

December 6, 2013

Dear Farm Bill Conferee,

As the House and Senate begins conferencing the final 2013 Farm Bill, the undersigned groups, representing millions of members across the country, urge you protect grasslands, wetlands, healthy soil and clean water by supporting a national sodsaver provision and re-coupling basic soil and water conservation measures to premium subsidies for crop insurance. Both of these provisions, included in the Senate bill, ensure that taxpayer dollars are not used to incentivize risky or environmentally destructive practices. Conservation compliance and sodsaver are among the top farm bill priorities for our groups, and both will be determining factors as we consider our support for a final bill.

For decades, in exchange for a publicly funded safety net, farmers have committed to adopt land management practices that successfully reduced soil erosion and protected wetlands. By shifting subsidies away from direct payments and towards a strong crop insurance safety net, this new farm bill creates a loophole in the longstanding requirements that those who receive subsidies take minimal steps to protect the public good. Without these key protections, billions of taxpayer dollars spent on crop insurance over coming years will subsidize soil erosion that will choke our waterways, increase the cost of water treatment and dredging, and reduce the long term productivity of farmland. It will also allow for the destruction of tens of thousands of acres of valuable wetlands, resulting in increased downstream flooding, loss of wildlife habitat and decreased water quality. To keep these protections in place, it is critical that the final farm bill re-couple conservation compliance with crop insurance premium subsidies and does not weaken existing wetland conservation provisions.

Native grasslands across the country are disappearing at an alarming rate, threatening grassland-dependent wildlife species as well as the ranching and hunting industries dependent on those lands. From 2011 to 2012 alone, nearly 400,000 non-cropland acres were “broken out” for crop production. These acres are being lost across the entire country. In fact, over this period, more than 65 percent of these losses occurred outside of the Prairie Pothole Region states. A nationwide sodsaver provision will reduce taxpayer-funded incentives to destroy these critical grassland resources. Most of the land that is being converted from native ecosystems to cropland is marginal, highly erodible, or prone to flooding. Bringing this marginally productive land into crop production provides little benefit to taxpayers, increases long-term costs due to erosion and nutrient loss, and ultimately leads to reduced water quality, less capacity to reduce flooding and the loss of valuable wildlife habitat. Sodsaver does not prohibit farmers from breaking out new land; it ensures that if they do, they do so at their own risk by partially reducing the cost to taxpayers. It is critical that sodsaver apply to the entire country. A regional approach, such as included in the House bill, is not adequate to protect our nation’s remaining native grasslands.

We thank you for your efforts to complete the 2013 Farm Bill, and we strongly urge you to support soil, water, and wildlife habitat conservation in the final bill by including a national sodsaver provision, re-linking basic conservation measures to eligibility for crop insurance premium subsidies, and opposing efforts to weaken existing wetland protections. Doing so will

save money and ensure long term farm productivity by protecting our nation's vital natural resources.

Signed,

National Groups:

American Bird Conservancy
American Farmland Trust
Amphibian Survival Alliance
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Bridging The Gap
Caribou Ecological
Center for Rural Affairs
Chicago Botanic Garden
Clean Water Action
Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Defenders of Wildlife
Delta Waterfowl
Ducks Unlimited
Ecological Society of America
Environmental and Energy Study Institute
Environmental Defense Fund
Environmental Working Group
Farm Bill Primer
Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future
National Association of Clean Water Agencies
National Audubon Society
National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative
National Bobwhite Technical Committee
National Center for Appropriate Technology
National Parks Conservation Association
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
National Wildlife Federation
Natural Resources Defense Council
Nature Abounds
North American Falconers' Association
Pesticide Action Network
Pheasants Forever
Pollinator Partnership
Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation

Quail Forever
 SAVE THE FROGS!
 Sierra Club
 Soil and Water Conservation Society
 The Conservation Fund
 The Freshwater Society
 The Izaak Walton League of America
 The Nature Conservancy
 The Tortoise Reserve
 The Wildlife Society
 Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
 United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries
 Watchable Wildlife, Inc.
 Water Environment Federation
 Wildlife Management Institute
 World Wildlife Fund
 Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation

Regional Groups:

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| Alliance for the Great Lakes | Great Lakes Region |
| Appalachian Conservation Biology | East |
| Central Flyway Council | Central U.S. |
| Chapped Rapids Audubon Society | Northeastern WI and the Upper Peninsula of MI |
| Delmarva Ornithological Society | Delmarva Peninsula (Delaware, Maryland, Virginia) |
| Environmental Law & Policy Center of the Midwest | Midwest |
| Friends of the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge | Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont |
| Friends of the Upper Delaware River | Upper Delaware River |
| Great Lakes Environmental Law Center | Great Lakes Region |
| Gulf Restoration Network | Gulf of Mexico region: MS, LA, AL, FL, TX |
| Klamath Forest Alliance | Northern California and Southern Oregon |
| Lake Champlain Committee | Vermont & New York (Lake Champlain watershed) |
| Lake Erie Waterkeeper | Lake Erie Region |
| Midwest Environmental Advocates | Midwest |
| Midwest Organic and Sustainable | Upper Midwest (WI, MN, IA, IL, MI, ND, |

