

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF TEAMSTERS

JAMES P. HOFFA
General President

25 Louisiana Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20001



KEN HALL
General Secretary-Treasurer

202.624.6800
www.teamster.org

October 25, 2013

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow, Chairwoman
The Honorable Thad Cochran, Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Agriculture
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Frank D. Lucas, Chairman
The Honorable Collin C. Peterson, Ranking Member
House Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow, Chairman Lucas and Ranking Members Cochran and Peterson:

The Teamsters Union, our 1.4 million members, and especially our members in the dairy, bakery, brewery and food processing industries, are pleased that the Farm Bill process enjoys new momentum with the appointment of conferees. Food industry workers, like our brothers and sisters on family farms and ranches throughout the country, rely on the stability of the traditional five-year reset of American agricultural policy. On their behalf, we respectfully ask that you include these four priorities in your deliberations towards a conference report.

First, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) program should be given a full five-year reauthorization instead of a three-year renewal, and should be reintegrated with the other titles of the Farm Bill. Congress should also reject the severe cuts to SNAP previously passed in the House, which would have stripped \$39 billion from the program as millions depend on this program to put food on the table. The House should instead incorporate the sensible reforms and more modest cuts already passed by the Senate.

Second, the \$900 million for energy title programs in the Senate bill should be included in the final report to support the Rural Energy for America Program, Biomass Crop Assistance Program, Biorefinery Assistance Program and Biobased Markets Program. Not only do these initiatives, which are inherited from the 2008 farm bill, point the way towards greater energy sustainability and reduction on our dependence on imported oil, but they also will create good jobs in important industries and in rural areas.

Third, any superfluous analysis or other delay in the implementation of Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) should be left out of the conference report. COOL is already positive law and needs no further tinkering. Furthermore, COOL is an important element of “fair trade” – always a Teamster high priority – and its implementation without further delay is important to consumers here and abroad.

Finally, as to the dairy chapter, on behalf of our 35,000 members who are employed throughout the dairy supply chain, we support the Senate version in its entirety, including its market stabilization provisions. Although we were unable to support the full dairy title that was reported out of the House Committee, we note that the Senate approach in the Dairy Security Act (DSA) will cost substantially less than the House version. According to the Congressional Research Service, the price tag for the DSA in the House-passed bill is \$418 million over ten years, which is \$116 million more than the Senate version, which we now support.

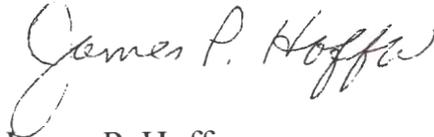
Our original objection to the DSA during the House debate and committee mark-up was driven by our concern for our members who work in dairy processing – that the supplies of milk to the processors could dry up under a supply management regime like the DSA as proposed in the House, thereby undermining our members’ job security. However, as your conference committee convenes and works to resolve the competing dairy chapters, we note that the contractual obligations that the dairy co-ops have with processors require them to deliver the milk in full, regardless of the stabilization provisions. That is, if the co-ops don't have enough milk, for whatever reason, they must procure product on their own to meet the contracts. The processors set the level of demand and the producers just have to meet it, DSA market stabilization notwithstanding. Nothing in the Farm Bill should change that market reality.

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In conclusion, the Teamsters support the Senate-passed Farm Bill with full endorsement of the provisions in the dairy chapter. We also urge Congress to reunite the nutrition and commodity titles into a single five-year bill. In doing so, farm and factory agricultural workers and all the transportation between them, will be guaranteed the stability they depend upon for their livelihoods and communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James P. Hoffa". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

James P. Hoffa
General President

JPH/md

cc: Members of the Farm Bill Conference Committee