

# Farm Bill Energy Title Support Letter

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October \_\_, 2013

Dear Farm Bill Conferees:

We are writing to urge your support for a five year Farm Bill including re-authorization and \$900 million in mandatory funding of the Farm Bill's energy title.

The U.S. is experiencing strong growth in the development and commercialization of biofuels, bioproducts, biopower, biogas, energy crops, renewable energy, renewable chemicals and energy efficiency. These important and growing industries all benefit agriculture and forestry and are poised to make huge contributions to our economic, environmental and national security in the coming years, provided that we maintain stable policies that support clean energy manufacturing and innovation.

The Energy Title programs contained in the 2002 and 2008 Farm Bills are vital components in the continued growth of these industries. Programs like the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP), Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP), Biorefinery Assistance Program (BAP) and Biobased Markets Program (Biopreferred) strongly support American agriculture and ensure broad public benefits to the entire country. Every single state has benefited from these low-cost, high return programs. Since some programs are just getting started, the next five years will be crucial for achieving success.

Many tens of thousands of direct and indirect jobs are being created or saved in rural areas by our nation's expanding clean energy economy. This growth is occurring due in large part to Farm Bill energy programs, which have used a modest amount of federal money to leverage billions of dollars in private investment. These new agriculture, manufacturing, and high technology jobs are at risk without continued Federal investment.

The outstanding benefits of Energy Title programs also flow from a very modest investment. They accounted for only 0.7 percent of overall spending in the 2008 Farm Bill. As longstanding agricultural safety net programs lose funding or end, these energy investments create new opportunities for producers and rural communities to further cut input costs and diversify their income.

We recognize the fiscal challenges facing your committees as a new Farm Bill is completed this year. However, for all of the reasons noted above, we urge you to ensure the vital Energy Title programs are re-authorized and afforded significant mandatory funding over the life of the legislation. We believe the Senate's bi-partisan investment must be preserved. Helping to grow the economy in these low-cost, but transformative ways will help ease the fiscal challenge in the years ahead while also addressing other critical national challenges.

We commend you for your leadership on all of these important issues and pledge to work with you to craft farm and energy policies that work for all of agriculture, clean energy industries and rural America.

Thank you.

Sincerely,