

September 10, 2007

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Chairman  
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and  
Forestry  
United States Senate

The Honorable Saxby Chambliss  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and  
Forestry  
United States Senate

Dear Senators Reid, McConnell, Harkin and Chambliss:

The undersigned organizations look forward to expedited Senate action on the 2007 Farm Bill. We are writing to encourage swift action in the Senate and to offer our assistance in enacting solid policy for American farmers, ranchers and those industries that depend on them.

While there are some detail differences in specific policy recommendations between the organizations, we are united on the following points:

1. It is vitally important to mark-up and pass the 2007 bill as soon as possible. Most of the existing law expires on September 30, leaving nothing in place but the 1938 and 1949 permanent law. Even though the 2001-02 process stretched out over several months, the 2002 law was enacted more than four months before the 1996 law would have expired. In 2007 we are now down to a matter of days before the current law expires. Farmers are already making planting, capital allocation and financing decisions, and they and their lenders need certainty on the policy environment in which they will operate. For this reason, the bill should be at least a five-year authorization rather than a short-term extension of the current policy.
2. We believe that the legislation passed by the House of Representatives is an appropriate and useful starting point for the Senate deliberations. Some of the organizations signed below will make their own recommendations for some adjustments in the House-passed bill. Overall, however, we believe the Committee would be well served to use the House bill as a starting point for its deliberations and that doing so would contribute to the expediency of the process.
3. The bill must have strong bipartisan support in the Committee. Farm policy is best when it has the support of both parties, and that support will be necessary to prevail.

Our members, leaders and organizations look forward to working with you on this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely yours,

Alabama Peanut Producers Association  
American Soybean Association  
American Sugar Alliance  
Florida Peanut Producers Association  
Georgia Peanut Commission  
Mississippi Peanut Growers Association  
National Association of Wheat Growers  
National Barley Growers Association  
National Cotton Council  
National Sorghum Producers  
National Sunflower Association  
New Mexico Peanut Growers Association  
North Carolina Peanut Growers  
Oklahoma Peanut Commission  
Southern Peanut Farmers Federation  
United Peanut Alliance  
USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council  
USA Rice Federation  
US Canola Association  
US Rice Producers Association  
Virginia Peanut Growers  
Western Peanut Growers Association

cc: Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry