

October 21, 2011

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
U.S. Senate  
328A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Frank Lucas  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1301 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Pat Roberts  
U.S. Senate  
109 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Collin C. Peterson  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1305 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senators Stabenow and Roberts and Representatives Lucas and Peterson:

We are writing to urge your strong support for agriculture and forestry-based energy programs and policies in the new farm bill. There are a multitude of reasons why these Federal investments make great sense. The national security benefits are clear. And stable Federal support is essential to help meet rising energy demand and rapidly deploy new biofuels, bioproducts and energy crops, renewable and distributed electricity generation, thermal energy, as well as energy efficiency.

The innovative programs authorized in the Energy Title of the 2008 Farm Bill<sup>1</sup>, such as the Rural Energy for America Program, the Biomass Crop Assistance Program, the Biorefinery Assistance Program, and the Biobased Markets Program, have also been particularly valuable to U.S. farmers and the rural economy. These programs, administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), have helped finance thousands of diverse renewable energy projects and improved energy efficiency at farms, ranches and businesses across rural America. Programs are generally over-subscribed and show no signs of abating even as the economy has slowed.

And numerous reputable studies all come to the same conclusion – that building the clean energy economy is likely to create millions of jobs. This is already happening in part due to Farm Bill clean energy investments that have leveraged hundreds of millions of dollars from the private sector. Of course, these jobs and industries bolster U.S. technological competitiveness as well.

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<sup>1</sup> The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, Pub. L. No. 110-234.

The benefits of Energy Title initiatives also come at a very modest cost. Of all the programs authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill, the Energy Title programs account for less than one percent of total outlays. Further, as longstanding agricultural safety net programs come under increasing budgetary pressure, these energy programs will continue to strengthen and diversify the rural economy.

We recognize the significant budgetary constraints facing Federal policymakers and the bold steps Congress is undertaking to address these challenges. The daunting scope of the task facing the nation is illustrated by the broad and unprecedented powers – and lofty expectations – bestowed on the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction. This deficit reduction effort will require considerable sacrifices from many sectors of the Federal government, including agriculture.

However, as the House and Senate Agriculture Committees engage with members of the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction and set forth the policy priorities of rural America within the next Farm Bill, for the reasons outlined above, we urge you to ensure that the Energy Title is preserved and robust mandatory funding is provided for critically important programs.

We thank you for your leadership on all of these important issues and pledge to work with you to craft farm, forest, and energy policies that work for all of agriculture and rural America.

Regards,

25x'25 Alliance

Advanced Biofuels Association

Advanced Ethanol Council

Agriculture Energy Coalition

Algal Biomass Organization

American Biogas Council

American Coalition for Ethanol

American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE)

American Council on Renewable Energy (ACORE)

American Loggers Council

American Nursery and Landscape Association

Association of Equipment Manufacturers

Association of State Energy Research and Technology Transfer Institutions (ASERTTI)

Biomass Coordinating Council

Biomass Power Association  
Biomass Thermal Energy Council  
Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO)  
Distributed Wind Energy Association (DWEA)  
Energy Future Coalition  
Environment and Energy Study Institute (EESI)  
Environmental Law & Policy Center (ELPC)  
Florida Renewable Energy Producers Association  
Fresh Energy  
Growth Energy  
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy  
Iowa Environmental Council  
Iowa Solar/Small Wind Energy Trade Association  
Iowa Wind Energy Association  
Mississippi Biomass and Renewable Energy Council  
National Association of Conservation Districts  
National Association of State Energy Officials (NASEO)  
National Center for Appropriate Technology  
National Farmers Union  
National Woodland Owners Association  
North Carolina Association of Professional Loggers  
North Carolina Woodland Owners Association  
Ohio Environmental Council  
Renewable Fuels Association  
Rural Alliance for Renewable Energy  
Show Me Energy Cooperative  
Society of American Florists  
Society of American Foresters  
South Carolina Biomass Council  
South Carolina Clean Energy Business Alliance  
Southeast Energy Efficiency Alliance  
Southern Alliance for Clean Energy  
Tennessee Renewable Energy and Economic Development Council  
Texas Renewable Energy Industries Association

Cc: Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction