



## **Senate & House Ag Committee Ranking Members Chambliss & Lucas question USDA climate bill analysis**

**By Agri-Pulse Staff**

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Washington, Dec. 18 – Sen. Saxby Chambliss (R-GA) and Rep. Frank Lucas (R-OK), ranking members of the Senate and House Agriculture Committees respectively, sent a letter to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Lisa Jackson Dec. 18 requesting the agency correct the Forest and Agriculture Sector Optimization Model (FASOM) used as the basis for USDA’s analysis of climate change legislation. Chambliss and Lucas noted that earlier this week, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack stated that the FASOM, which is often cited in the climate change debate, is not “current” and “complete.” They sent a similar letter to Sec. Vilsack Dec. 17 requesting the flawed analysis be corrected, and that the Secretary report to Congress upon its completion.

The complete letters read as follows:

The Honorable Tom Vilsack  
Secretary  
United States Department of Agriculture  
14th and Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

It is with significant interest and concern that we read your comments this week regarding the climate change legislation analysis produced by the Department of Agriculture’s Office of the Chief Economist. Statements that imply a lack of confidence in both the modeling used and work product developed by USDA and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) raise doubts regarding the Administration’s position on cap and trade legislation and, more importantly, the impacts on the agricultural and forestry sectors.

The Department’s testimony delivered earlier this month to the House Agriculture Committee is clear and unequivocal; agriculture will undergo significant structural impacts that will change how food, feed, fiber and fuel are produced in the United States. The disappearance of 59 million acres of cropland, higher food prices and lower exports will undoubtedly shape how farmers and ranchers make a living in the years ahead.

While we can disagree on policy, we cannot ignore the facts when they are inconvenient to our preferred narrative.

In light of your critique of USDA's analysis, we respectfully request your office consult with the EPA and report to the House and Senate Agriculture Committees on the problems with the economic model in order to reflect realistic scenarios while examining the impact of cap and trade on the agriculture and forestry sectors. Moving forward with flawed studies will only result in bad policy and legislation.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and we look forward to working with you on this and other important issues to farmers and ranchers in the future.

U.S. Senator Saxby Chambliss (R-Ga.)  
U.S. Representative Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

The Honorable Lisa Jackson  
Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Jackson:

Recent comments by Department of Agriculture Secretary Vilsack raise concerns with the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) analysis of H.R. 2454. Specifically, Secretary Vilsack indicates the agriculture and forestry model utilized by your agency, the Forest and Agricultural Sector Optimization Model (FASOM) is not "current" and "complete."

EPA's analysis was often cited during debate in the House of Representatives and the study had a great impact on the final vote. If there was a flaw in the analysis, then it would be prudent to correct the model and perform a more current and complete analysis on both H.R. 2454 and S. 1733. Moving forward with flawed studies will only result in bad policy and legislation.

In addition, given the importance of this issue to the House and Senate Agriculture Committees, we respectfully request the EPA provide a briefing along with USDA regarding updates to the model and results from any future analysis. It is our hope that a thorough study of the House and Senate climate change bills will provide the Congress with the necessary information to make informed decisions. The impacts of these bills are too consequential to ask otherwise.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and we look forward to working with you on this and other important issues to farmers and ranchers in the future.

U.S. Senator Saxby Chambliss (R-Ga.)  
U.S. Representative Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

To read Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack's comments on the new USDA analysis of the Waxman-Markey climate bill released Dec. 18, go to:

<http://www.agri-pulse.com/uploaded/20091218H1.pdf>

To read the two-page Executive Summary of “The Impacts of the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009 on U.S. Agriculture” report from USDA’s Office of the Chief Economist, go to: <http://www.agri-pulse.com/uploaded/20091218H2.pdf>.

To read the complete 80-page “Impacts of the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009 on U.S. Agriculture” report from USDA’s Office of the Chief Economist, go to: <http://www.usda.gov/oce/newsroom/archives/releases/2009files/ImpactsofHR%202454.pdf>.

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#30