

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 25, 2013

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Chairman
Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and
Forestry Committee
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and
Forestry Committee
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Stabenow and Ranking Member Cochran:

As the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee prepares to markup a Farm Bill, we are writing to express our strong support for the Regional Conservation Partnership Program of the 2012 Farm Bill (S. 3240), the Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act of 2012 as reported from the Senate last year. We respectfully urge you to incorporate the Regional Conservation Partnership Program section of the next Farm Bill's Conservation Title as it was reported last year into this year's Farm Bill.

We greatly appreciate the Agriculture Committee's willingness to work with us on the Conservation Title last year. Federal agricultural conservation programs are of great importance to our farmers operating in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The modifications we worked out together provide not only considerable benefit for farmers in our states but for farmers around the country operating in environmentally sensitive areas.

If the committee considers changes to the Regional Conservation Partnership Program and other elements of the Conservation Title that will affect Chesapeake Bay region farmers we ask that you please consult us as modifications are negotiated. We would greatly appreciate the opportunity to provide input on programmatic changes to these programs that the Committee puts forward.

The Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries are tremendously important natural resources to our region and our nation. Farmers in our states who operate in the Chesapeake Bay watershed face tremendous pressure to control nutrient and sediment loss from their farms. The Farm Bill's conservation programs have proven incredibly valuable to farmers in our region in mitigating the impact of these pollutants. Our work with Chairwoman Stabenow and Ranking Member Roberts to improve the Regional Conservation Partnership Program will help maintain the federal government's commitment to assisting farmers do their part to protect the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

We recognize Congressional leadership's desire to reform and consolidate the Farm Bill's conservation programs. Last year's amendments to the Regional Conservation Partnership

Program adopted by the full Senate respects the construction of the new program. The changes merely focus resources on regions with the most need and proven benefit.

This is an issue of the utmost importance to all of us and we respectfully ask that you maintain the Regional Conservation Partnership Program according to what the Senate agreed to in the 2012 Farm Bill.

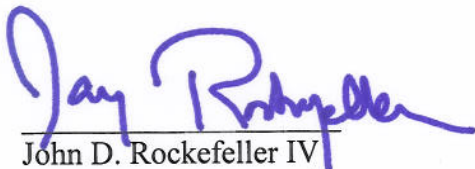
Sincerely,



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



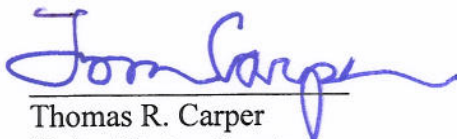
Barbara A. Mikulski
United States Senator



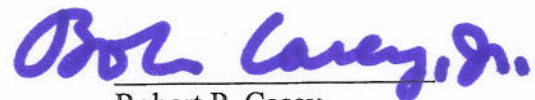
John D. Rockefeller IV
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



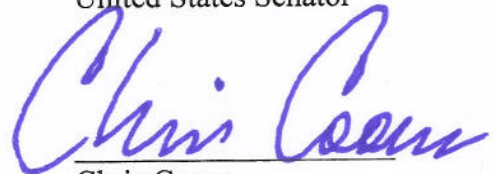
Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator



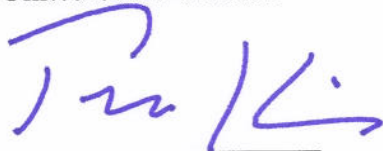
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United States Senator

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