

May 14, 2018

Dear Member of Congress:

The Agriculture Energy Coalition opposes the elimination of a standalone energy title and exclusion of mandatory funding for key energy programs in the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018, H.R. 2. While this is vitally important legislation and should be reauthorized by September 30<sup>th</sup>, we cannot support it without an energy title and mandatory funding for programs.

The Coalition stands with the farmers, ranchers, rural small businesses and countless others that rely on good farm and nutrition policy. Farm country is hurting right now, and we urge Congress to meet its obligations to support a strong agricultural economy. Successful energy and sustainability programs must be funded and prioritized along with the other core elements of the farm bill. The lack of an energy title will have a chilling effect on private sector investment in renewable energy, new technologies, and innovative manufacturing in rural communities.

Farm bill energy and sustainability programs are very popular and impactful. The Farm Bill's Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) supports a myriad of renewable energy and energy efficiency investments made by farmers, ranchers and rural small businesses. The program has supported more than 15,000 projects, benefiting every state. The program is consistently oversubscribed.

The Biorefinery, Renewable Chemical, and Biobased Product Manufacturing Assistance Program is helping build state-of-the-art, first-of-a-kind biorefineries for advanced biofuels, bioproducts and renewable chemicals. Without the program, the United States will cede leadership in developing new biobased technologies to foreign competitors.

USDA's Biopreferred Program creates demand for renewable agricultural materials via federal purchasing of biobased industrial products. More than 3,000 products now carry the voluntary BioPreferred® label, indicating their renewable content. It is so innovative and successful that several states and countries around the globe have emulated it.

The Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP) can revolutionize new energy crop development and at the same time cost-effectively reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfires across the United States.

Other programs of import are contained within the title, enhancing rural economic development and meaningful public benefits to the nation.

The bipartisan Energy Title must be reinstated, with mandatory funding for key programs. The federal investment is minimal, less than one-percent of total farm bill spending, yet incentivizes hundreds of thousands of jobs, new manufacturing, technology innovation and a cleaner, healthier America. More than 1.5 million U.S. workers manufacture biobased products, generating over \$127 billion in annual economic activity.

Thank you for your consideration.

Agriculture Energy Coalition