



National Association of Conservation Districts

February 10, 2009

The Honorable David Obey
Chair, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Daniel Inouye
Chair, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jerry Lewis
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) represents the nation's 3,000 conservation districts and their governing boards. Established under state law, conservation districts are local units of state government charged with carrying out programs for the productivity and protection of natural resources at the local level. Conservation districts work with federal, state, tribal and local agencies to provide technical and watershed-based assistance to landowners and land users to collaboratively address a wide variety of natural resource issues.

As the House and Senate prepare to conference the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, NACD would like to highlight our support of specific conservation programs.

With regard to proposed Agriculture spending under the Natural Resources Conservation Service, we support the House-passed level of \$350 million for Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations and the Senate-passed level of \$65 million for Watershed Rehabilitation. Reinvestment in this infrastructure can provide local jobs while also maintaining aging structures to provide continued flood control, public safety, local water supply and recreational benefits.

With regard to proposed Interior spending under the U.S. Forest Service, we support the House-passed level of \$850 million for wildland fire activities; and under the Bureau of Land Management, we support the House-passed level of \$325 million for restoration and hazardous fuels reductions. These programs offer tremendous potential for job creation and forest stewardship including wildfire mitigation, wood based energy development, fuels reductions, pest prevention and rehabilitation, invasive plant rehabilitation, and post-wildfire restoration. Conservation districts have had a good partnership with these agencies through the National Fire Plan and look forward to continuing and expanding this cooperation with these funds and activities.

NACD believes these programs can serve the goals outlined by the President of creating jobs while also investing in our nation's natural resource infrastructure. The nation's conservation districts understand this potential and stand ready at the local level to assist with quick implementation of conservation spending proposed in the economic stimulus.

Sincerely,
Steve Robinson
NACD President

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