

SUPPORT THE FARM BILL AND A STRONG NUTRITION SAFETY NET

Dear Colleague:

The recently completed farm bill makes important investments in our nation's food and farm economy as well as making important forward strides in conservation, and energy. Please join me in expressing your support for the farm bill conference report and, especially, the bill's strong nutrition title by sending the accompanying letter to the Agriculture Committee commending them for their strong support of nutrition programs in the farm bill. If you are interested in signing the letter please contact Ron Anderson in Mr. Walsh's office at 5-3701 no later than noon on Tuesday, May 13th.

As the House prepares for final consideration of the conference report on the Farm Bill, H.R. 2419, we respectfully urge support for quick consideration and passage of this important legislation. This conference report reflects a very carefully balanced compromise of policy priorities that has engendered broad-based support from a wide variety of agriculture, conservation and nutrition organizations throughout the country.

Specifically, we wanted to reiterate the importance of the nutrition title of the farm bill especially when more than 35.5 million people in the U.S. live in households that face a constant struggle against hunger. Food stamp benefits currently average a mere \$1 a person a meal and are not fully indexed to inflation; furthermore, the minimum monthly food stamp benefit has been stuck at \$10 for three decades and food stamp household asset limits have been frozen for decades. This farm bill conference report addresses these long-standing issues as the bill increases spending on nutrition programs by \$10.361 billion over ten years allowing for increases in food stamp access and eligibility, increases in commodity purchases for emergency food and additional funding and expansion of food stamp benefits.

We appreciate the bipartisan leadership that has worked tirelessly over the past year to produce a five year farm bill. While not a perfect measure, this bill strengthens our nation's nutrition safety net as well as addressing critical farm commodity, conservation and energy programs and we urge your support for this conference report.

Sincerely,