



National Association of Conservation Districts

February 19, 2009

Senator Dianne Feinstein
Chairwoman
Interior and Environment Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Interior and Environment Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
113 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairwoman and Ranking Member:

The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) represents the nation's 3,000 conservation districts and 17,000 men and women who serve on their governing boards. Conservation districts are local units of government established under state law to carry out natural resource management programs at the local level. Conservation districts help state and federal partners work with landowners on a variety of conservation programs, including the 319 Nonpoint Source Grants Program authorized under the Clean Water Act and administered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The 319 Nonpoint Source Program addresses water pollution from diffuse sources that affect water quality and can include nutrient and sediment runoff from agriculture, faulty septic systems from residential properties, or storm water runoff such as oil, toxic chemicals, and sediment. Under this program, EPA awards funding to states that are then used by the state and local governments to implement nonpoint source pollution projects. The 319 program is critically important to conservation districts to address water quality at the local level through a variety of projects including stream bank stabilization, temperature and turbidity reduction, storm water management, and low-impact development. The program also provides flexibility to address resources concerns that are outside the scope of many traditional United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) conservation programs.

NACD respectfully supports a funding level of **\$218.957 million** for 319 Nonpoint Source Grants in the FY 2010 Interior Appropriations Bill. This increase in funding will provide continuing support in addressing nonpoint source pollution, ensuring that local communities will continue to realize the benefits of clean water. The increase in funding will also help leverage cost-share funding at the state and local level, providing added benefit for the federal dollars spent.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. We look forward to working with you as we continue to provide the benefits of natural resource conservation across the country.

Sincerely,

Steve Robinson
NACD President

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