



March 16, 2011

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
331 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Boxer  
112 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Feinstein and Boxer:

We, the undersigned members of the California Roundtable on Agriculture and the Environment (CRAE), representing a broad cross-section of agricultural and environmental organizations in California, are strongly opposed to the disproportionate funding cuts to the United States Department of Agriculture and 2008 Farm Bill programs that are included in H.R. 1, the Continuing Resolution to fund the United States government for the remainder of fiscal year 2011.

The House measure would cut \$4.9 billion, or 18 percent, from USDA's budget, compared to the overall average 6 percent cut across overall government funding. The cuts to the USDA and Farm Bill programs have been proposed without a thorough evaluation of the efficacy of these programs and without a robust dialogue with stakeholders on how best to ensure the future success of American agriculture and natural resource conservation.

Over the past seven years, CRAE members have worked together to enhance the economic viability and environmental sustainability of California's agricultural sector, and have been successful in identifying areas of common ground. Dramatic and disproportionate cuts to USDA programs will make it much harder to collaboratively develop the necessary pragmatic solutions to the very real and complex problems facing our state's economy and environment.

We urge the Senate to carefully evaluate the consequences of these disproportionate cuts to the important and widely supported USDA and Farm Bill programs. We stand ready to engage in a dialogue with you about possible solutions that continue to meet the needs of agriculture, environment and communities.

Sincerely,  
Agriculture Council of California  
American Farmland Trust  
California Association of Winegrape Growers  
California Cattlemen's Association

CRAE is a broad coalition of agriculture, environment, labor and public agency leaders working to promote an agriculture that is economically viable, environmentally sustainable and socially responsible.

California Climate and Agriculture Network  
California Farm Bureau Federation  
California Rice Commission  
Community Alliance with Family Farmers  
Corny Gallagher, Agribusiness Executive, Bank of America Merrill Lynch  
Defenders of Wildlife  
Environmental Defense Fund  
Holly King, King-Gardiner Farms, LCC  
Markon Cooperative  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
The Nature Conservancy  
Rich Rominger, Rominger Brothers Farms  
Roots of Change  
San Joaquin Resource Conservation District  
Sustainable Conservation  
Western Growers  
Western United Dairymen

CC: Secretary Vilsack, USDA; Secretary Ross, CDFA; members of the California House Delegation