

SUPPORT BIPARTISAN LEGISLATION TO PRESERVE OPEN SPACES

Endorsed by Land Trust Alliance, American Farm Bureau Federation, National Wildlife Federation, National Cattleman's Beef Association, American Forest Foundation, Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation and over 50 other leading groups

March 2, 2009

Dear Colleague:

Conservation easements are a vital tool in the fight to preserve open spaces and farmland. They allow private landowners to permanently retire development rights to protect significant natural resources. Conservation easements are also critical resources to help protect clean water supplies, fight air pollution, and conserve wildlife habitats. **We are introducing the Conservation Easement Incentive Act to make these deductions permanent.**

Currently, landowners who donate a qualified conservation easement are allowed to deduct the fair market value of the easement. Such deductions are capped at 50% of income, with farmers and ranchers eligible to claim 100%. The carry forward period for such deductions is 15 years. The deduction for conservation easements is set to expire at the end of 2009.

It can take up to four years to complete the process of placing land into easement. Making these incentives permanent will afford landowners the stability and certainty needed to complete their long-term planning.

This proposal has been endorsed by over 50 leading conservation, sportsmen's, and agricultural organizations, including the Land Trust Alliance, the American Farm Bureau Federation, the National Wildlife Federation, the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, and the American Forest Foundation.

We urge you to join us in supporting this legislation. To become an original co-sponsor, please contact Travis Robey (Thompson) at 5-3311 or Wyatt Stewart (Cantor) at 5-2815.

Sincerely,



MIKE THOMPSON
Member of Congress



ERIC CANTOR
Member of Congress