

**ATT: Budget Reconciliation –
Food, Ag, Conservation, Energy, Rural Development, Research**

November 8, 2005

Dear Representative:

We the undersigned organizations strongly oppose the misguided priorities reflected in the budget reconciliation package reported by the House Agriculture Committee and urge you to oppose the budget reconciliation bill when it reaches the floor.

The agricultural portion of the bill as reported would:

- Eliminate nearly 300,000 food stamp recipients from the program entirely. One proposal alone would terminate food stamps to 225,000 people, mostly in low-wage working families with children. Another provision would terminate food stamps working-poor and elderly legal immigrants by making them ineligible for seven years after legally entering the U.S. regardless of how poor they are. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that 70,000 low-income legal immigrants would be tossed off the Food Stamp Program by this measure. Through program interactions, the food stamp section of the bill would also force 40,000 children to lose their automatic eligibility for free school meals, according to the Congressional Research Service.
- Cut conservation spending over the next five years by \$760 million, a rate nearly three times greater than conservation's share of total committee mandatory spending. One proposal alone, scaling back the groundbreaking new Conservation Security Program, would cut over \$500 million, bringing a stop to new enrollments in the program before the end of this farm bill cycle and denying participation to farmer and ranchers in large portions of the country. All this comes at a time when three out of every four farmers seeking to enroll in conservation programs are being turned away due to lack of funds, and follows on the heels of a one-year \$507 million cut to farm bill conservation programs in the recently passed FY06 Agricultural Appropriations bill.
- Totally eliminate all funding for 2007 for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Improvements program (Section 9006). This popular and successful farm bill program assists farmers and ranchers with wind power, solar energy, biofuels and energy efficiency projects. The bill also would eliminate baseline funding for this program in the next farm bill.
- Totally eliminate all funding for 2007 for the Value-Added Producer Grants (VAPG) Program that helps farmers and rural communities increase income and economic opportunity through creation of value-adding agricultural enterprises. The program is so popular that USDA is able to fund only a quarter of the project proposals. In addition to food and agricultural development projects, the program has also funded nearly 100 renewable energy projects in the last four years. The bill also would eliminate baseline funding for this program in the next farm bill.

- Totally eliminate funding for organic farming cost-share and organic transition conservation payments in each of the Northeast states and three Western states (UT, WY, and NV). These funds are helping to build a vibrant new farming industry. The cuts unfairly target some of the only organic funding in the entire agricultural budget and unfairly single out a region of the country.
- For three years, totally eliminate agricultural research and extension competitive grant funding by a total of a \$460 million cut. The farm bill funding for the Initiative for Future Agricultural and Food Systems (IFAFS), while generally zeroed out in the appropriations bill, nonetheless provides the funding base for other agricultural research spending, including the National Research Initiative (NRI) which each year designates a major portion of its funding for the IFAFS program. Through IFAFS, the NRI funds important integrated research, education and extension projects in agro-ecosystems research, small and moderate-sized farm profitability, and human nutrition and obesity prevention.

In our view, these cuts do not represent a fair and balanced package. They would have a serious and negative impact on the nation's ability to prevent hunger, solve critical environmental and energy problems, and improve economic opportunity in rural America. We urge you to vote against the entire bill and to speak out against the misplaced priorities represented by its agricultural component.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

Action for a Clean Environment (GA)

Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association (CA)

American Agriculture Movement of Arkansas

American Bird Conservancy

American Corn Growers Association

American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy

American Farmland Trust

American Grassfed Association

American Society of Agronomy

Art of Construction, Inc. (OR)

The Association of Energy Conservation Professionals (AECP)

Bergey Windpower Co. (OK)

Biobased Manufacturers Association (Reformed) (MO)

Biogas Energy Systems (WA)

