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## **Diverse Coalition Urges Super Committee to Support Farm Bill Conservation Programs**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.—Oct. 12, 2011**—In a letter sent to the “Super Committee” earlier today, the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) and others called for fair treatment for agriculture and conservation programs within any deficit reduction plan. The letter was signed by a diverse group of nearly 50 conservation, agriculture, wildlife and forestry organizations representing millions of members across the country.

“By playing a key role in supporting clean air, clean water and productive soils, technical assistance and Farm Bill conservation programs benefit all Americans,” said NACD President Gene Schmidt. “With increased pressures on working lands to produce food, feed, fuel and fiber for our nation and the world, these programs are needed now more than ever. Unfairly targeting conservation and agriculture would have devastating impacts reaching far beyond rural America.”

Mandatory farm bill conservation programs have been cut by more than \$2 billion since passage of the 2008 Farm Bill in annual appropriations bills. Uniquely among farm bill titles, conservation programs have already contributed to deficit reduction via appropriations and should not be asked to contribute more.

“...Conservation programs are crucial to the health and viability of agriculture and rural America,” stated the groups in the letter. “They help farmers, ranchers and private forest landowners to voluntarily address important natural resource issues and assist them in complying with local, state, and federal regulations. These programs deliver demonstrated environmental benefits including clean air, clean water, and abundant habitat for wildlife. They help reduce the damage caused by flood waters and drought. They protect soil and farmland to provide lasting food security. And they bring important money and jobs to rural areas, including increased revenues from hunting, fishing, and other recreational activities.”

The high demand for enrollment in these programs routinely exceeds available funds. Currently, more than 1 million acres are waiting to be enrolled in the Wetlands Reserve Program and Grasslands Reserve Program. Applications for the Conservation Stewardship Program and Environmental Quality Incentives Program outstrip available funds by two to three times.

View the full letter here: [www.nacdnet.org/policy/input/letters/Super\\_Committee\\_Conservation\\_Letter.pdf](http://www.nacdnet.org/policy/input/letters/Super_Committee_Conservation_Letter.pdf).

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*The National Association of Conservation Districts is the non-profit organization that represents the nation's 3,000 conservation districts, their state associations and the 17,000 men and women who serve on their governing boards. For more than 70 years, local conservation districts have worked with cooperating landowners and managers of private working lands to help them plan and apply effective conservation practices. For more information about NACD, visit: [www.nacdnet.org](http://www.nacdnet.org).*