



## **Nebraska Farm Bureau Federation®**

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July 25, 2011

Congressman Jeff Fortenberry,

On behalf of the Nebraska Farm Bureau Federation and our over 54,000 members, we urge you to support the FY 2012 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill. In these challenging times of high deficits and a fragile economy, it is critical that our limited spending priorities be focused on programs that can achieve results, do not duplicate other programs and encourage the creation of jobs and economic growth. This bill achieves this delicate balance with regard to some of the challenges facing agricultural producers.

Within this important piece of legislation are numerous proposals to limit the power of the federal government and reduce the regulatory burden currently facing all of Nebraska's farmers and ranchers. For example, the bill would prevent imposition of a wasteful and redundant requirement for farmers to obtain a Clean Water Act permit to apply certain crop protection products when the product label already spells out requirements under other federal law. The Clean Water Act permit would be in addition to those requirements and provide no additional benefits.

Similarly, the bill would eliminate funding for the Bureau of Land Management for its redundant program for designating "wild lands," a function reserved to Congress under the Wilderness Act of 1964.

Another example of eliminating overlapping jurisdictional issues regards provisions that eliminate funding for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to promulgate guidance on what constitutes "waters of the United States" under the Clean Water Act. The agency has already signaled that its guidance would increase regulatory burdens; a step which many are concerned would impede economic growth.

The bill would also relieve rural communities from having to comply with significantly more stringent air quality standards for naturally occurring dust (coarse particulate matter). EPA has already concluded that stricter standards, which most rural areas would be unable to meet, will not have any effect on public health. There is no reason to impose additional burdens on rural America by changing the current standard.

The bill also would reduce funding to implement regulations that will not achieve promised results. For example, EPA regulation of greenhouse gases presumably seeks to reduce impacts of climate change. Greenhouse gases, however, are evenly distributed around the globe. Efforts by one country to reduce emissions will have little or no environmental impact unless the international community also agrees to similar regulations. At the same time, these programs will raise the cost of energy for most Americans and would raise fuel, fertilizer and energy costs for farmers and ranchers.

Again, we urge you to vote "yes" on the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriation Bill and support these important provisions in the bill. Thank you for your consideration of our position and the work you continue to do on behalf of Nebraska's farmers and ranchers.

Sincerely,

Keith R. Olsen  
President