Biomass Investment Group, Inc (FL)
Bread for the World
Breathable Bus Coalition (WA)
California Coalition for Food and Farming
California Food and Justice Coalition
California Institute for Rural Studies
Center for Food Safety
Center for Rural Affairs
Central New York NOFA
Clean Fuels Development Coalition
Climate Solutions (WA)
Clouston Energy Research, LLC (OR)
Columbia Plateau Clean Cities Coalition (WA)
Community Food Security Coalition
Congressional Hunger Center
The Cornucopia Institute (WI)
The Corporation for Economic Opportunity (SC)
Crop Science Society of America
Dairyland Power (WI)
Defenders of Wildlife
Delta Land and Community
Eden Foods, Inc.
End Hunger Network
EnergySolve Companies (NJ)
Environmental Law & Policy Center
Environmental and Energy Study Institute
Evergreen Renewable Technologies (WA)
Farmworker Association of Florida, Inc.
Food for Families, Inc. (PA)
Food Research and Action Council (FRAC)
GEMTEK Products LLC (AZ)

General Bioenergy, Inc. (AL)
Georgia Poultry Justice Alliance
Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank (PA)
Greenpeace
Hancock Public Affairs, LLC (NY)
Hands of Health
Harvesting Clean Energy Network (WA)
Hoosier Environmental Council
Illinois Stewardship Alliance
Iowa Environmental Council
Iowa Farmers Union
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Island Clean Energy (WA)
JG Press Inc. (PA)
Just Food (NY)
Kansas Rural Center
Keech Farm Service, Ltd. (PA)
Kentucky Resources Council, Inc.
Land Stewardship Project
League of Rural Voters
Liquid Resources of Ohio, LLC. (OH)
Lots to Gardens
McIntosh County Wind Energy Committee, LLC (ND)
Michael Fields Agricultural Institute
Michigan Land Trustees
Michigan Land Use Institute
The Minnesota Project
Mississippi River Basin Alliance
National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture
National Catholic Rural Life Conference
National Center for Appropriate Technology

National Family Farm Coalition
National Farmers Organization (NFO)
National Organic Coalition
Natural Resources Defense Council
Nature's International Certification Services
Nebraska Sustainable Agricultural Society
Nebraska Wildlife Federation
New Alternatives Fund (NY)
New England Wood Pellet
New Jersey Conservation Foundation
New Uses Council
New York Sustainable Agriculture Working Group
North Carolina Contract Poultry Growers Association
Northeast Biofuels, LLC (NY)
Northeast-Midwest Institute
Northeast Organic Farming Association of Connecticut
Northeast Organic Farming Association – Interstate Policy Council
Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Jersey
Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York
Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont
Northeast Pastured Poultry Association
Northern Options
NW Biodiesel Network (WA)
NW Sustainable Energy for Economic Development (WA)
Ohio Family Farm Coalition
Oregon Power Solutions, LLC
Organic Consumers Association
Organic Farming Research Foundation
Organic Seed Alliance
Organic Valley Family of Farms
Pennsylvania Association of Regional Food Banks

Pennsylvania Certified Organic
Phase 3 Developments & Investments, LLC (OH)
Politics of Food (NY)
Practical Farmers of Iowa
Redwood Alliance (CA)
Renewable Lubricants, Inc. (OH)
RENEW Wisconsin
Richmond Energy Associates (VA)
Rural Advancement Fund (NC)
Rural Coalition
Rural Vermont
Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD)
SeaPort Biofuels (WA)
Seattle Biodiesel, LLC
Share Our Strength
Sherman County of Oregon
Small Planet Institute
Small Potatoes Gleaning Project (WA)
Soil Science Society of America
Solar Energy Industries Association
Southeastern Massachusetts Agricultural Partnership
Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group
Soybean Producers of America
Spokane County Conservation District
The Stella Group, Ltd.
Sunbelt Biofuels, LLC (NM)
SUN DAY Campaign
Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
SustainableBusiness.com
Sustainable Living Committee, Unitarian Universalist Society
Sustainable Northwest (OR)

Sustainable Systems

Texas Mexico Border Coalition

Tri-State Coalition for Responsible Investment

Urban Options (MI)

Union of Concerned Scientists

Waverly Light and Power (IA)

Western Sustainable Agriculture Coalition

Western Wind Power (WA)

Weston A. Price Foundation

Women, Food and Agriculture Network

Wood Specialty Products (PA)