



May 13, 2013

U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar
Senate Agriculture Committee Member
302 Hart SOB
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Klobuchar:

The Senate Agriculture Committee is scheduled for debate and votes on the Agriculture Reform, Food, and Jobs Act of 2013 on Tuesday, May 14, 2013. Leading up to the committee process, we at the Land Stewardship Project wanted to provide our perspective on a handful of amendments that will be important in crafting the next Farm Bill and to our nation's food and agriculture system. Outlined below are amendments listed by title, as well as greater details on the positions we urge you to consider.

We especially want to thank you for working to advance amendment "Klobuchar #2," which would support increased funding for the Conservation Stewardship Program and a select set of other programs. The Conservation Stewardship Program is a popular working lands program that leverages more conservation on the landscape. We need more conservation resources available for farmland, not less.

We recognize this process is fluid and hope the outline below is informative and useful. If you have questions, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

Mark Schultz
Associate Director, Director of Programs
marks@landstewardshipproject.org
612-722-6377

Adam Warthesen
Federal Farm Policy Organizer
adamw@landstewardshipproject.org
612-722-6377
651-890-9250 mobile

LEWISTON OFFICE
180 E Main Street, Box 130
Lewiston, MN 55952
Phone: 507-523-3366

MONTEVIDEO OFFICE
301 State Road, Suite 2
Montevideo, MN 56265
Phone: 320-269-2105

TWIN CITIES OFFICE
821 East 35th Street,
Suite 200
Minneapolis, MN 55407
Phone: 612-722-6377

landstewardshipproject.org

Commodities & Crop Insurance, Title: I & XI

- **OPPOSE – Stabenow #2 – Strikes the limitation on crop insurance premium subsidies based on adjusted gross income.**
Restores unlimited taxpayer subsidies by eliminating the subsidy reduction on crop insurance premiums for farmers and investors making over \$750,000 a year — a measure which was approved by a super majority in the full Senate during last year's Farm Bill debate. We appreciated Senator Klobuchar's yes vote for the Durbin-Coburn amendment in 2012 that established this precedent.

Conservation, Title II

- **SUPPORT – Klobuchar #2 – Funding support for conservation, rural development, research and energy programs.**
Directs mandatory funding to the Conservation Stewardship Program, Rural Energy Assistance Program, Research Foundation, and Water and Waste Disposal loans and loan guarantees.
- **OPPOSE – Hoven #1, #4, #5, and Heitkamp #5 – Undermining conservation compliance.**
These set of amendments aim to weaken the accountability that conservation compliance demands from producers who are found in violation of the law.
- **OPPOSE – Hoven #6 – Prohibits conservation compliance from being connected to crop insurance in any manner.**
Would not allow any means in the Farm Bill to tie conservation compliance to federally subsidized crop insurance.

Credit, Title V

- **SUPPORT – Cowan #4 – Farm Service Agency credit for local and regional farmers.**
Authorizes lending from all Farm Service Agency credit programs to farmers and ranchers producing for local and regional food markets.
- **SUPPORT – Harkin #6 – Microloans for beginning and veteran farmers.**
Authorizes and establishes terms for microloans to beginning farmers and ranchers and military veteran farmers and ranchers in the Farm Service Agency direct operating loan program.

Research, Title VII

- **OPPOSE – Bennet # 4 – Enables procedures needed to establish an organic checkoff.**
Agricultural checkoff programs have a sordid history and have resulted in a greater gain for industry advocates and processors, rather than the farmers and ranchers, which they purport to serve. Even in cases where checkoffs are opposed by the majority of producers, they have been maintained. The dollars that would be generated by a new checkoff are better left in the pockets of farmers and ranchers. Any congressional action enabling the procedure of petitioning USDA for an organic checkoff should be opposed.
- **SUPPORT - Harkin #4 – Improving farm safety training through the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program.**
Adds farm safety training to the list of grant priorities funded through the program, and strikes existing language that would divert funds from new farmer training into state block grants.

Miscellaneous, Title XII

- **OPPOSE – Johanns #1 – Eliminate Country of Origin Labeling for Livestock and Poultry.**
Repeals country-of-origin labeling requirements for meat to the detriment of farmers and ranchers, as well as the consumers' right-to-know.
- **OPPOSE – Roberts #9 – Clean Water Act exemption for pesticides.**
Amends the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act to exempt authorized pesticides from Clean Water Act regulation as a source of pollution.