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# LARRY CRAIG

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NEWS RELEASE

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## **CRAIG SAYS NO MORE FARM BILL EXTENSIONS** **-- Farmers Need 'Certainty' About U.S. Farm Policy --**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Idaho Senator Larry Craig today challenged Farm Bill negotiators either to agree on a new Farm Bill within the next week or extend current farm policy for no less than a year to give farmers certainty for the upcoming growing seasons.

The current Farm Bill expired in September 2007, and Congress has passed multiple extensions of its provisions while trying to negotiate a new bill from the versions passed by the House last July and by the Senate in December.

When Senate leaders Wednesday night asked for another extension beyond the April 18 negotiation deadline, Craig initially objected, halting progress on the measure. He acquiesced today but cautioned that he will no longer agree to any short-term extensions that leave Idaho's and all farmers without basic, foundational farm policy for the future.

"I, like many Senators, and especially American agriculture, am growing very frustrated and very restless about the reality that we don't have a Farm Bill," Craig said in a speech on the Senate floor. "As we know, across America and in central parts of our country, certainly in the south, spring is here and it's planting season . . . But Congress basically is on hold right now. We're not getting our work done in a variety of areas, and agriculture and the Farm Bill are simply very tragic examples of that lack of effort."

"I am sure that we will not, nor should we allow American agriculture to be without a policy," Craig said and expressed concern that progress achieved in the Senate version of the Farm Bill – especially in the hard-fought battle for specialty crops – could be wiped away "if there is no willingness or ability to come together for a final compromise on behalf of American agriculture."

Also included in that progress, Craig cited program innovations and funding advances for conservation, commodities, school nutrition, disaster assistance, country of origin labeling as well as tax credits for wind energy, cellulosic ethanol and biodiesel production.

"I agreed on a one-week extension," Craig said. "This is not an ultimatum. This is simply a statement of fact. I can't agree any longer (to further extensions). American agriculture, Idaho's farmers, need to know – they deserve to know. They shouldn't be kept in limbo, bouncing on the end of a string because the politicians in Washington can't get their act together and simply can't agree. We've always come to an agreement on agriculture. It has always been a bipartisan policy.

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“It’s time we worked a little overtime to get this done. It’s time to finish it, time to tell American agriculture, here’s the new policy. If we can’t, then let’s extend the old policy and give (our farmers) certainty for a minimum of at least one year.”

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