

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 26, 2013

Senator Mark Pryor, Chair
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug
Administration, and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations

Senator Roy Blunt, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug
Administration, and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations

Dear Chairman Pryor and Ranking Member Blunt:

We understand that you face very significant challenges in allocating limited funding across the numerous deserving programs under your purview. We also believe that as funding decisions are made we should continue to invest in our nation's energy security and the economic health and sustainability of our agricultural sector and rural America. We thus recommend strong funding support in FY 2014 for three energy programs at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. These three programs offer enduring national employment benefits and also contribute to our national energy security by increasing production of home-grown biofuels and renewable energy.

The Rural Energy for America Program – REAP – provides significant opportunities for producers and rural small businesses across the country to adopt energy efficiency projects and install renewable energy systems. Through recipient cost-sharing, REAP funds are leveraged approximately three-to-one. REAP is generating critically-needed job and economic benefits in virtually every state in the country. Accordingly, we encourage you to provide a minimum of \$70 million for this very successful program.

The Biorefinery Assistance Program provides critical financing for our nation's first-generation of commercial-scale advanced biorefineries, reducing investor risk and providing well-paying construction and operation jobs in rural communities. This program is critical to the construction of these first-of-a-kind biorefineries that are so essential for diversifying biofuels' feedstocks and enabling the nation to continue to replace petroleum-based fuels with advanced biofuels to meet the Renewable Fuel Standard. Accordingly, we ask that you appropriate \$75 million for the Biorefinery Assistance Program.

Providing adequate feed stocks for expanding the production and use of advanced biofuels in the future will require growth, harvest, and delivery of very significant amounts of cellulosic feedstocks to new advanced biorefineries. The Biomass Crop Assistance Program – BCAP – is designed to support producers who will supply these biomass feedstocks by providing

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payments for crop establishment as well as cost-shared payments for feedstock deliveries in the first two years. Development of this feedstock supply enterprise across the nation depends on support from BCAP. We therefore urge you to provide \$50 million for this program in FY 2014.

We believe that funding for these USDA energy programs should receive priority consideration within a fiscally responsible appropriations bill. With strong national interest in agriculture-based energy solutions, we urge you to support these funding priorities in FY 2014.

Sincerely,

Tom Harkin

For Wyden

Jeanne Shaker

Al Franken

Lin Duncan

Willie

Jim Johnson

Meyi K. Simon

Chris Coons

Jon Tester

Yang Boldi

Sherrill Brown

Jeffrey A. Mackley

Brian Schatz

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