



Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts

September 4, 2012

The Honorable Raul Labrador
United States Congressman
33 East Broadway Avenue
Suite 251
Meridian, ID 83642

Dear Congressman Labrador,

As the August District Work Period winds down, the Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts is hopeful that upon your return to Washington, DC, you will encourage House leadership to bring the Farm Bill to the floor for a vote in September. While the drought assistance legislation that was passed prior to recess is helpful, it is a short-term solution, and does not provide a plan for the future.

In Idaho, the fifty soil conservation districts have a remarkable track record in working with farmers, ranchers, rural and city residents, and communities to protect and preserve our state's natural resources. The federal dollars invested in Title II programs in the Farm Bill ripple out into our communities and impact all facets of our economy; less sediment in rivers means a pristine river for fishing or rafting; healthy soil means a more plentiful crop; responsible land management means a balance between species habitat and grazing.

Each of our board members serves on a local conservation district board, and we have assisted willing land owners to develop common sense solutions to environmental challenges they face. These solutions are crafted by people with significant knowledge of the local land and expertise in natural resource management, not an overreaching federal agency.

We fully understand the difficult decisions that will need to be made by your fellow Congressmen when debating the Farm Bill. IASCD fully supports legislation that reduces unnecessary government spending, and properly reflects our nation's difficult economic situation.

However, the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and local districts have the tools and resources available right now to continue common-sense conservation practices that will help mitigate the impacts of extreme weather. Strong, locally led conservation, as supported by Farm Bill conservation programs are essential tools to preserve natural resources here in Idaho and across our nation.

A new, five-year Farm Bill must be passed in September which includes a strong conservation title that streamlines and consolidates programs for increased efficiency and ease-of-use for land owners and producers. We would be honored to work with you and your staff if the Farm Bill does come to the House floor next month.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact IASCD if we can ever be of assistance. We can be reached at 208-344-1221.

Sincerely,



Kit Tillotson
President



Billie Brown
Vice President



Steve Becker
Treasurer



Rick Rodgers
Secretary



J. Lynn Bagley
Director



Lynn McKee
Director