

April 5, 2011

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

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Boehner and Majority Leader Reid:

We write to express our strong opposition to the inclusion of cuts to farm bill and crop insurance mandatory funding in any compromise package on fiscal year 2011 appropriations.

Agriculture has always contributed to deficit reduction in the past when called upon. But we do feel strongly that any future contribution must be commensurate with our effect on the budget and that any savings from mandatory funding must be made in the context of the Farm Bill reauthorization anticipated this Congress.

We would note that mandatory funding for farm policy has already been cut in the past six years by \$5 billion more than the net savings called for in the debt commission chairs' recommendations of last December. In point of fact, the cost of farm policy has sharply declined over the past 10 years and is consistently under budget.

The importance of agriculture to the nation's economic recovery, our balance of trade, and to political stability around the world is independently corroborated by sources ranging from the Federal Reserve to news media reports.

Yet while the farm economy is generally strong today, we would caution that weather and global markets, distorted by high foreign subsidies and tariffs, are highly volatile and we urge you to carefully consider the adverse budgetary and economic effect if Washington crafts farm policy based on optimistic price and production forecasts that ultimately do not hold up.

Sincerely,

American Association of Crop Insurers
American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers
American Sugar Alliance
Crop Insurance Professionals Association
Crop Insurance and Reinsurance Bureau
Independent Insurance Agents & Brokers of America
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Cotton Council
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Farmers Union
National Milk Producers Federation
National Sorghum Producers
North Carolina Peanut Growers Association

Oklahoma Peanut Commission
Panhandle Peanut Growers Association
South Carolina Peanut Growers Association
Southern Peanut Farmers Federation
Southwest Council of Agribusiness
US Rice Producers Association
USA Rice Federation
Virginia Peanut Growers Association
Western Peanut Growers Association

cc: The Honorable Barack Obama, President
The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Senate Minority Leader
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, House Minority Leader