

July 11, 2013

The Honorable
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Rep. :

The American Farm Bureau Federation is our nation's largest general farm organization, representing more than 6 million member families in all 50 states and Puerto Rico. Our members represent the grassroots farmers and ranchers who produce the wide range of food and fiber crops for our customers here and around the world. To achieve this, farmers and ranchers depend on the variety of programs such as risk management, conservation, credit and rural development contained in H.R. 2642 that is scheduled to be voted on by the full House today.

Last night the House Rules Committee approved the rule for considering H.R. 2642, which also includes separating the nutrition title from the remaining provisions of H.R. 1947, a complete farm bill that was reported out of the House Agriculture Committee by a 36-10 bipartisan vote.

We are very disappointed in this action. The "marriage" between the nutrition and farm communities and our constituents in developing and adopting comprehensive farm legislation has been an effective, balanced arrangement for decades that has worked to ensure all Americans and the nation benefits. In spite of reports to the contrary, this broad food and farm coalition continues to hold strong against partisan politics. In fact, last week, more than 530 groups representing the farm, conservation, credit, rural development and forestry industries urged the House to not split the bill. Similar communications were relayed from the nutrition community. Yet today, in spite of the broad-based bipartisan support for keeping the farm bill intact, you will vote on an approach that seeks to affect a divorce of this longstanding partnership. It is frustrating to our members that this broad coalition of support for passage of a complete farm bill appears to have been pushed aside in favor of interests that have no real stake in this farm bill, the economic vitality and jobs agriculture provides or the customers farmers and ranchers serve.

We are quite concerned that without a workable nutrition title, it will prove to be nearly impossible to adopt a bill that can be successfully conferenced with the Senate's version, approved by both the House and Senate and signed by the President.

We are also very much opposed to the repeal of permanent law contained in H.R. 2642. This provision received absolutely no discussion in any of the process leading up to the passage of the bill out of either the House or Senate Agriculture Committees. To replace permanent law governing agricultural programs without hearing from so much as a single witness on what that law should be replaced with is not how good policy is developed.

As recently as last December, the threat of reverting to permanent law was the critical element that forced Congress to pass an extension of the current farm bill when it proved impossible to

complete action on the new five-year farm bill – an action that not only provided important safety net programs for this year, it ensured Congress would have time this year to consider comprehensive reforms that contribute billions to deficit reduction.

We urge you to oppose the rule as well to vote against final passage of this attempt to split the farm bill and end permanent law provisions for agriculture.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Stallman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bob Stallman
President