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URGE SPEAKER PELOSI TO SAVE THE CONSERVATION SECURITY PROGRAM AND SUPPORT REAL REFORM IN THE FARM BILL!!!

The Farm Bill approved by the House Agriculture Committee on July 19 falls dramatically short of delivering programs that meaningfully encourage small and mid-sized family farmers and comprehensive land stewardship. The bill strips \$3 billion in funding from the Conservation Security Program and offers a payment limits package that is a wolf in sheep's clothing: the proposal actually *removes any cap* on loan deficiency payments and *increases the cap* on direct payments by 50 percent to \$120,000.

With the farm bill scheduled to be debated on the floor of the House July 26, it is up to Speaker Pelosi to save the Conservation Security Program and ensure that real reform be included in the final farm bill.

CALLS NEEDED TO OUR KANSAS REPRESENTATIVES TODAY THROUGH July 25!!!

Rep. Nancy Boyda (KS-2) (Aide: Lindsey Matese)
Phone 202-225-6601 FAX 202-225-7986

The message: I am a constituent of Rep. Boyda's district (or a Kansas citizen if not in her district). " To ensure that family farmers, rural communities, and the environment get real support in the next farm bill I am asking you to call Speaker Pelosi and ask her to demand that:

- Ø \$3 billion be restored to the Conservation Security Program and
- Ø Real payment limits be applied to commodity programs, including a \$40,000 direct payment cap and the closing of all loopholes."

It's easy to call or write. If calling, once connected, ask the Representative's receptionist for the staff person responsible for agriculture. If the agriculture aid is unavailable, leave your name, phone number, and the message above on the aid's voice mail, or if necessary, with the receptionist. If you prefer to write, fax a brief letter with the same points above, along with your name, address, and contact information.

(If you are calling Rep. Moran or his office, ask that he also support the above points: support payment limits and the restoration of funding to CSP .)

Rep. Jerry Moran (KS-1) (Aide: Aaron Popelke)
Phone 202-225-2715 FAX 202-225-5124

IN ADDITION, CONTACT REP. PELOSI DIRECTLY

The Center for Rural Affairs has set up a landing page where you can send a message directly to Speaker Pelosi about payment limits, the Conservation Security Program, and any other program you think she needs to hear about it. Please visit <http://www.cfra.org/frame/nofakereforms.html>

Background:

The **Conservation Security Program (CSP)** is an innovative and proactive stewardship incentives program first authorized in the 2002 Farm Bill. The CSP provides financial and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers who develop and maintain conservation systems that solve critical natural resource and environmental concerns, rewarding them for investments of labor, management, and capital aimed at fostering healthy, productive, and non-eroding soils, clear air and clean water, energy savings, and wildlife habitat.

Despite its wide popularity with farmers and ranchers, the intent and scope of the CSP have been stunted by repeated cuts to its funding levels. The 2007 Farm Bill is the vehicle for improving the CSP, strengthening its environmental criteria, ensuring that it serves sustainable and organic farmers, and getting its funding back to a level where the program can be made available to farmers on a regular nationwide basis.

The draft farm bill, as it stands in the House Agriculture Committee, makes another huge cut of \$3 billion to the program. The proposal then transfers those CSP funds to the already well-funded Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Unlike the CSP, EQIP has low environmental standards and uses a portion of its \$1.3 billion a year to pay for construction costs associated with large scale confined feeding operations (CAFOs), promoting overproduction and industrialization.

Effective payment limits would cap direct payments at \$40,000, counter-cyclical payments at \$60,000, and marketing loan payments at \$150,000, for a total hard cap of \$250,000. It would also establish clear, measurable standards to determine whether beneficiaries are actually actively engaged in the business of farming, and close a variety of existing loopholes that have entered into the statute and regulations over the years.

The House Agriculture Committee's payment limits provision has been labeled as a positive reform that helps family farmers, but this is laughable, and more importantly inaccurate. The House Farm Bill would increase the current cap on direct and counter-cyclical payments from \$210,000 a year to \$250,000 a year and remove any cap whatsoever on marketing loan gains and loan deficiency payments. The proposal also fails to address the widespread abuse, documented by the Government Accountability Office, which results from the lack of any measurable standard to determine whether payments are being made to actual working farmers or to participants in sham partnerships designed to avoid limitations.

In short, ineffectual or a complete lack of payment limits contributes to land prices rising well beyond market levels, which leads to farm consolidation and the disappearance of mid-sized family farms, in addition to reduced farming opportunities for a new generation of farmers.

For Further Information, or to sign up for KRC Action Alerts, contact:

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