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| Education Service | SD) |
| Mississippi River Cities & Towns Initiative | Mississippi River region |
| Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (NESAWG) | Northeast |
| Northern Great Plains Working Group | North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana |
| Northern Prairies Land Trust | South Dakota & Nebraska |
| Northwest Center for Alternatives to Pesticides | Northwest |
| Northwest Watershed Institute | Pacific Northwest |
| Ohio River Foundation | Ohio River Watershed |
| Ozark Regional Land Trust | Ozarks (Missouri, Arkansas) |
| Quail & Upland Game Alliance | Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky |
| Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory | Colorado, Great Plains/Rockies |
| The Wetlands Initiative | Midwest |
| The Wildlife Society-Central Mountains and Plains Section | Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas |
| Total Resource Management | Midwest |
| Western Sustainable Agriculture Working Group | Western U.S. |

State and Local Groups

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| Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation | Arizona |
| Arizona Wildlife Federation | Arizona |
| Friends of the San Pedro River | Arizona |
| Northern Arizona Audubon Society | Arizona (northern) |
| Wild At Heart | Arizona |
| Arkansas Public Policy Panel | Arkansas |
| Arkansas Wildlife Federation | Arkansas |
| Enviroscapes Ecological Consulting | Arkansas |
| Yell County Wildlife Federation | Arkansas |
| Audubon California | California |
| California Climate and Agriculture Network | California |
| California Waterfowl | California |
| Endangered Habitats League | California |
| EPIC-Environmental Protection Information Center | California |
| Roots of Change | California |

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| Slow Food California | California |
| Wild Farm Alliance | California |
| Audubon Society of Greater Denver | Colorado |
| Colorado Wildlife Federation | Colorado |
| Grand Valley Audubon Society | Colorado (Western) |
| Izaak Walton League of America, Pike's Peak Chapter | Colorado |
| Southern Plains Land Trust | Colorado |
| Audubon Connecticut | Connecticut |
| Delaware Nature Society | Delaware |
| Apalachicola Riverkeeper | Florida |
| Florida Wildlife Federation | Florida |
| Izaak Walton League of America, Cypress Chapter | Florida |
| Izaak Walton League of America, Florida Division | Florida |
| Izaak Walton League of America, Florida Keys Chapter | Florida |
| South Florida Audubon Society | Florida (southern) |
| South Florida Wildlands | Florida |
| St. Johns River Alliance | Florida |
| United Waterfowlers- Florida, Inc. | Florida |
| Georgia Wildlife Federation | Georgia |
| Oconee Rivers Audubon Society | Georgia (Northeast) |
| Friends of Camas NWR | Idaho |
| Henry's Fork Chapter Idaho Master Naturalists | Idaho (Henry's Fork Watershed Area) |
| Intermountain Aquatics Inc. | Idaho |
| Pend Oreille Chapter of the Idaho Master Naturalists | Idaho (Panhandle area) |
| Snowdon Wildlife Sanctuary, Inc. | Idaho |
| Bird Conservation Network | Illinois |
| Committee on the Middle Fork Vermilion River | Illinois |
| Environmental Defenders of McHenry County | Illinois |
| Garden Advisors | Illinois |
| Illinois Ornithological Society | Illinois |
| Illinois Stewardship Alliance | Illinois |
| Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation | Illinois |
| Prairie Rivers Network | Illinois |
| The Nature Institute | Illinois |

