

April 28, 2009

Honorable John Spratt
Chairman
House Committee on the Budget
207 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Kent Conrad
Chairman
Senate Committee on the Budget
624 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Paul Ryan
Ranking Member
House Committee on the Budget
B-71 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Judd Gregg
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on the Budget
624 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Spratt, Chairman Conrad, Ranking Member Ryan and Ranking Member Gregg:

As you prepare to go to conference on the fiscal year 2010 budget resolution, we are writing to reiterate our strong opposition to the inclusion of assumed savings from the House and Senate Agriculture Committees.

As we noted to you in our letter during consideration of Senate and House versions of the budget resolution, the farm safety net constitutes a de minimis share of the total federal budget (less than 0.25%) and the 2008 Farm Bill itself (16%), having just sustained \$7.4 billion in cuts last year in the farm bill debate despite the preceding Farm Bill's safety net already reporting more than \$21 billion in savings.

While imposing further cuts to these already very limited financial resources would not make a meaningful dent in deficit reduction, we are concerned that such cuts would worsen the current economic hardship faced by U.S. farm and ranch families as they struggle with high production costs, which have only partially retreated from the record highs of last year, and lower commodity prices, which have fallen sharply since that time.

In short, we believe that additional budget cuts to the farm safety net would seriously undermine an important sector of the U.S. economy, result in job losses, and exacerbate the current credit crisis all while having no noticeable impact on the goal of deficit reduction.

We appreciate your efforts to ensure that rural America is not singled out to bear alone the burden of deficit reduction and we respectfully urge you to exclude any assumed savings from the House and Senate Agriculture Committees in the fiscal year 2010 budget resolution.

Sincerely,

Agro National, LLC
American Association of Crop Insurers
American Beekeeping Federation
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Sheep Industry Association
American Soybean Association
American Sugar Alliance

CGB Diversified Services
CoBank
Crop Insurance Professionals Association
Crop Insurance Research Bureau
Farm Credit Council
Heartland Crop Insurance, Inc
Hudson Insurance Company
Independent Community Bankers of America
NAU Country Insurance Company
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Barley Growers Association
National Corn Growers Association
National Cotton Council
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Farmers Union
National Sorghum Producers
North Carolina Peanut Growers Association
National Sunflower Association
Peanut Growers Cooperative Marketing Association
ProAg
Producers Agriculture Insurance Company
Rain and Hail, LLC
Rice Belt Warehouses
Rural Community Insurance Services
Southern Peanut Farmers Federation
Southwest Council of Agribusiness
United Dairymen of Arizona
U.S. Canola Association
US Rice Producers Association
USA Dry Pea and Lentil Council
USA Rice Federation
Virginia Peanut Growers Association