

May 27, 2011

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Norman Dicks
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Dicks:

We, the undersigned organizations, write to voice our deep concerns with the FY 2012 Agriculture Appropriations legislation that was recently marked-up in the House Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies.

It is important to acknowledge the numerous innovative renewable energy, energy efficiency and bio-products programs that were authorized by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008¹, commonly known as the 2008 Farm Bill. These initiatives, authorized primarily in the Farm Bill's Bi-partisan Energy Title, have provided support to countless clean energy projects, most in rural areas across the country. Projects include wind, solar, and geothermal power; biomass power and fuels production, energy efficiency improvements on farms and ranches; and anaerobic digesters to turn agricultural waste streams into energy and farm revenue.

More specifically we respectfully request you reconsider the provisions in the FY2012 Agriculture Appropriations Bill that would zero out funding for important programs within the Farm Bill's energy title such as the Bioenergy Crop Assistance Program (BCAP) and the Rural Energy for American Program (REAP) and significantly cut funding for the Bioenergy Program for Advanced Biofuels.

BCAP is just beginning to take shape in transforming rural America's contribution to the nation's renewable energy supply. BCAP provides critical assistance to help farmers and foresters plant and collect next generation, purpose grown energy crops and other biomass that are key to ensuring the near-term commercialization of low-carbon advanced biofuels, power, and products. Failing to strongly fund BCAP in FY 2012 will severely stunt the development of these new dedicated energy crops just at a time when they are needed to further develop domestic sources of energy.

¹ Pub.L. 110-234

The REAP program supports a wide array of agriculture-based renewable energy and energy efficiency projects and has positively impacted every state in America. It has been a very successful program since inception in 2002 and widely popular with farmers, ranchers and small businesses.

The Bioenergy Program for Advanced Biofuels will help maximize renewable energy commercialization by incentivizing the production of fuel derived from renewable biomass, other than corn ethanol.

While we recognize the very difficult budget challenges facing Congress and the nation funding for these programs are critical to the development of a new energy economy and the many thousands of jobs that will be created. And just as important, these programs support our goal of improving challenging economic conditions in rural America while providing opportunities for farmers and foresters to produce real energy solutions.

For these reasons, we call upon you and your colleagues in the House of Representatives to maintain healthy funding levels for these important programs. Thank you.

Sincerely,

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Advanced Biofuels Association
Advanced Ethanol Council
Agriculture Energy Coalition
American Coalition for Ethanol
American Council on Renewable Energy
Association of Equipment Manufacturers
Distributed Wind Energy Association
Environmental and Energy Study Institute
Environmental Law and Policy Center
Growth Energy
National Biodiesel Board
National Farmers Union
National Wildlife Federation
POET
Renewable Fuels Association

Cc:

The Honorable Jack Kingston, Chairman, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Sam Farr, Ranking Member, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies