

March 12, 2013

U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow  
Chairwoman  
Committee on Agriculture,  
Nutrition and Forestry  
Washington, D.C. 20510

U.S. Senator Thad Cochran  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Agriculture,  
Nutrition and Forestry  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow and Ranking Member Cochran:

We write to express our support for strong, meaningful, and affordable crop insurance protection for this nation's farmers and ranchers, and our opposition to any changes to crop insurance that would discourage producer participation or undermine private sector delivery.

In agriculture, one thing is for certain: crop loss will occur in some part of the United States each year. The significant, widespread crop losses of 2011 and 2012 have clearly demonstrated the need for crop insurance protection and the public-private partnership of program delivery. Farmers, ranchers, their lenders, input suppliers and other stakeholders agree that crop insurance protection should remain a viable, affordable tool for managing risk.

Crop insurance is the cornerstone of most farmers' risk management portfolios. It is a product selected in advance and tailored to the individual producer, with that producer choosing his or her product and protection level, and paying a premium for that coverage. In contrast, ad hoc disaster assistance is an after-the-fact form of assistance paid for entirely by the taxpayer that may help a producer survive a disaster but does not help manage risk. Importantly, because of the protection crop insurance provides, there were no calls for ad hoc disaster assistance in 2012 as there have been in the past.

Federal crop insurance provides an effective risk management tool to farmers and ranchers of all sizes when they are facing losses beyond their control, reduces taxpayer risk exposure, makes hedging possible to help mitigate market volatility, and provides lenders with greater certainty that loans made to producers will be repaid. The public-private partnership of program delivery works very well, allowing for timely and outstanding service to producers when they need it the most and providing much-needed jobs across rural America.

After a very challenging 2012 crop year, and with increasing demands for food, fiber, feed and fuel worldwide, it makes little sense to reverse the great progress Congress has made in providing crop insurance protection to producers.

Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Retailers Association

American Association of Crop Insurers  
American Bankers Association  
American Farm Bureau Federation  
American Insurance Association  
American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers  
American Soybean Association  
American Sugarbeet Growers Association  
Association of Equipment Manufacturers  
California Association of Winegrape Growers  
Cooperative Network  
Corn Refiners Association  
Credit Union Association of the Dakotas  
Crop Insurance Professionals Association  
Crop Insurance and Reinsurance Bureau  
Farm Credit Council  
Independent Community Bankers of America  
Independent Insurance Agents & Brokers of America  
National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies  
National Association of Professional Insurance Agents  
National Association of Wheat Growers  
National Barley Growers Association  
National Cooperative Business Association  
National Corn Growers Association  
National Cotton Council  
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives  
National Farmers Union  
National Grain and Feed Association  
National Oilseed Processors Association  
National Sorghum Producers  
National Sunflower Association  
North American Equipment Dealers Association  
Reinsurance Association of America  
Southwest Council of Agribusiness  
The Fertilizer Institute  
The Wisconsin Credit Union League  
United Fresh Produce Association  
US Apple Association  
US Beet Sugar Association  
US Canola Council  
USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council  
Western Growers  
Western Peanut Growers Association

cc: All Members of the U.S. Senate