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**February 4, 2008 Action Alert #15**

***URGE SENATE AND HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE LEADERS TO FUND  
SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PRIORITIES IN 2008 FARM BILL***

With the Senate and House versions of the new farm bill passed in 2007, the next step is for the differences between the two bills to be negotiated and resolved so that one final bill can be voted on by both Chambers and sent to the President.

While a substantial majority of the Sustainable Agriculture Coalition's platform is in either the Senate or the House bill, one of the two versions contains little, or in some cases no mandatory funding for: beginning farmers and ranchers, the Conservation Security Program, value-added, organics, and rural micro-enterprise.

It is vital at this stage to urge the likely Conference Committee Members (see list below) to adopt provisions authorizing mandatory funding for these programs during their negotiations.

**PLEASE CALL OR FAX LEADERS IN THE  
SENATE AND HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEES TODAY !**

Urge them to fight for a farm bill that invests in the future!

***Time is of the essence.*** If your Senator or Representative is on the Agriculture Committee, and especially if they are a leader or senior Member on the Committee (see list of Members with asterisks next to likely conferees below), call and ask for their legislative aide that works on agriculture. In Kansas Rep. Jerry Moran has a good chance of being on the conference committee, and calls to Rep. Moran and Sen. Pat Roberts are the best to call.

If their agriculture aide is available, talk to them about your support for adequate funding for key programs in the 2008 Farm Bill (for more background on these programs, please see the Sustainable Agriculture Coalition platform, at: [www.sustainableagriculturecoalition.org](http://www.sustainableagriculturecoalition.org))

If the aide is unavailable, leave a short message of support, along with your name and phone number, on the aid's voice mail or with the receptionist.

If you prefer to write, fax a brief letter of support, addressed to the Senator and/or Representative, and remember to include your name and address and contact information. The fax numbers are listed below.

**SENATOR PAT ROBERTS**

Agricultural Aide - Joel Leftwich  
202-224-4774  
FAX 202-224-3514

**REPRESENTATIVE JERRY MORAN**

Agricultural Aide - Aaron Popelka  
202-225-2715  
FAX 202-225-5124

***The message is simple.*** (Choose at least several of the programs listed below to include in your message) I am a constituent and am calling to urge Representative Moran or Senator Roberts to support mandatory farm bill funding for key sustainable agriculture priorities whose fate hangs in the balance. Please ensure the final farm bill includes:

- \$15 million in annual mandatory funding for the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program and \$5 million in annual mandatory funding for the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Individual Development Account Program
- \$2 billion in additional mandatory funding over five years for the Conservation Security Program
- \$40 million (the 2002 Farm Bill level) in annual mandatory funding for the Value-Added Producer Grant
- Incorporate the Organic Conversion Assistance Program into the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) so that educational and financial assistance is available to farmers moving to certified organic systems nationwide
- \$16 million in annual mandatory funding for the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative
- \$75 million in mandatory funding over five years for the Rural Micro-Enterprise Assistance Program

**BACKGROUND:**

For more information about the status of sustainable agriculture priorities in the House and Senate bills, please see SAC's farm bill progress chart at:

[www.sustainableagriculturecoalition.org/ActionCenter/SACFarmBillPlatformProgressReport3.pdf](http://www.sustainableagriculturecoalition.org/ActionCenter/SACFarmBillPlatformProgressReport3.pdf)

While negotiations between Members will most likely not commence until the end of January/early February, discussions at the staff level have already begun. The House and Senate Agriculture Committee staff will work through as many issues as possible, reaching tentative agreements on matters most easily settled, over the coming weeks.

The work of producing a final version is taken on by a "conference committee," whose members have not yet been announced, but is likely to include the chair and ranking members of the full Senate and House Agriculture Committees and House subcommittees, as well as the most senior members of the Senate Agriculture Committee:

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

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