NATIONAL CATTLEMEN'S BEEF ASSOCIATION
1301 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Suite #300 • Washington, DC 20004 • 202-347-0228 • Fax 202-638-0607

March 26, 2009

Letters Individually Addressed

Re: Please Co-sponsor the Conservation Easement Tax Incentive Act

Dear Member of Congress:

Voluntary conservation easements are important tools for keeping land in agriculture and protecting conservation values for future generations. In 2006, Congress enhanced the tax deduction for donations of conservation easements, but this important conservation tool is set to expire at the end of 2009. We urge you to become an original cosponsor of legislation to make it permanent.

Many of the nation's most ecologically diverse and agriculturally productive lands are owned by working farm and ranch families. This legislation encourages voluntary, incentive-based donations of future development rights to ensure such lands remain in production.

For the farmer or rancher, this donation may mean giving away their family's single largest asset, but previous law prevented modest-income landowners from deducting more than a small portion of their generous gift. The enhanced incentive allows agricultural landowners to deduct more of the value of their donation, up to their full income for 16 years.

The 2008 Farm Bill renewed the incentive through December 2009, but landowners considering a perpetual commitment to conservation should not be pressured by a deadline, and many will never begin the lengthy process without the reassurance of a permanent incentive. Please join Congressmen Mike Thompson (D-CA) and Eric Cantor (R-VA) as an original cosponsor of the Conservation Easement Incentive Act by contacting Travis Robey in Rep. Thompson's Office or Wyatt Stewart in Rep. Cantor's Office.

Thank you for your continued commitment to safeguarding farm and ranch land, supporting rural economies and conserving our natural resources.

Sincerely,

Gary Voogt, President
National Cattlemen's Beef Association