

New Jersey Conservation Foundation • New Jersey Chapter, Sierra Club
Honey Brook Organic Farm CSA • Northeast Organic Farming Association of NJ
New Jersey Environmental Federation • Stone's Throw Garden
Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions
Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association • West Windsor Community Farmers Market
New Jersey Highlands Coalition • Delaware Riverkeeper Network
Pinelands Preservation Alliance • Musconetcong Mountain Conservancy
New Jersey Audubon Society • New Jersey Environmental Lobby
New Jersey Future • Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association
Bethlehem Township Environmental Commission • Great Swamp Watershed Association
Upper Raritan Watershed Association • Upper Rockaway River Watershed Association
Comeback Farm • Tewksbury Democratic Committee
Montgomery Friends of Open Space • South Branch Watershed Association
Save the Environment of Morristown

October 23, 2007

The Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg
Hart Senate Office Building
Suite 324
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Lautenberg,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we applaud your work to support real Farm Bill reform in 2007. Few federal policy decisions will have as broad and wide-ranging an impact on New Jersey residents as reauthorization of the U.S. Farm Bill. Farm Bill food and agriculture programs affect every facet of American life — from the food we put on our tables to the fuel we use to the quality of the air, land and water around us.

The bill recently passed by the House of Representatives includes increases in conservation, nutrition and healthy foods spending as well as important policy improvements. However, House Farm Bill increases do not go far enough to address the needs of farmers, consumers and communities.

We commend your leadership in introducing the Farm Ranch Energy Stewardship and Health Act (FRESH Act) this week. Your bill will redirect savings from Farm Bill reform to help farmers, children, the environment and rural communities *without increasing overall federal spending.*

Specifically, the bill will provide the following over 5 years:

- \$6 billion more for conservation including \$200 million for wildlife, \$500 million for open space protection, \$1.9 billion to restore and protect wetlands, \$780 million to conserve grasslands and almost \$2 billion in new investments in EQIP

- \$4.2 billion in investments in Food Stamps and nutrition programs
- Record investments in fruit and vegetable agriculture, including \$1 billion in block grants and research funding, \$375 million in transportation grants and \$200 million for invasive pest detection and control
- Free crop insurance available to all farmers to cover 80% or more of revenue
- \$1 billion investment in school Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program
- \$100 million for organic research and transition assistance
- \$460 million for WIC and Seniors farmers market coupon programs, \$100 million to support farmers markets, and \$150 million for farm-to-school and DoD Fresh
- \$1.6 billion for renewable energy research and investments in cellulosic, wind, solar, manure and other farm-based energy sources
- \$3 billion in deficit reducing savings

There has never been a better opportunity to reform Farm Bill programs and make them more beneficial to New Jersey farmers, consumers and the environment. Thank you for developing the FRESH Act and championing these reforms during Senate debate on the Farm Bill.

We appreciate your consideration of our comments. Please contact Alison Mitchell, Policy Director, New Jersey Conservation Foundation, at 908-234-1225 with any questions or concerns.

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Connie Stroh, President
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Dominick DePinto, Chairman
Tewksbury Democratic Committee

William S. Kibler, Executive Director
South Branch Watershed Association

Walt Trommelen, Past President
Save the Environment of Morristown

cc: Senator Richard G. Lugar
Senator Robert Menendez