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| Geist Fall Creek Watershed Alliance | Indiana |
| Hoosier Environmental Council | Indiana |
| Indiana Assoc. of Soil and Water Conservation Districts | Indiana |
| Indiana Chapter of The Wildlife Society | Indiana |
| Indiana Park & Recreation Association | Indiana |
| Indiana Wildlife Federation | Indiana |
| Keep Our Rivers Green | Indiana |
| Save the Dunes | Indiana (Northwest) |
| Sycamore Land Trust, Incorporated | Indiana (Southern) |
| Tippecanoe Audubon Society | Indiana |
| 1000 Friends of Iowa | Iowa |
| Citizens for a Healthy Iowa | Iowa |
| Des Moines Water Works | Iowa (Central) |
| Driftless Chapter of Trout Unlimited (Decorah) | Iowa |
| Griggs Environmental Strategies, Inc. | Iowa |
| Iowa Bowhunters Association | Iowa |
| Iowa Chapter of the American Fisheries Society | Iowa |
| Iowa Environmental Council | Iowa |
| Iowa Farmers Union | Iowa |
| Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation | Iowa |
| Iowa Rivers Revival | Iowa |
| Iowa Wildlife Federation | Iowa |
| Izaak Walton League of America, Maquoketa Valley Chapter | Iowa |
| North Bear Chapter of Trout Unlimited (Des Moines) | Iowa |
| Quad City Audubon Society | Iowa |
| Spring Creeks Chapter of Trout Unlimited (Iowa City) | Iowa |
| Trout Unlimited, Iowa Council | Iowa |
| Wagner Conservation Coalition | Iowa |
| Audubon of Kansas | Kansas |
| Kansas Rural Center | Kansas |
| Kansas Wildlife Federation | Kansas |
| Frankfort Audubon Society | Kentucky (central) |
| Kentucky Conservation Committee | Kentucky |
| Kentucky Waterways Alliance | Kentucky |
| The Wildlife Society, Kentucky Chapter | Kentucky |

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| America's WETLAND Foundation | Louisiana |
| Atchafalaya Basinkeeper | Louisiana |
| Sierra Club, Delta Chapter | Louisiana |
| Friends of Maine's Seabird Islands | Maine |
| Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative | Maine (southern) |
| Western Foothills Land Trust | Maine |
| Fox Haven Farm and Learning Center | Maryland |
| Gunpowder RIVERKEEPER | Maryland |
| Izaak Walton League of America-Maryland Mid-shore Chapter | Maryland |
| Izaak Walton League of America, Free State Chapter | Maryland |
| Maryland Ornithological Society | Maryland |
| Broad Brook Coalition | Massachusetts |
| Massachusetts Audubon Society | Massachusetts |
| Audubon Society of Kalamazoo | Michigan |
| Dwight Lydell Chapter, IWLA | Michigan |
| Garden Project | Michigan |
| Huron River Watershed Council | Michigan (southeast) |
| Lafayette Greens | Michigan |
| Michigan Farmers Union | Michigan |
| Michigan United Conservation Clubs | Michigan |
| Michigan Wildlife Conservancy & Michigan Wildlife Habitat Foundation | Michigan |
| Michigan Young Farmer Coalition | Michigan |
| Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council | Michigan |
| Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis | Minnesota |
| Brainerd Lakes Area Audubon Society | Minnesota (central) |
| Cannon River Watershed Partnership | Minnesota |
| Central Minnesota Audubon Society | Minnesota |
| Friends of the Mississippi River | Minnesota |
| Izaak Walton League of America, Cass County Chapter | Minnesota |
| Izaak Walton League of America, Jaques Chapter | Minnesota |
| Land Stewardship Project | Minnesota |
| Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy | Minnesota |
| Minnesota Chapter of The Wildlife Society | Minnesota |
| Minnesota Conservation Federation | Minnesota |

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| Minnesota Ornithologists' Union | Minnesota |
| Pioneer Heritage Conservation Trust | Minnesota (western) |
| W. J. McCabe Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America | Minnesota (Duluth) |
| Mississippi River Trust | Mississippi |
| Mississippi Wildlife Federation | Mississippi |
| Wildlife Mississippi | Mississippi |
| Conservation Federation of Missouri | Missouri |
| EcoWorks Unlimited | Missouri |
| Missouri Coalition for the Environment | Missouri |
| Missouri Farmers Union | Missouri |
| Missouri Parks Association | Missouri |
| Missouri Prairie Foundation | Missouri |
| Missouri Stream Team | Missouri |
| Missouri Stream Team 3762 | Missouri |
| Ozark (Missouri) Council Trout Unlimited | Missouri |
| Social Services/Rural Life, CCCNM | Missouri |
| Montana Audubon | Montana |
| Montana Wildlife Federation | Montana |
| Audubon Society of Omaha | Nebraska |
| Izaak Walton League of America- Grand Island Chapter | Nebraska |
| Nebraska Chapter of the Wildlife Society | Nebraska |
| Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society INC-NSAS | Nebraska |
| Nebraska Wildlife Federation | Nebraska |
| Western Nebraska Resources Council | Nebraska |
| Nevada Wildlife Federation | Nevada |
| Bear-Paw Regional Greenways | New Hampshire |
| New Jersey Wildlife Society | New Jersey |
| Church Women United of New York State | New York |
| Buffalo Audubon Society | New York (western) |
| Eastern Long Island Audubon Society | New York (Long Island) |
| Save The River, the Upper St. Lawrence Riverkeeper | New York |
| Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester Justice & Peace & Global Environment Committees | New York (Rochester) |
| The Wetland Trust | New York |
| Land Trust for the Little Tennessee | North Carolina |
| North Carolina Trout Unlimited Council | North Carolina |

