



# Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts

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June 13, 2011

The Honorable Raúl Labrador and Mike Simpson  
Members of Congress  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Congressmen Labrador and Simpson,

This week, the United States House of Representatives will begin consideration of HR 2112, the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. This is critical legislation which funds the Natural Resources Conservation Service and vital Farm Bill conservation programs. Currently, the bill reduces spending by \$2.7 billion (13.4%) below last year's level. These reductions include drastic cuts to conservation programs.

We are aware this is a difficult budget year, and there is a need for federal spending to be brought back to reasonable levels. However, these conservation programs allow Idaho's private land owners, farmers and ranchers to participate in non-regulatory conservation practices.

Idaho has 50 conservation districts, and they are the primary entities to provide assistance to private landowners and land users in the conservation, sustainment, improvement, and enhancement of Idaho's natural resources. They rely on conservation technical assistance funded in this legislation, as well as programs such as the Environmental Quality Incentive Program, Conservation Reserve Program and Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program. IASCD recognizes a voluntary, non-regulatory approach to conservation, and we agree that these programs are best accomplished at the local level with maximum involvement from farmers and private landowners.

Our districts are Idaho's true environmentalists, and federal conservation programs allow them put common sense conservation programs on the ground. We encourage you to oppose these cuts, and craft amendments to help offset reductions in the agriculture appropriations bill.

Should you have any questions, please contact Bret Rumbeck at (208) 888-1890 x. 108.

Sincerely,

Randy Purser  
President

Kit Tillotson  
Vice President

Steve Becker  
Treasurer

Rick Rodgers  
Director

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