



## SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE COALITION

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### **COALITION ENDORSES BILL PROMOTING FARMER'S MARKETS AND LOCAL FOODS**

*(Washington D.C., May 17, 2007)* - The Sustainable Agriculture Coalition praised the introduction today of the Local Food and Farm Support Act introduced by Representatives Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), Steve Kagen (D-WI), Nancy Boyda (D-KS), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Bobby Rush (D-IL), and Donald Payne (D-NJ). The bill is being introduced for consideration in the 2007 Farm Bill and would promote the twin goals of increasing access to healthy affordable food and supporting small and mid-sized family farmers and ranchers by encouraging farmers' markets and local and regional food system infrastructure. Other original co-sponsors may be added today as the bill is dropped.

"The Local Food and Farm Support Act supports innovative programs that make good food grown by family farmers accessible to consumers and underserved communities," said Tazuer Smith, Washington Representative for the Sustainable Agriculture Coalition. "The number of farmers' markets has doubled in the last ten years and the public is clamoring for even more access to these market venues that feature fresh, locally-grown fruits, vegetables, meats, and dairy products."

To address this trend, the Local Food and Farm Support Act would provide \$25 million for the Direct to Consumer Marketing Assistance Program for grants to establish and promote farmer's markets and other direct to consumer sales activities.

The Act also provides \$60 million a year for the Value-Added Producer Grant program, which helps small and mid-sized farmers and ranchers increase their revenue by adding value to their agricultural products. In addition, the Local Food and Farm Support Act increases support for the WIC Farmer's Market Nutrition Program, the Senior Farmer's Market Nutrition Program, Community Food Project Grants, and the Farm to Cafeteria Program. These programs and others in the bill promote good nutrition and food security, as well as the economic viability of farmers and ranchers who supply these markets. Another bill introduced in the Senate today by Senators Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY), the FOOD for a Healthy America Act also supports several of these provisions.

"With the rate of obesity in children and adults having doubled in the last twenty years and the number of family farmers continuing to decline, current U.S. farm policy is clearly not doing its job," comments Smith. "The 2007 Farm Bill is a critical opportunity to support the physical and economic health of our rural and urban communities. The Local Food and Farm Support Act is an important step in that direction."

The Sustainable Agriculture Coalition represents grassroots farm, rural, and conservation organizations from across the country that advocate for public policies supporting the long-term economic and environmental sustainability of agriculture, natural resources and rural communities.