

**Agricultural Council of California
American Farmland Trust
California Association of Resource Conservation Districts
California Association of Wine Grape Growers
California Cattlemen's Association
California Coalition for Food and Farming
California Farm Bureau Federation
Community Alliance with Family Farmers
Defenders of Wildlife
Environmental Defense
Marrone Organic Innovations, Inc.
The Nature Conservancy
Natural Resources Defense Council
Rominger Brothers Farm
San Joaquin Resource Conservation District
Sustainable Conservation
Western United Dairymen**

May 29, 2007

Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi
450 Golden Gate Ave., 14th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Madame Speaker,

As representatives of some of California's leading agricultural, environmental and labor organizations, we are concerned about the urgent need to ensure adequate funding for the Farm Bill. With mark-up beginning on the 2007 Farm Bill, we the undersigned groups are writing to you with an urgent plea to assert leadership in helping to identify budgetary offsets that would allow strengthened investments in Farm Bill conservation and other programs that are vital to addressing California's environmental, agriculture, health and economic challenges.

As members of the California Roundtable on Agriculture and the Environment, our organizations have come together in California over the past two years to address environmental challenges faced by the agricultural sector. Agriculture's success in meeting these challenges will provide important public benefits for our urban and rural residents through the protection of water resources, improved air quality, preserved open space and wildlife habitat, improved community and worker health, and a safe and nutritious food supply.

Farm Bill conservation programs provide important tools and incentives to help California producers provide these benefits. However, these critical programs are at risk. The funding baseline for all Farm Bill programs has been drastically reduced. Some very important conservation programs, such as the Grasslands Reserve Program and the Wetlands Reserve program, have no baseline funding at all. And, even at current levels of funding, many existing conservation programs are unable to meet the current demand. Nationally, three out of four eligible farmers are turned away due to lack of resources. **We should reward landowners when they offer to help protect the environment**, not reject them. Unless we secure significant increases in Farm Bill conservation programs, many of the California's biggest environmental challenges will not be met

Renewal of the Farm Bill this year creates an enormous opportunity to meet California's economic, energy, environment, hunger and health challenges. Absent your engagement, many of these opportunities will be lost and the Farm Bill will fail to offer California and the nation the tremendous benefits that come from increased agricultural stewardship and other investments.

Your leadership is therefore vitally needed to find the budgetary offsets to ensure adequate funding for conservation and other pressing needs in the Farm Bill. We thank you in advance and welcome the opportunity to meet with you to further discuss these issues.

Respectfully,

Agricultural Council of California, Donald G. Gordon Jr., President

American Farmland Trust, Edward Thompson, Jr., California Director

California Association of Resource Conservation Districts, Tacy Currey,
Executive Director

California Association of Wine Grape Growers, Karen Ross, President

California Cattlemen's Association, Bruce Hafenfeld, President

California Coalition for Food and Farming, Kari Hamerschlag

California Farm Bureau Federation, Noelle Cremers, Director, Natural
Resources & Commodities, Govt. Affairs Division

Community Alliance with Family Farmers, Dave Runsten, Executive Director

Defenders of Wildlife, Kim Delfino, California Program Director

Environmental Defense, Kathryn Phillips, Manager, California Clean Air for

Life Campaign

Marrone Organic Innovations, Inc., Pam Marrone, CEO/Founder

The Nature Conservancy, Mark Kramer, Director of Federal Government Relations, California Chapter

Natural Resources Defense Council, Jonathan Kaplan, Director, Sustainable Agriculture Project

Rominger Brothers Farm, Richard Rominger

San Joaquin Resource Conservation District, Molly Watkins, Vice President

Sustainable Conservation, Ladi Asgill, Agricultural Economist

Western United Dairymen, Paul Martin, Director of Environmental Services