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June 10, 2013



Good Afternoon Friends,

On Monday, June 10, 2013, the Senate passed the 2013 Farm Bill, "Agriculture Reform, Food, and Jobs Act of 2013" (S. 954), by a vote of 66-27. This legislation invests in the future, with a strong focus on broadband, business development, and rural infrastructure. It also includes a strong conservation component that protects our soil and water for generations to come.

Below you can find statements from Majority Leader Harry Reid and Senator Debbie Stabenow, Chairwoman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.



Press Release
Senator Debbie Stabenow, Chairwoman

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Senate Approves Farm Bill, Major Reforms with Broad Bipartisan Support

Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act Will Save Taxpayers More Than \$24 Billion, Strengthen Economy

WASHINGTON, DC – The U.S. Senate today voted to approve the Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act of 2013, a bipartisan Farm Bill authored by Senator Debbie Stabenow, Chairwoman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry, and Ranking Member Senator Thad Cochran. The bill was approved with broad bipartisan support by a vote of 66-27. The bill, which saves taxpayers more than \$24 billion, represents the most significant reform of American agriculture policy in decades.

The bill reforms food and agricultural policy by eliminating direct payments and transitioning to responsible risk management tools for farmers, saving billions of dollars. The Farm Bill also consolidates programs to end duplication and addresses fraud and misuse in nutrition programs. These reforms allow for the strengthening of key initiatives that help farmers and small businesses reach new

markets and create American jobs.

“The Senate today voted to support 16 million American jobs, to save taxpayers billions and to implement the most significant reforms to agriculture programs in decades,” Chairwoman Stabenow said. “By eliminating duplication and streamlining programs, we were able to save \$24 billion while strengthening initiatives that help farmers and small businesses reach new markets. This bill proves that by working across party lines, we can save taxpayer money and create smart policies that lay the foundation for a stronger economy.”

Stabenow continued, “I want to thank my Ranking Member Senator Thad Cochran for his leadership and commitment to bipartisan partnership, and all my colleagues in the Senate for voting on behalf of the 16 million American jobs that rely on a robust, innovative agriculture sector. I look forward to continuing to work in a collaborative and bipartisan way to see that this reform bill is signed into law. There can be no more kicking the can down the road—it’s time for Congress to finish its work on the Farm Bill.”

To view a copy of the Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act of 2013, please visit the Senate Agriculture Committee website at <http://www.ag.senate.gov/issues/farm-bill>. A section-by-section summary of the bill is also available as well. A short summary of the Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act is below.

The Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act of 2013

The Senate’s bipartisan 2013 Farm Bill represents the **most significant reform** of American agriculture policy in decades. With the Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act, **the era of direct payments is over**. Instead of subsidies that pay out every year even in good times, the bill creates risk management tools that support farmers when they are negatively impacted by weather disaster or market events beyond their control. By ending unnecessary subsidies, streamlining and consolidating programs and cracking down on abuse, the **bill reduces the deficit by billions**. Passing the Farm Bill will yield a total of **\$23 billion** in cuts to agriculture programs (including cuts made due to the sequester). \$23 billion is over double the amount the bipartisan Simpson-Bowles commission (\$10 billion) and Gang of Six (\$11 billion) recommended in total agriculture cuts.

Agriculture is a bright spot in America’s economy. The Senate’s 2013 Farm Bill strengthens top priorities that help farmers, ranchers and small business owners **create jobs**. The current Farm Bill expires September 30th. A new Farm Bill **must be passed this year** to provide farmers the certainty they need to keep driving our economic recovery.

Sixteen million jobs hang in the balance. Last year’s similar Senate Farm Bill passed the Senate with a wide bipartisan vote, 64-35. The Farm Bill is broadly supported by Democrats and Republicans across the country for its major reforms, common sense deficit reduction and strengthened job creation initiatives.

Major Reform: Ending Direct Payments; Creating Responsible Risk Management

Farmers face unique risks unlike other businesses. Weather and market conditions outside a producer's control can have devastating effects. Responsible risk management tools help ensure that farmers – and farm jobs – are not wiped out by disasters, and protect all American families from sudden spikes in food prices.

However, for too long farm programs have existed as subsidies that provide payments even when farmers are already doing well. The 2013 Senate Farm Bill reforms farm programs to save taxpayer dollars, while providing farmers with a responsible risk management system that only helps farmers when they experience substantial losses due to events beyond their control. This proposal:

