

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 29, 2012

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow, Chairman
The Honorable Pat Roberts, Ranking Member
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow and Ranking Member Roberts:

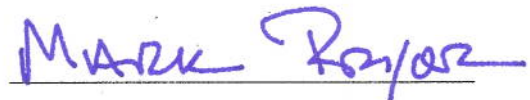
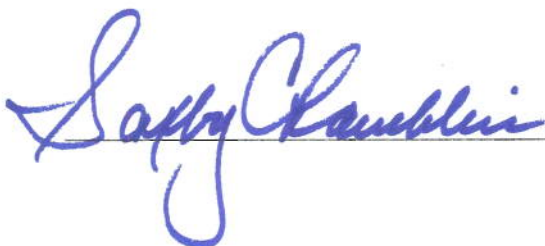
As the Committee continues its deliberations to reauthorize the farm bill, we believe it is important the new legislation remain consistent with the Committee's history of balancing the diversity of the country regardless of crop or growing region. We understand that tight budgets impose constraints on the policy options available to the Committee and the probable loss of direct payments will require different risk management strategies for different farm operations. Your work last Fall to produce recommendations for the Joint Committee on Deficit Reduction should be applauded and be the basis of any future agreement. Consistent with your draft recommendation, we support the underlying concept of producer choice. Like you, we believe the commodity policy options being discussed should be equitable and not result in acreage shifts independent of market signals.

It is critical for agriculture to do its fair share to reduce the budget deficit while at the same time preserving adequate budget authority to craft effective farm policy. It is our hope the new farm legislation offers producers options including a price-based counter-cyclical program; a revenue-based program with a reference price and; for cotton, an insurance based shallow-loss revenue program to establish a basis to resolve the World Trade Organization (WTO) Brazil case. These options will enable growers to continue to obtain financing, continue to invest in the technology necessary to remain competitive, and make market-oriented cropping decisions. Continuation of the marketing assistance loan is also important and any adjustments to payment limitations or the income tests used to determine eligibility should be made only after there is detailed analysis regarding the impact on farming operation structures, cropping mixes and regions.

We also support efforts to develop new farm legislation that is compliant with our current WTO commitments and that serves as a basis to resolve pending WTO cases. We are committed to work with you and our colleagues to develop new farm legislation that fits our budget requirements while preserving an effective and balanced farm policy for all growers regardless of their cropping mix or growing region.

Thank you for your consideration of our views and concerns.

Sincerely,



Man of Garden

Kay R. Hagan

Robert W. Hagan

John

Paul Cohen

David Vitter

John Boozman

James