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| North Carolina Wildlife Federation | North Carolina |
| Resource Institute, Inc. | North Carolina |
| Ad Hoc Downstream Group | North Dakota |
| Browns Ranch | North Dakota |
| North Dakota Wildlife Federation | North Dakota |
| Izaak Walton League of America, Buckeye All-State Chapter | Ohio |
| Izaak Walton League of America, Headwaters Chapter | Ohio |
| Izaak Walton League of America, Wayne County Chapter | Ohio |
| Izaak Walton League of America, Western Reserve Chapter | Ohio |
| Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association | Ohio |
| Ohio Environmental Council | Ohio |
| Ohio Farmers Union | Ohio |
| Ohio Spider Society | Ohio |
| Ohio Wetlands Association | Ohio |
| Shaker Lakes Garden Club | Ohio |
| Silvertip Productions, Ltd | Ohio |
| Oklahoma Conservation Coalition | Oklahoma |
| Izaak Walton League – Oregon Division | Oregon |
| Izaak Walton League – Silverton Chapter | Oregon |
| Izaak Walton League of America, Mary’s Peak Chapter | Oregon |
| Kalmiopsis Audubon Society | Oregon |
| Lane County Audubon Society | Oregon |
| Oregon Tilth | Oregon |
| Salem Audubon Society | Oregon |
| Tualatin Riverkeepers | Oregon (Tualatin River Basin) |
| Ecological Associates | Pennsylvania |
| Lake Erie Region Conservancy | Pennsylvania |
| Lehigh Valley Audubon Society | Pennsylvania |
| PennFuture | Pennsylvania |
| Pennsylvania Chapter of The Wildlife Society | Pennsylvania |
| Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen’s Clubs | Pennsylvania |
| East Greenwich Municipal Land Trust | Rhode Island |
| Coastal Conservation League | South Carolina |
| Hilton Pond Center for Piedmont Natural | South Carolina |

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| History | |
| South Carolina Wildlife Federation | South Carolina |
| Black Hills Sportsmen Club | South Dakota |
| Delta Waterfowl, the Sioux Falls, SD Chapter | South Dakota |
| High Plains Wildlife Association | South Dakota (central area) |
| Huron(SD) Puddle Jumpers Chapter of Delta Waterfowl | South Dakota (Huron) |
| Izaak Walton League of America, Rapid City Chapter | South Dakota |
| Izaak Walton League of America, Sioux Falls Chapter | South Dakota |
| Living River Group- Sierra Club | South Dakota |
| Northern South Dakota Chapter of Pheasants Forever | South Dakota |
| Prairie Hills Audubon Society | South Dakota |
| South Dakota Agriculture Conservation Coalition | South Dakota |
| South Dakota Chapter of the Sierra Club | South Dakota |
| South Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society | South Dakota |
| South Dakota Farmers Union | South Dakota |
| South Dakota Grassland Coalition | South Dakota |
| South Dakota Walleyes Unlimited | South Dakota |
| South Dakota Wildlife Federation | South Dakota |
| Tennessee Clean Water Network | Tennessee |
| Tennessee Ornithological Society | Tennessee |
| Audubon Dallas | Texas (Dallas) |
| Green Spaces Alliance of South Texas | Texas |
| Houston Audubon Society | Texas |
| Texas Conservation Alliance | Texas |
| Citizens for a Fort Monroe National Park | Virginia |
| Fredericksburg-Rappahannock Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America | Virginia (Spotsylvania/Fredericksburg Area) |
| Shenandoah Valley Network | Virginia (Shenandoah Valley) |
| U.S. Trail Riders | Virginia |
| Virginia Association for Biological Farming | Virginia |
| Virginia Conservation Network | Virginia |
| Virginia Food Works | Virginia |
| North Cascades Audubon Society | Washington |
| Pilchuck Audubon Society | Washington (Snohomish County) |

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| Washington Sustainable Food & Farming Network | Washington |
| Izaak Walton League of America, Mountaineer Chapter | West Virginia |
| West Virginia Highlands Conservancy | West Virginia |
| Michael Fields Agricultural Institute | Wisconsin |
| Milwaukee Riverkeeper | Wisconsin |
| Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association, Inc. | Wisconsin |
| Wisconsin Society for Ornithology | Wisconsin |
| Wisconsin Soil and Water Conservation Society | Wisconsin |
| Wisconsin Wildlife Federation | Wisconsin |
| Wyoming Chapter of the Wildlife Society | Wyoming |
| Wyoming Outdoor Council | Wyoming |
| Wyoming Wildlife Federation | Wyoming |