

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 16, 2007

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid
S-221, Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Tom Harkin
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid and Chairman Harkin,

We urge you to provide a significant increase in mandatory funding for the USDA's voluntary conservation incentives programs and to expand consumers' and children's access to healthy food in the 2007 Farm Bill. As Democrats we believe that it is our responsibility to protect America's extraordinary natural resources and the health of all families.

Farmers are eager to support clean water, clean air, a stable climate and wildlife habitat. Unfortunately, two out of three farmers are turned away by USDA when they offer to provide a healthier environment because of insufficient funding for USDA's voluntary conservation incentives programs. As a result, we continue to lose thousands of acres of valuable wetlands, grasslands and private forest lands and our efforts to clean up lakes, rivers and bays like the Great Lakes, Mississippi River and the Chesapeake Bay are falling further behind schedule. Boosting conservation spending in the 2007 Farm Bill would also help more farmers and more regions receive a fair share of federal farm spending.

In addition, America faces an unprecedented obesity crisis with the real possibility that this generation of Americans will be the first to live shorter lives than their parents. The Farm Bill should support farm-friendly efforts to provide more fresh and local fruits and vegetables in schools, expand access to healthy foods to low income and elderly consumers, and help more farmers' transition to produce organic food for a rapidly growing domestic market.

Thank you for your continued efforts to protect the environment, promote conservation, and provide wider access to healthy foods.



ROBERT MENENDEZ
United States Senator

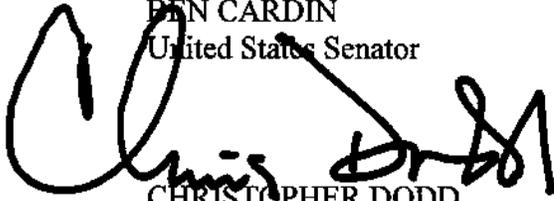
Sincerely,



BARBRA BOXER
United States Senator



BEN CARDIN
United States Senator



CHRISTOPHER DODD
United States Senator



FRANK R. LAUTENBERG
United States Senator



SHELDON WHITEHOUSE
United States Senator



CARL LEVIN
United States Senator



CLAIRE MCCASKILL
United States Senator



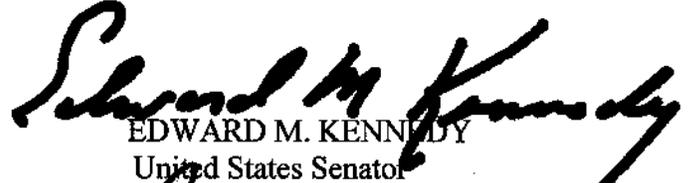
JOSEPH LIEBERMAN
United States Senator



DANIEL INOUE
United States Senator



CHARLES SCHUMER
United States Senator



EDWARD M. KENNEDY
United States Senator



JOHN F. KERRY
United States Senator



JACK REED
United States Senator



BILL NELSON
United States Senator



MARY LANDRIEU
United States Senator



RON WYDEN
United States Senator



DANIEL AKAKA
United States Senator