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October 15, 2007 - Action Alert #12

***URGENT ACTION NEEDED!
Conservation Call-In Day October 17!!!***

Wednesday October 17 is a nationwide call to action for the Senate to commit to conservation in the 2007 Farm Bill. Conservation and sustainable agriculture groups across the country are participating in a call-in to ask our Senators to:

“Provide at least \$5 billion more for conservation in the farm bill, including \$2 billion for the Comprehensive Stewardship Incentives Program (CSIP).”

The Senate Agriculture Committee is scheduled to begin markup of the 2007 Farm Bill on or near October 23. To win dollars for conservation programs we need pressure from citizens on our Senators. Conservation funding has been steadily eroded over the past 2 or 3 years (cuts to CSP, WRP, etc.) Thus, 2007 Farm Bill debate started behind where conservation funding needs to be.

Currently, the Senate Finance Committee secured \$2.8 billion more for the Conservation Title. Senate Ag Committee Chairman Harkin is asking for \$3.5 billion (with \$1.5 billion for CSIP. See below for background). However, the conservation and sustainable agriculture community argue that \$5 to 6 billion is needed for the entire conservation title so that programs are adequately funded.

Without additional funds, conservation and environmental protection efforts will be on hold or backslide for the duration of the next Farm Bill. Financing these programs gets complicated very quickly. But the message for our Senators is simple:

“We need more emphasis on conservation in the 2007 Farm Bill and we need more funding. Please provide at least \$5 billion more for conservation, including \$2 billion for the Comprehensive Stewardship Incentives Program (CSIP).”

On Wednesday October 17, please Call or FAX:

Senator Pat Roberts at 202-224-4774; FAX 202-224-3514

Senator Sam Brownback at 202-224-6521; FAX 202-228-1265

It is vital to rally support for increased funding for conservation in general and the Comprehensive Stewardship Incentives Program (CSIP) in particular. The continuing

pre-markup jockeying that is underway right now will determine what programs and what reforms will and will not receive consideration and support by the Committee.

Background on the Comprehensive Stewardship Incentives Program (CSIP)

The new Comprehensive Stewardship Incentives Program (CSIP) combines the two leading working lands conservation programs – the Conservation Security Program (CSP) and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) – into an integrated program that improves the conservation benefits and cost effectiveness of each current program. Farmers will be able to apply at one time for stewardship enhancement payments through the CSP and/or for conservation cost-share through EQIP. By coordinating the two programs, program delivery will be improved and streamlined.

Without adequate funding (\$2 billion) the CSP part of the program cannot be available nationally. Many Senators have so far been unwilling to come up with the money needed. We have until October 23 to convince those Senators that \$2 billion more in funding is needed so that farmers and ranchers in all parts of the country have a fair opportunity to participate and help protect the environment.

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

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