

July 21, 2010

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

We the undersigned organizations support speedy passage of the *Improving Nutrition for America's Children Act* (H.R. 5504). We understand the critical need to provide additional funding and improved policy for school meal programs. We trust that appropriate offsets can be found quickly to get this bill to the President's desk before the current authorization expires at the end of September.

We are also united, however, in fervently opposing any attempt to use farm bill conservation program funding for this purpose. We oppose the \$2.8 billion cut to the Environmental Quality Incentives Program contained in the companion Senate bill reported out of committee, and we would also just as strongly oppose any proposed cut to any other farm bill conservation program.

Farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners are eager to share the cost of protecting the environment, and indeed demand for participation in conservation programs routinely far outstrips available funding. Applied conservation helps provide clean air and water, energy conservation, erosion reduction, carbon sequestration, wildlife and pollinator habitat, wetland protection, pesticide reduction, and other important public benefits that should not be lost.

After long and careful negotiation, the 2008 Farm Bill moved in the right direction by increasing resources for these purposes, and was widely touted for doing so. Now is not the time to reverse course and sacrifice an improved environment for improved nutrition. This is a false choice, one that is neither in the public interest nor in keeping with progressive values.

We support passage of child nutrition reauthorization, but we oppose using conservation funding to pay for it. We look forward to working with you and with Chairman Miller and others to find progressive alternatives to get the job done and the child nutrition bill to the President's desk.

Sincerely,

Alberts Organics
American Farmland Trust
American Rivers
Audubon California
Audubon Dakotas
California Climate and Agriculture Network
California Farmers Union
Center for Environmental Health (CA)

Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage
Church Women United of New York
Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CA)
Community CROPS (NE)
Connecticut Farmland Trust
Connecticut Forest and Parks Association
Conservation Law Foundation
Defenders of Wildlife
Environmental Defense Fund
Environmental Working Group
Farm Fresh Rhode Island
Foodways Alliance (AZ)
Izaak Walton League of America
Land Stewardship Program
Land Trust Alliance
Leopold Group, Iowa Sierra Club
Michael Fields Agricultural Institute (WI)
Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy
Montana Farmers Union
Montgomery Countryside Alliance (MD)
Montgomery County Community Action Development Commission (PA)
Mount Adams Resource Stewards (WA)
National Association of Conservation Districts
National Audubon Society
National Catholic Rural Life Conference
National Center for Appropriate Technology
National Farmers Union
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
National Wildlife Federation
Natural Resources Defense Council
New England Farmers Union
New England Small Farm Institute
Northeast Organic Farming Association – Connecticut
Northeast Organic Farming Association – Massachusetts
Northeast Organic Farming Association – New Hampshire
Northeast Organic Farming Association – New Jersey
Northeast Organic Farming Association – New York

Northeast Organic Farming Association – Vermont
Northern New Mexico Stockman’s Association
Occidental Arts and Ecology Center (CA)
Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association
Ohio Farmers Union
Oklahoma Composting Council
Organic Farming Research Foundation
Partners for Sustainable Pollination
Pennypack Farm and Education Center (PA)
Pesticide Watch Education Fund (CA)
Pollinator Partnership
Prairie Rivers Network
REAP Food Group (WI)
Roots of Change
Seacoast Eat Local (NH)
South Carolina Wildlife Federation
Stone Barns Center for Food & Agriculture (NY)
Sustainable Northwest
The Nature Conservancy
The Ranchers Stewardship Alliance (MT)
Union of Concerned Scientists
Utah Farmers Union
Virginia Association for Biological Farming
Wild Friends Program (NM)
World Wildlife Fund
Women, Food and Agriculture Network
Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation

cc:

Majority Leader Steny Hoyer
Majority Whip James Clyburn
Assistant to the Speaker Chris Van Hollen
Chairman George Miller
Chairman Collin Peterson
Chairwoman Rosa DeLauro