

For further information, please contact Lorette Picciano, lpicciano@ruralco.org, Savi Horne, Policy Team Chair, savi@landloss.org, or Quinton Robinson, qrobinson@ruralco.org.

May 12, 2008

Dear Member of Congress:

As supporters of the 2008 Farm and Food Policy Diversity Initiative, we write to urge you to vote in favor of the House and Senate Conference report accompanying H.R. 2419, the 2008 Farm Bill Reauthorization. The Diversity Initiative policy package was developed by and represents the unified rural and urban agricultural interests of African American, American Indian, Latino, Asian American and other small farmers and ranchers all across the United States.

This sector of the agriculture economy has experienced significant land loss and decreased rural economic opportunity as a result of inadequate policies at the United States Department of Agriculture. The conference report, retaining many critical elements of the diversity proposals secured in the House and Senate versions of the Farm Bill, takes critical steps in the right direction to remedy these problems. These groups also strongly support the related urban food, community food, nutrition, and sustainability features of the bill.

More than in any previous farm bill, the specific provisions of the conference report represent major changes in agriculture policy that will assist these producers with their efforts to continue participation in the food, fuel, and fiber production in this country at a level that adds to the sustainability of local economies and contributes to local food systems.

Sincerely,

Farm and Food Policy Diversity Initiative

Rural Coalition/Coalición Rural, Washington, DC

Intertribal Agriculture Council, Billings, MT

National Latino Farmer and Rancher Trade Association, Washington, DC

North Carolina Association of Black Lawyers Land Loss Prevention Program, Durham, NC

Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund, East Point, GA

Organización en California de Lideres Campesinas, Pomona, CA

National Hmong American Farmers, Inc., Washington, DC

Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project, Oklahoma City, OK

Agricultural Missions, Inc., New York, NY

National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture, Pine Bush, NY

American Corn Growers Association, Washington, DC

American Agriculture Movement, Washington, DC

Land Stewardship Project, White Bear Lake, MN

Rural Advancement Fund, Orangeburg, SC

National Congress of American Indians, Washington, DC

National Farmers Union, Washington, DC

Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, Washington, DC

Indian Nations Conservation Alliance, Twin Bridges, MT

Hispanic Farmers and Ranchers of America Inc., Las Cruces, NM

Amanecer, Inc., Hillsboro, NM
Court St Joseph #139, Catholic Daughters of the Americas, Corning, NY
Church Women United of Chemung County, NY
Church Women United of New York State
Ladies of Charity of Chemung County NY
Past Regents Club, Catholic Daughters of the Americas, Diocese of Rochester, NY
Horseheads Grange #1118, Chemung County, NY
Pesticide Action Network North America
Arkansas Land and Farm Development Corporation, Brinkley, AR
Food First, Oakland, CA
Empire State Family Farm Alliance, Inc.
Rural Development Leadership Network, New York, NY
Black Farmers & Agriculturalists Association, Tillery, NC
Concerned Citizens of Tillery, Tillery, NC
United Methodist Appalachian Ministry Network, Hagerstown, MD
Cumberland Countians for Peace & Justice, Pleasant Hill, TN
Caney Fork Headwaters Association, Pleasant Hill, TN
Network for Environmental & Economic Responsibility, Pleasant Hill, TN
California Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association, Sacramento, CA
National Immigrant Farming Initiative, New York, NY
Flats Mentor Farm, Lancaster, MA
Michael Fields Agricultural Institute, Madison, WI
Organic Farming Research Foundation, Santa Cruz, CA
National Center for Appropriate Technology, Butte, MT
National Catholic Rural Life Conference, Des Moines, IA
Cornucopia Institute, Cornucopia, WI
Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society, LaMoure, ND
The Minnesota Project, St. Paul, MN
Northeast States for Agricultural Stewardship, Dresden, ME
Rural Advancement Foundation International – USA, Pittsboro, NC
Southwest Indian Agriculture Association, Phoenix, AZ