

September 10, 2007

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and
Forestry
United States Senate

The Honorable Saxby Chambliss
Ranking Member
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and
Forestry
United States Senate

Dear Senators Reid, McConnell, Harkin and Chambliss:

The undersigned organizations look forward to expedited Senate action on the 2007 Farm Bill. We are writing to encourage swift action in the Senate and to offer our assistance in enacting solid policy for American farmers, ranchers and those industries that depend on them.

While there are some detail differences in specific policy recommendations between the organizations, we are united on the following points:

1. It is vitally important to mark-up and pass the 2007 bill as soon as possible. Most of the existing law expires on September 30, leaving nothing in place but the 1938 and 1949 permanent law. Even though the 2001-02 process stretched out over several months, the 2002 law was enacted more than four months before the 1996 law would have expired. In 2007 we are now down to a matter of days before the current law expires. Farmers are already making planting, capital allocation and financing decisions, and they and their lenders need certainty on the policy environment in which they will operate. For this reason, the bill should be at least a five-year authorization rather than a short-term extension of the current policy.
2. We believe that the legislation passed by the House of Representatives is an appropriate and useful starting point for the Senate deliberations. Some of the organizations signed below will make their own recommendations for some adjustments in the House-passed bill. Overall, however, we believe the Committee would be well served to use the House bill as a starting point for its deliberations and that doing so would contribute to the expediency of the process.
3. The bill must have strong bipartisan support in the Committee. Farm policy is best when it has the support of both parties, and that support will be necessary to prevail.

Our members, leaders and organizations look forward to working with you on this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely yours,

Alabama Peanut Producers Association
American Soybean Association
American Sugar Alliance
Florida Peanut Producers Association
Georgia Peanut Commission
Mississippi Peanut Growers Association
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Barley Growers Association
National Cotton Council
National Sorghum Producers
National Sunflower Association
New Mexico Peanut Growers Association
North Carolina Peanut Growers
Oklahoma Peanut Commission
Southern Peanut Farmers Federation
United Peanut Alliance
USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council
USA Rice Federation
US Canola Association
US Rice Producers Association
Virginia Peanut Growers
Western Peanut Growers Association

cc: Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry