2, 2007
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We remain hopeful that the Committee will continue to invest in these conservation programs that are of extraordinary importance to the West. Again, thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



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The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Chair
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration, And Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
2362A Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jack Kingston, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration, And Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
2362A Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

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