- **Eliminates direct payments.** Farmers will no longer receive payments when prices are rising and support is not needed. Ending these subsidies and creating responsible risk management is a major shift in American farm policy
- **Caps remaining risk management support** at \$50,000 per person
- **Ends Farm Payments to Non-Farmers.** This bill closes the “management loophole,” through which people who were not actually farming—in many cases not even setting foot on the farm—were designated as farm “managers” so they could receive farm payments
- **Requires conservation compliance for crop insurance,** which will protect both the farm safety net and the natural resources that our nation's farmers and ranchers will need for generations to come
 - **Strengthens crop insurance** and expands access so farmers are not wiped out by bad weather
 - Includes **disaster relief** for producers hurt by drought, spring freeze, and other weather disasters
 - Reforming farm programs, ending direct payments and implementing market-oriented programs to help farmers manage risk saves **\$16 billion dollars** (\$12 billion in the bill, \$4 billion through sequestration)

Consolidating and Streamlining Programs

By eliminating duplicative programs, funds are concentrated in the areas in which they will have the greatest impact, reducing the deficit while strengthening top priorities. The Senate Farm Bill **eliminates over 100 programs** and authorizations under the Agriculture Committee's jurisdiction. For example:

- The bill **consolidates 23 existing conservation programs into 13 programs—while maintaining existing tools** to protect and conserve land, water and wildlife

- Streamlining programs provides added flexibility and focuses conservation around four primary functions: working lands conservation, the Conservation Reserve Program, regional partnerships, and easements to help prevent sprawl and protect wetlands
- These reforms save money while still **increasing resources for top priorities**
- Because we are truly doing more with less, changes to conservation policies are supported by nearly **650 conservation organizations from all 50 states**

Improving Program Accountability

At a time when many out-of-work Americans are in need of food assistance for the first time in their lives, it is more critical than ever that every dollar go to families in need. By closing loopholes, cracking down on abuse and improving program integrity, the Farm Bill reduces the deficit without cutting standard benefits or removing any needy family from the program. The Senate Farm Bill **increases accountability in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** by:

- **Stopping lottery winners** from continuing to receive assistance
- Preventing states from providing \$1 per year in home heating assistance to individuals who do not have a heating bill for the sole purpose of providing extra benefits above what they would normally receive
- Ending misuse by **college students** whose families are not truly low-income
- Cracking down on retailers and recipients engaged in **benefit trafficking**
- Increasing requirements to **prevent liquor and tobacco stores** from accepting food assistance benefits
- The above savings reduce the deficit while continuing **support for food banks, seniors' food programs and healthy school lunch initiatives**

Continuing Growth in America's Diverse Agricultural Economy

The Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act increases efficiency and accountability, saving tens of billions of dollars overall, while still strengthening agricultural jobs initiatives through:

- **Export opportunities** to help farmers find new global markets for their goods
- Help for **family farmers** to sell locally, increasing support for **farmers' markets** and spurring the creation of food hubs to connect farmers to schools and other community-based organizations
- Training and access to capital to make it easier for **beginning farmers** to get off the ground
- Initiatives to help **American veterans** start agriculture businesses
- Growth in **bio-based manufacturing** (businesses producing goods in America from raw agricultural products grown in America) to create rural agriculture and urban manufacturing jobs
- Innovation in **bio-energy** production, supporting non-food based advanced biomass energy production such as cellulosic ethanol and woody biomass power
- **Research** to promote the commercialization of new agricultural innovations
- **Rural development initiatives** to help rural communities upgrade infrastructure, extend broadband internet availability and create a better environment for small businesses

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SENATE MAJORITY LEADER
HARRY REID, SENATOR FROM NEVADA

For Immediate Release

Date: Thursday, June 06, 2013

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REID REMARKS ON THE FARM BILL

Washington, D.C. –Nevada Senator Harry Reid spoke on the Senate floor today regarding the farm bill. Below are his remarks as prepared for delivery:

Shortly the Senate will consider whether to end debate on the agriculture jobs bill. I commend Chairman Stabenow and Ranking Member Cochran on their excellent work managing this bill. Regrettably, our two sides have been unable to reach an agreement to consider a finite number of amendments to this measure. But I am optimistic that we will advance this measure today and that next week the farm bill will pass on a strong, bipartisan vote in the Senate, as it did last year.

Unfortunately, last year the House of Representatives failed to take up the Senate's bipartisan farm bill. I hope this year Republican leadership will allow a vote in the House on the Senate's bipartisan legislation, which will create jobs, cut taxpayer subsidies and reduce the deficit by \$23 billion.

America's farms and ranches are the most productive in the world. But to keep America's farms and America's economy strong, Congress must pass a strong farm bill and do it quickly.

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More About the Senate Democratic Steering & Outreach Committee:

The Senate Democratic Steering and Outreach Committee is dedicated to fostering dialogue between Senate Democrats and leaders from across the nation. Each year, the Steering Committee hosts numerous meetings with advocates, policy experts, and elected officials to discuss key priorities and enlist their help in the development of the Senate Democratic agenda. The Committee serves as a liaison between Senate Democratic offices, advocacy groups, and intergovernmental organizations. It is one of three Democratic Leadership Committees in the Senate and is chaired by Senator Mark Begich (AK) and vice chaired by Senator Jeanne Shaheen (NH).