

Having trouble viewing this email? [Click here](#)



In This Issue

[Take Action on Farm
Bill Cuts](#)

Quick Links

[About CalCAN](#)

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

March 2, 2010

Take Action: Oppose Reckless Spending Cuts to Farm Bill Programs

*Thanks to the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
for this alert.*

In mid-February, the House of Representatives approved a government funding bill that would slash more than \$60 billion from the federal budget for the last half of fiscal year 2011. The bill (H.R. 1) unfairly targets programs that serve sustainable and organic farmers. It makes steep cuts in agricultural research, extension and farm credit. It makes deep cuts to funding provided in the 2008 Farm Bill for conservation and would terminate programs that serve beginning and minority farmers without making any cuts to commodity or crop insurance funding. The Senate is now considering H.R. 1 and they need to hear from you!

The cuts are reckless and unjust, threatening economic recovery in rural communities struggling to create jobs, find new markets, and renew economic life.

Calls to the Senate right now will be critical to the outcome of the coming battle over government funding and policy.

Please call your Senators today.

It's easy to call:

Go to Congress.org and type in your zip code. Click on your Senator's name, and then on the contact tab for their phone number. You can also call the Capitol Switchboard and ask

to be directly connected to your Senator's office:
202-224-3121.

The message is simple. "I am a constituent of Senator _____ and I am calling to ask him/her to reject H.R. 1, the Continuing Resolution to fund the government for the remainder of fiscal year 2011. H.R. 1 singles out conservation, research, extension, and other programs important to sustainable and organic agriculture. It terminates programs that serve beginning and minority farmers without making any cuts to commodity or crop insurance programs. If cuts are to be made then everything must be on the table. Cuts must be fair, equitable and based on the merits of each program."

Report your Call:

Click [here](#) to tell us how your call went.

Learn More:

H.R. 1, the Continuing Resolution slashes more than \$60 billion from the federal budget for the last half of fiscal year 2011. The House has unfairly targeted agriculture and rural America for a disproportional share of the proposed cuts. Within agriculture, the cuts are targeted at programs that serve sustainable, organic, beginning and minority farmers.

None of the cuts in the House bill are directed at the two largest federal agricultural spending items - commodity and crop insurance subsidies. In a year of high farm income, the House has focused its cuts instead upon programs that protect the environment, increase economic opportunity, serve beginning and minority farmers, and ensure proper nutrition for low-income families.

The House measure would cut \$5.2 billion or 22 percent from the combined USDA and FDA budgets, compared to 6 percent for the government overall. The House proposes deep cuts to mandatory conservation and renewable energy funding provided by the 2008 Farm Bill - a combined \$500 million would be cut under the House bill from the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), and the Biomass Crop Assistance

Program (BCAP). With those cuts included, the total cut to agriculture comes to \$5.7 billion or 24.5 percent. The House has singled out a subset of programs that represent a fraction of the full agriculture budget and that are of particular importance to the sustainable agriculture community. For years we have struggled to achieve a fair share of federal farm spending and have made significant strides forward. H.R. 1 sets back our progress by decades.

The House bill would make very major cuts in agricultural research and extension, rural development, and domestic and international feeding programs. It would also eliminate funding completely for a number of small programs of great importance to sustainable, organic, beginning and minority farmers. The National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service (ATTRA), Organic Transitions Research Program, Office of Advocacy and Outreach (to coordinate policy and outreach to beginning, women, and minority farmers), and the Office of Tribal Relations program would all be terminated. These are programs that with minimal resources are charged with serving the most chronically underserved segments of agriculture. Slating programs of such small means for termination suggests a motive that has little to do with deficit reduction. Terminating these programs is unjust and discriminatory.

At a time of extremely tight credit markets and increased demand for Farm Services Agency (FSA) farm credit, H.R. 1 would cut FSA Direct Operating loans by 10% or \$100 million and Direct Farm Ownership loans by 27% or \$175 million, and would completely eliminate funding for Conservation Loans. The majority of direct lending is targeted to beginning and minority farmers and ranchers although in these tough times many established farmers have had to turn to FSA direct loans to keep operating. Cuts to such an important source of credit in the countryside will only further delay economic recovery in rural America and we urge you to reject them.

H.R. 1 also cuts several USDA agency administrative budgets more severely than the programs they manage, raising the obvious question of how they could possibly manage and implement the programs with staff cuts of that

magnitude. The result is that agencies will find it impossible to do their jobs effectively.

Tell your Senator that if cuts must be made then everything must be on the table. Cuts must be fair, equitable and made based on the merits of each program. Cuts to mandatory funding and the attendant loss of baseline used to determine future Farm Bill funding should be made by the Agriculture Committee in the context of the next Farm Bill or, if need be, in budget reconciliation. Ultimately, these are decisions that must be made in the context of a broader agreement to find savings in mandatory programs on a government-wide basis. With just half a fiscal year remaining, a net freeze at the prior year's level would be a significant contribution toward a comprehensive deficit reduction plan.

[Forward email](#)



This email was sent to info@calclimateag.org by info@calclimateag.org | [Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

CalCAN | PO Box 1366 | Sebastopol | CA | 95472