



AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION®

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April 3, 2009

The Honorable Mike Thompson
United States House of Representatives
231 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20215

The Honorable Eric Cantor
United States House of Representatives
329 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20215

Dear Rep. Thompson and Rep. Cantor:

Conserving our nation's resources and safeguarding farmland is a longstanding goal of the American Farm Bureau Federation. We support tax incentives that help farmers and ranchers protect their land base, and we endorse your legislation, H.R. 1831, the Conservation Easement Incentive Act of 2009, to make permanent the enhanced tax deduction for donated conservation easements.

Voluntary easements are important for land conservation. When farmers and ranchers donate voluntary conservation easements, they protect farmland for future generations from development by giving up development rights while retaining ownership and management of the land.

Under current law a farmer can take a tax deduction for donating a conservation easement. Through 2009, an enhanced deduction of up to 100 percent of a farmer's or rancher's income can be taken and the deduction can be carried forward for 15 years. Unless Congress acts, the amount of the deduction will be limited to 30 percent and the amount of time that the deduction can be carried forward will only be five years.

Tax deductions for donated conservation easements provide farmers and ranchers an economic benefit for preserving farmland. Allowing a deduction worth 100 percent of income increases the amount of the economic benefit and incentive to preserve farm and ranch land. The 15-year carry forward provides a way for farmers with modest incomes to receive a larger benefit for donating development rights to their land.

Farm Bureau commends your leadership on this issue and stands ready to assist you in securing passage of this valuable legislation.

Sincerely,

Bob Stallman
President



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April 3, 2009

The Honorable Max Baucus
U.S. Senate
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
U.S. Senate
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senators Baucus and Grassley:

Conserving our nation's resources and safeguarding farmland is a longstanding goal of the American Farm Bureau Federation. We support tax incentives that help farmers and ranchers protect their land base, and we endorse your legislation, S. 812, the Rural Heritage Conservation Extension Act of 2009, to make permanent the enhanced tax deduction for donated conservation easements.

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