

September 15, 2008

The Honorable Collin Peterson
Chairman
House Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bob Goodlatte
Ranking Member
House Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman and Ranking Member:

We appreciate the efforts of the Agriculture Committee to pass a comprehensive farm bill that maintains the safety net for American agriculture.

However, we do not believe the bill is being implemented as Congress intended with regard to Section 1101(d). This section prohibits producers from receiving direct, counter-cyclical or average crop revenue payments if the sum of the base acres on their farm equals 10 acres or less. The Joint Explanatory Statement of the Managers that accompanied the 2008 farm bill clearly states: "The Managers intend for the Department to allow for aggregation of farms for purposes of determining the suspension of payments on farms with 10 base acres or less." In contrast, guidance issued to FSA offices by USDA clearly prohibits farmers from taking such action.

Reps. Etheridge and Moran have introduced a bill (H.R. 6849) that provides unequivocal clarity to Section 1101(d) and would require this section of the farm bill to be implemented in accordance with the intentions of Congress.

We would like to express our strong support for this bill and urge the Agriculture Committee to markup this bill as soon as possible to ensure the farm bill is being implemented in a way consistent with the intentions of Congress and fair to American farmers.

Sincerely,

Alabama Peanut Producers Association
American Agriculture Movement
American Corn Growers Association
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Soybean Association
Federation of Southern Cooperatives
Florida Peanut Producers Association
Georgia Peanut Commission
Mississippi Peanut Producers Association
National Association of Farmer Elected Committees

National Association of Farmers Market Nutrition Programs
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Barley Growers Association
National Corn Growers Association
National Cotton Council
National Farmers Organization
National Farmers Union
National Sorghum Producers
New Mexico Peanut Growers Association
North Carolina Peanut Growers Association
Northeast States Association for Ag Stewardship
Oklahoma Peanut Commission
Peanut Growers Cooperative Marketing Association
South Carolina Peanut Growers Association
Southern Peanut Farmers Federation
Texas Peanut Producers Board
US Canola Association
US Rice Producers Association
USA Rice Federation
Virginia Peanut Growers Association
Western Peanut Growers Association
Women Involved in Farm Economics

cc: Members of the House Agriculture Committee

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