

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 29, 2013

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Chairwoman
Senate Committee on Agriculture,
Nutrition and Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC, 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Agriculture,
Nutrition and Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC, 20510

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow and Ranking Member Cochran,

As you prepare to meet with your House counterparts to reconcile the differences between the House and Senate farm bills, we are writing to voice our strong support of the new payment limit reforms that have been approved by large majorities in both chambers of Congress. These reforms are good for rural America, taxpayers, and beginning farmers.

The House and Senate farm bills both include significant reforms that are needed to make farm policy more defensible to the public. The new payment limits would finally establish a reasonable overall hard cap of \$250,000 on the total amount of payments that producers can receive. The bill also reforms the farm program eligibility requirements by replacing the vague 'actively engaged' requirement that is still being exploited to qualify people with limited farm involvement for payments. Finally, the Congressional Budget Office has estimated savings of \$170 million for these policies.

We believe farm programs should offer support in tough times, but like other economic safety nets, the assistance should be limited. The new limits have been approved by both bodies of Congress and any changes by the conference committee would contradict the will of Congress and violate Senate Rule 28. Farm bills require a delicate balance of policy to achieve final passage, and we urge you to ensure these bipartisan reforms are in the final bill.

Sincerely,







John Barrasso
Tom Cole

Mike Johanns

Kirsten E. Gillibrand

PK Fleck

Michael B. Enzi

Jan Tosta