

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 3, 2008

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
House Majority Leader
H-107, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable James Clyburn
House Majority Whip
H-329, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rahm Emanuel
Democratic Caucus Chairman
202 A Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

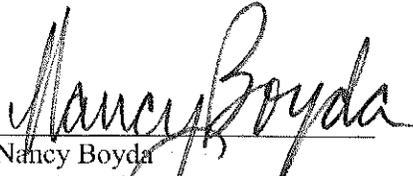
Dear Members of the House Democratic Leadership:

As members of the Democratic freshmen class, we have heard from our constituents on the imperative need to sign into law a Farm Bill before its expiration date of April 18, 2008. While high commodity prices have been a boon for farmers, ranchers, rural businesses and communities in our districts, costs like gasoline and fertilizer are on the rise with no guarantee of high prices for commodities in the future. Without a strong farm safety net, many agriculturally related businesses are only one disaster away from bankruptcy.

The agriculture and rural groups we represent remain anxious about the lack of a strong farm safety net should we fail to pass a Farm Bill this year. Important changes the House has made in improving nutrition, renewable energy, agriculture research and farm commodity programs remain in jeopardy.

We have also been made aware that some opponents to the farm bill, whose alternative proposals were decisively defeated in July, are now urging a one-year extension as an alternative strategy to defeat a new farm bill. After a year of negotiation, debate and progress, a long-term extension of the 2002 Farm Bill is unacceptable. We urge the House leadership to make every effort possible to pass a comprehensive farm bill that invests in our agricultural priorities.

Writing a farm bill is one of those benchmarks that rural America uses to judge if Congress is functional or not. We appreciate the work Chairman Peterson and the House leadership has done in making progress on the Farm Bill, but we can't see those achievements stopped now. Please work with the House and Senate Farm Bill negotiators in finding a compromise acceptable for all parties which expedites passage of this bill.


Nancy Boyda
Member of Congress

Sincerely,


Tim Walz
Member of Congress


Steve Kagen, M.D.
Member of Congress

CC: Representative Chris Van Hollen
Representative Colin Peterson
Representative Charles Rangel

Burt Z. Berg

Joe Courtney

Brian Hill

Paul E. Smith

Michael Blum

Kristen Gilliland

Phil Nass

Jack Langman

Christopher P. Conroy

Ron Klein

~~W. J. ...~~ ^{W. J.}

Joe Donnell

Steve Kagan, M.D.