

The Honorable Blanche Lincoln  
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Saxby Chambliss  
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC

September 10, 2009

Dear Chairman Lincoln and Ranking Member Chambliss:

We ask that you support incentives for low carbon energy activities at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) as a key component of any comprehensive climate change legislation in the Senate. Agriculture-based energy supports America's efforts to reduce global warming pollution while also helping to reduce energy costs; developing new income streams for farmers, ranchers and foresters; and improving our nation's energy independence.

We support provisions in the recently passed American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009 (ACES), to direct allowance proceeds to supplement agricultural conservation programs. These practices merit support so that all agricultural producers may benefit when they provide greenhouse gas reduction services. Missing from ACES, however, are incentives for low carbon agriculture-based energy.

Low carbon agriculture energy solutions include an array of proven renewable energy technologies such as wind, solar, biomass (including biomass combined heat and power) and geothermal which can and should be adopted at a far greater pace than they are today. Energy efficiency both saves money and reduces emissions very quickly from agriculture and related industries. All of these approaches reduce carbon pollution and are well-suited for agricultural applications.

Therefore, we ask that you support dedication of a substantial allocation of allowance sale proceeds to significant low carbon agriculture energy activities at the USDA. The measure should accelerate development of low carbon agriculture energy and energy efficiency technologies, which are largely not eligible as offset projects. Use of these allowances should be predicated upon the goals of the legislation – to reduce carbon pollution.

We recognize there are other important initiatives being considered as part of comprehensive climate legislation. However, given the enormous potential for this sector to meet our sustainability and economic goals, it is imperative that renewable energy and energy efficiency deployment in the agricultural sector be afforded ample support.

We applaud your leadership in addressing our nation's pressing energy, environment and national security challenges. Allocating allowance sale proceeds to USDA for low-carbon energy activities will help secure our nation's energy independence, mitigate climate change and create jobs in rural America. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

25 x '25 Alliance	American Coalition for Ethanol	American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy
Biomass Power Association	Biotechnology Industry Organization	Center for Rural Affairs
Ceres, Inc.	Climate Solutions	Environmental and Energy Study Institute
Environmental Law and Policy Center	Iowa Environmental Council	The Minnesota Project
National Center for Appropriate Technology	Solar Energy Industries Association	Southern Alliance for Clean Energy
U.S. Clean Heat & Power Association	Windustry	

CC: The Honorable Max Baucus, Chairman, Senate Committee on Finance  
The Honorable Charles Grassley, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Finance  
The Honorable Barbara Boxer, Chair, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works  
The Honorable James Inhofe, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works  
The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
The Honorable Tom Harkin  
The Honorable Kent Conrad  
The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
The Honorable E. Benjamin Nelson  
The Honorable Sherrod Brown  
The Honorable Robert Casey, Jr.  
The Honorable Amy Klobuchar  
The Honorable Michael Bennet  
The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand  
The Honorable Richard Lugar  
The Honorable Thad Cochran  
The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
The Honorable Pat Roberts  
The Honorable Mike Johanns  
The Honorable John Thune  
The Honorable John Cornyn  
The Honorable Tim Johnson  
The Honorable John Tester