

January 25, 2008

Via Facsimile

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture,
Nutrition, and Forestry
United States Senate
731 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Saxby Chambliss
Ranking Member, Committee on
Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
United States Senate
416 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Harkin and Mr. Chambliss,

The Wyoming Association of Conservation districts is writing to convey our concern with any last minute attempts to modify conservation program administration responsibilities as the Farm Bill moves to conference committee.

The Association, on behalf of Wyoming's 34 member conservation districts, believes that the potential impacts to producers of such a change warrants a well thought out and open deliberation.

The Secretary of Agriculture currently has the authority to make changes in the administration of programs within the Department of Agriculture. USDA has not proposed to make shifts in conservation program administration, and it was not a part of the Administration's Farm Bill Proposal. If Congress takes action to legislate changes in program administration, it should be done in consultation with the Secretary with a review of the field office structure, an understanding of technology, operating systems, staffing needs and potential efficiencies to be gained. With an open public input process including ample opportunity for producer and local government input.

The Association's top priority is service to the producers who participate and implement conservation program practices. WACD is committed to the locally led process of conservation program delivery. A key element of this process is the work of the Local Work Groups to gain input and priorities from within local communities. We know that USDA through regulation, and Congress through the legislative process can impact this process, and we will continue to work with USDA and Congress to ensure that the locally led process is maintained.

Respectfully,



Ralph Brokaw
President

Cc: WACD Board of Directors
Wyoming's Conservation Districts