

October 7, 2013

President Barack Obama
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20006

The Honorable Harry Reid
522 Hart S.O.B.
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
317 Russell S.O.B.
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Boehner
1011 Longworth H.O.B.
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Eric Cantor
303 Cannon H.O.B.
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
235 Cannon H.O.B.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Leaders:

The farm bill extension has expired and, along with it, vital conservation programs will unfortunately be closed for enrollment. As the leaders of Ducks Unlimited, National Wild Turkey Federation, Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever, we respectfully urge you to pass a comprehensive five-year farm bill as soon as possible. Consumers may not feel the full consequences of a lapsed farm bill before January, but conservation felt it immediately.

Farm bill conservation programs like the Conservation Reserve Program, Wetlands Reserve Program and Grasslands Reserve Program are now closed for enrollment. These are the most effective tools farmers and ranchers have to conserve bird and other wildlife habitat on private lands, and they will no longer be available without an enacted farm bill. This habitat also contributes environmental services to our citizens in the form of flood abatement, soil erosion abatement and clean water.

From 2006 to 2011, 1.3 million acres of grassland were converted to cropland in the Great Plains, most of which occurred in heart of the duck factory. This is a rate of land conversion our country hasn't seen since the Dust Bowl. It is not only vital for the birds our organizations work to protect that these lands are conserved and restored, it is vital to our country's citizens. We could be recreating the dust storms of the 1930s without the conservation programs in the farm bill that encourage private landowners to maintain the grasses and prairie habitat that prevent erosion.

Outdoor recreation, including hunting and bird watching, contributes \$646 billion to the U.S. economy each year. The industry also creates 6.1 million American jobs – more than the oil and gas, finance or real estate sectors. These jobs cannot be exported and fuel rural, local and our national economies. Conservation measures in the Senate farm bill, like re-coupling conservation compliance to crop insurance and a national Sodsaver program, are critical to ensuring this positive economic impact continues.

On behalf of our more than 1.5 million members and supporters, we ask that you use your leadership to expeditiously pass and enact a comprehensive five-year farm bill with a robust conservation title that includes re-coupling compliance to crop insurance and a national Sodsaver program.

Thank you for your consideration of our perspectives.

Sincerely,



Dale Hall, CEO
Ducks Unlimited, Inc.



George Thornton, CEO
National Wild Turkey Federation



Howard Vincent, President & CEO
Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever

CC: The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
113 Hart S.O.B.
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The Honorable Thad Cochran
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The Honorable Frank Lucas
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The Honorable Collin Peterson
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