



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

MAY 31 2007

DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR

The Honorable Charles F. Conner
Deputy Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Mr. Conner:

Recently, I was briefed on the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP). I am encouraged by the initial CEAP products and the significant resources that USDA is putting into the CEAP to understand the science that will be used to improve conservation programs and their delivery.

The CEAP's ambitious goal of quantifying the impacts of USDA conservation practices and programs on the environment and its initial focus on water quality, water quantity, and soil quality is one that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) shares. This information is vital to EPA and the states as agricultural conservation practices and programs are critical components for achieving many of our nation's environmental goals.

EPA is committed to continuing our collaboration with USDA to move the CEAP forward. EPA contributes resources to the effort by detailing staff to coordinate CEAP activities, participating on the CEAP Steering and Executive Steering Committees, and cooperating with the national and watershed components. Additionally, many of the CEAP watersheds are located in areas where EPA and states are investing Clean Water Act funds to improve impaired water quality and protect drinking source water.

I look forward to being kept up to date on CEAP's progress as the research and analysis move forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marcus".

Marcus Peacock

cc: David Anderson, Associate Director for Natural Resource Programs, OMB
Gary Mast, Deputy Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment, USDA
Dale Moore, Chief of Staff, Secretary of Agriculture, USDA
Mark Rey, Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment, USDA
Benjamin H. Grumbles, Assistant Administrator for Water, EPA