

October 17, 2007

Dear Senate Agriculture Committee Member,

We are writing to urge your support for meaningful commodity program payment limitation reform.

If a minor ineffective reform is offered in Committee, we urge you to reject it. We assume payment limitation reform will be addressed on the Senate floor. We endorse a clean vote by the full Senate on the Dorgan-Grassley payment limitation proposal, unclouded by inclusion of fig leaf "reform" in the Committee bill.

True payment limitation reform must include:

- Hard caps and effective limits on all payments and gains, including generic certificates and gains on forfeiture of commodities to satisfy marketing loans;
- Reform of the actively engaged in farming rules, including concrete, objective standards for active labor and management as recommended by the Government Accountability Office and the USDA Payment Limitation Commission; a requirement of regular, continuous on-site involvement; and rules that prevent one farmer from qualifying multiple corporations to collectively receive payments exceeding the limits.
- Real reductions in effective limits for all mega-farms, not just those operated by unmarried farmers.

The House farm bill does not include meaningful payment limitation reform. It increases rather than reduces the limit on direct payments for most mega farms. It fails to close the major loopholes. While it does include some tightening of means testing, which can be part of meaningful reform, means testing is no substitute for meaningful payment limitation reform.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

Bread for the World

Center for Rural Affairs

Church World Service

Citizens Against Government Waste

Environmental Working Group

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Izaak Walton League of America

Land Stewardship Project

National Catholic Rural Life Conference

National Grange

National Farmers Organization

Network, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby

Northern Plains Conference of the United Church of Christ

Oxfam America

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) Washington Office

Sustainable Agriculture Coalition

Taxpayers for Common Sense

United Church of Christ

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops