

February 16, 2011

The Honorable Lee Terry  
2331 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Terry:

On behalf of the over 53,000 members of the Nebraska Farm Bureau Federation, I would like to share our thoughts on H.R. 1, the *Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011*. Let me first say that we applaud Congress' efforts to decrease discretionary spending. We understand that any comprehensive plan to reduce deficit spending and debt will include cuts in programs that assist farmers, ranchers and others in rural America. However, we are concerned agriculture is being asked to absorb a disproportionate amount of the discretionary cuts contained in H.R. 1.

The legislation would cut \$5.21 billion, or 22.4 percent, from agriculture-related programs and operating budgets, which is more than double the 10.3-percent cut proposed in overall non-defense discretionary spending. For example, H.R. 1 would cut over \$29 million from the Smith-Lever program which provides funding for 4-H clubs and other Cooperative Extension programs that provide vital agricultural education for over 6 million youth and communities across the country. Given the importance that agriculture plays in America's food security and economic recovery, we question the disproportionate level of cuts that agriculture is being asked to absorb.

Over 400 amendments have been filed to H.R. 1, many of them being of interest to Nebraska's farmers and ranchers. While it is uncertain which amendments will actually be taken up the House, we ask you to consider our position on the following filed amendments:

Nebraska Farm Bureau opposes amendment 89 filed by Rep. Ron Kind (R-Wis.) to immediately stop payments to the Brazilian Research Institute. These payments were established as part of a negotiated agreement between Brazil and the United States as a result of the WTO Cotton case and if stopped at this time, would breach the agreement and likely lead to tariffs being placed on a wide range of U.S. products.

Nebraska Farm Bureau opposes amendments 121 and 122 filed by Rep. Daniel Lipinski (D-Ill.) to prohibit funds from being spent to allow Mexican trucks to enter the United States. The amendment would prohibit the U.S. from working to resolve a dispute with Mexico over a cross-border trucking pilot program and would therefore keep in place \$2.4 billion of tariff increases that Mexico placed on U.S. goods including pork and grain products.

Nebraska Farm Bureau supports amendment 230 filed by Rep. Robert Goodlatte (R-Va.) to limit the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s authority to mandate federal Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirements on states. Farm Bureau believes that TMDL decisions are the responsibility of states and that to impose flawed federal requirements will be detrimental to agriculture.

Nebraska Farm Bureau opposes amendment 3 filed by Rep. Paul Tonko (D-N.Y.) and amendment 337 filed by Rep. Jim Moran (D-Va.) to strike language barring EPA from moving forward with draft guidance to address the issue of when a water body or wetland is subject to Clean Water Act jurisdiction. We believe the guidance document will create further confusion and uncertainty within the regulated community.

Nebraska Farm Bureau supports amendment 563 filed by Kristi Noem (R-S.D.) to prohibit EPA from modifying the PM10 (dust) National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS). Farm Bureau supports the current standard and believes a more stringent standard would be detrimental to rural areas where naturally occurring dust is prevalent.

Nebraska Farm Bureau opposes amendment 367, filed by Rep. Jeff Flake (R- Ariz.), and amendment 323 filed by Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) to reduce the adjusted gross income (AGI) cap for farm program payments to \$250,000. These amendments would open the 2008 farm bill and AGI limits are clearly a policy decision that should be debated by Congress as it writes the 2012 farm bill.

Nebraska Farm Bureau opposes amendment 324 filed by Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) to limit the benefit from all farm programs to \$250,000 per person or legal entity. This amendment would open the 2008 farm bill and payment limits are clearly a policy decision that should be left for the writing of 2012 farm bill.

Nebraska Farm Bureau opposes amendment 94, filed by Rep. John Sullivan (R-Okla.) that would prevent EPA from implementing its approval for using 15 percent ethanol blended fuel. The EPA decision to allow up to 15 percent ethanol blends in all automobiles built in the last decade will create thousands of U.S. jobs, reduce dependence on foreign oil, reduce harmful emissions and boost the farm economy.

Nebraska Farm Bureau opposes amendment 253, filed by Rep. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.) to prevent the U.S. Department of Agriculture from implementing any effort to install blender pumps – fuel dispensers which give motorists a choice of the blend of ethanol and gasoline. A larger network of renewable fuels pumps and refueling stations is key to expanding the use of renewable fuels.

Nebraska Farm Bureau supports amendment 149 filed by Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer (R-Mo.) to prohibit the use of funds for contributions to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Nebraska Farm Bureau supports amendment 198 filed by Ted Poe (R-Texas) which prohibits funding for EPA to implement a Greenhouse Gas (GHG) cap and trade program or the regulation of GHG from stationary sources.

Nebraska Farm Bureau supports amendments 344 and 345, filed by Steve Pearce (R-N.M.) to prohibit funds from being used for attorney fees seeking enforcement of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Endangered Species Act.

Nebraska Farm Bureau supports amendment 378 filed by Ralph Hall (R-Texas) to prohibit funding to establish a National Climate Service within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Nebraska Farm Bureau opposes amendment 5 filed by Paul Tonko (D-N.Y.). This amendment would eliminate the provision in the CR that would de-fund EPA regulation of GHG, thus restoring funding for GHG regulation.

Nebraska Farm Bureau opposes amendments 65 and 66 filed by Jared Polis (D-Colo.) which would expand EPA authority to regulate GHG by allowing the agency more discretion when it determines there is “environmental degradation.”

Thank you for your consideration of our position on this important piece of legislation and the work you continue to do for Nebraska agriculture.

Sincerely,



Keith R. Olsen  
President