



## Office of Representative Heath Shuler

Representing North Carolina's Eleventh Congressional District

**For Immediate Release**

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### **Rep. Shuler Named to Farm Bill Conference Committee *Will Work to Protect WNC Specialty Crop Growers***

**Washington, D.C.** – Representative Heath Shuler has been appointed as a conferee on the reauthorization of the Farm Bill. As a conferee, Rep. Shuler will be part a small group that works to reach a compromise on the different versions of the Farm Bill passed by the House and Senate. He was selected to serve as a representative of the Small Business Committee on the conference committee.

“I am honored and excited to be a member of this conference committee,” Rep. Shuler said. “For years specialty crops, like those grown in Western North Carolina, were ignored by the Farm Bill. I am committed to working to ensure the gains made in the House bill remain in the final version of the bill.”

The House version of the Farm Bill, officially the Farm, Nutrition and Bioenergy Act of 2007, makes historic investments in programs to support Western North Carolina's fruit and vegetable producers, including \$1.5 billion in baseline budget funding dedicated to programs that directly benefit fruit and vegetable producers.

This bill also benefits specialty growers by improving programs that provide schools with nutritious fruits and vegetables. The House version of the Farm Bill expands Section 32 funding, which is used by the USDA to directly purchases a variety of fruit, vegetable and tree nut products for through domestic nutrition and food assistance programs to provide fresh fruits and vegetables in our schools. Rep. Shuler originally requested this increase in a letter to the Rep. Collin Peterson, the Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee.

“As a representative of the Small Business Committee, I will also be working to ensure that small businesses that are related to farming, both directly and indirectly, receive security in the final version of the Farm Bill,” Rep. Shuler continued. “From the drought to last year's Easter Freeze, we in Western North Carolina know that agriculture disasters affect businesses throughout a community, not just farms.”

Rep. Shuler is the only Democratic freshmen to the Conference Committee.

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