

June 7, 2002

Congressman _____
U.S. House of Representatives
Address
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman _____:

I am writing on behalf of the Farm Credit Bank of Texas and its affiliated cooperative lending institutions throughout Texas, New Mexico, Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama to express support for H.R. 4754, "The National Drought Preparedness Act of 2002," and to encourage your consideration of this important legislation.

As a single-industry lender, owned and governed by farmers and ranchers, Farm Credit institutions are hit particularly hard when drought conditions occur. When confronting this type of disaster, producers and lenders are faced with difficult financial situations that can ultimately force them out of business and leave their local economies suffering. Not only does drought cause billions of dollars in damage to production agriculture, it is just as destructive to other rural businesses, to water systems and water quality, aquifers, fish and wildlife, recreation and many other important sectors of our communities. Yet when it comes to drought, the federal government lacks an integrated and comprehensive national policy to mitigate the impacts of, and respond to, these emergencies.

H.R. 4754 would put in place a comprehensive national drought policy that statutorily authorizes a lead federal agency for drought and delineates the roles and responsibilities for coordinating and integrating federal assistance for droughts. It would move the country away from the costly, ad-hoc, response-oriented approach to drought, and move us toward a proactive, preparedness approach, similar to what we have for other natural disasters such as hurricanes, floods, and tornadoes.

We urge your support for this important legislation and encourage you to consider cosponsoring H.R. 4754.

Sincerely,

Stan Ray, Vice President
Legislative Affairs

Encl: section-by-section summary of H.R. 4754