



The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
302 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

April 24, 2012

Dear Senator Klobuchar,

In the lead-up to this year's Farm Bill, the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP) has been repeatedly grateful for the strong support you've given around many programs and issues that affect Minnesota's farmers, food system and rural communities. Now, as the markup begins in the Senate Agriculture Committee, we ask you to continue to show that same leadership by supporting the following positions.

Demand that conservation compliance be re-coupled with crop insurance. Unless Congress reconnects crop insurance subsidies to conservation compliance, a significant part of farmers' incentive to follow conservation plans will disappear this year if direct payments are removed.

Support full funding for the SNAP program that protects against hunger and improves nutrition by providing critical resources to vulnerable people. Cuts to SNAP will only make it harder for millions of families to afford a nutritious diet.

Support better, more affordable crop insurance for organic farmers that helps reduce the increased financial risk of growing organic crops, which reduce the use of harmful chemicals that endanger human health and the environment.

Support Senator Leahy's public health reporting amendment which would require USDA to report on the public health impacts of federal agricultural policies.

Reinstate funding for the 2501 Outreach and Technical Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Program. This program is a small effort to correct the policy barriers and institutional biases that farmers of color have faced for decades. The elimination of funding for this program is a startling refusal by Congress to address the lack of opportunities for farmers of color by continuing this well-regarded program.

Focus AFRI on research that better serves the public. Despite the increasing concerns that research funds are being co-opted for interests outside of general public benefit, Congress refuses to consider efforts to make the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative,

the largest competitive research grants program, more focused on research needs that better serve the public.

Support the Packer Ban amendment to be introduced by Senators Grassley and Conrad. The Packer Ban prohibits a meatpacker to own, feed or control livestock intended for slaughter, and helps to ensure transparency and competition in the marketplace.

Support the Casey amendment to encourage purchases of local foods for school nutrition programs. This amendment will help ensure existing programs allow and encourage schools to choose fresh, healthy, local food for schoolchildren.

Support the directive to the USDA to create Whole Farm Diversified Risk Management Insurance products for diversified farming operations.

Support the expansion of local and regional procurement of all international food aid.

We strongly encourage you to maintain and expand authorities currently provided on a pilot basis under Sec. 3206 of the 2008 Farm Bill and to establish that initiative as a permanent program. Authorized funding should be set at no less than \$100 million annually.

Support changes to the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program to use up to 20 percent of food aid funds as cash rather than commodities.

Support increased funding for section 202(e) of the Food for Peace Act to 15 percent to authorize greater flexibility and reduce the need for monetization.

Once again, we are grateful for the leadership you have shown in the lead-up to this Farm Bill, including your co-sponsorship of the Conrad-Lugar bill to create mandatory funding for core programs in the Energy Title. We look forward to working with you and your staff as this process continues. Thank you for all that you do on these issues.

Sincerely,



Jim Harkness
President
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy