

December 12, 2007

The Honorable Tom Harkin
U.S. Senate
731 Hart Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Harkin:

We urge you to vote “no” on the Brown-Sununu-McCaskill amendment that is said to “reform” the federal crop insurance program.

The Senate Agriculture Committee has already carefully considered the crop insurance program and adopted manageable changes that reduce costs and improve efficiency while capturing nearly \$4 billion in savings to fund other farm bill priorities.

The public-private partnership responsible for managing and implementing the program has responded very well over the years to Congress’ desire to have a federal crop insurance program that reaches out to farmers across the nation, especially small, beginning and limited-resource farmers, in a fair, equitable and non-discriminatory manner to provide effective risk management. There is very tangible evidence the program is achieving this objective. For example, farmer risk protection is projected to reach at least \$65 billion in 2007, providing protection to more than 80 percent of the insurable acreage.

With this magnitude of expansion, crop insurance has become essential not only for individual farmer risk management, but also, in many cases, to borrow money or rent land. Without a crop insurance safety net that is fairly and effectively available, many family farms will not be able to rent land and obtain credit to produce a crop. Furthermore, the crop insurance program helps farmers have the confidence to more effectively market their crops through the futures market where they can capture higher prices and increase their annual income.

We are concerned the changes that would be made to the crop insurance program by the Brown amendment have not been thoroughly and effectively analyzed by the Agriculture Committee and will cause unintended harm to the availability and delivery of a vital farm security program.

To protect what it has taken Congress more than 25 years to build, we urge you to vote “no” on the Brown amendment.

Sincerely,

American Soybean Association
American Sugar Alliance
Corn Producers Association of Texas
Minnesota Corn Growers Association
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Barley Growers Association
National Cotton Council

National Farmers Union
National Sorghum Producers
National Sunflower Association
New Mexico Peanut Growers Association
North Carolina Peanut Growers Association
Oklahoma Peanut Commission
Peanut Growers Cooperative Marketing Association
Southwest Council of Agribusiness
USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council
USA Rice Federation
US Canola Association
US Rice Producers Association
Virginia Peanut Growers Association
Western Peanut Growers