



## The Western Agriculture and Conservation Coalition

April 17, 2018

Chairman Mike Conaway

Ranking Member Collin Peterson

U.S. House Committee on Agriculture

Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: WACC Support for Conservation Programs in H.R. 2, the House Farm Bill

Dear Chairman Conaway and Ranking Member Peterson:

The Western Agricultural and Conservation Coalition (WACC) thanks the Committee for the strong western provisions in the draft conservation title it has introduced as part of the reauthorization of the Farm Bill.

As introduced, the Farm Bill has the potential to strengthen the ability to use some USDA conservation programs to manage agricultural landscapes in the West. The conservation programs in the bill that best serve western producers and the needs for conserving and restoring watersheds are EQIP, RCPP, and ACEP. These programs are especially important for

conservation, rural economic, and social goals in the West. H.R. 2 recognizes the impact of these private land conservation programs, invests in them, and includes reforms to improve program accessibility and ensure they work better for more producers. The bill also simplifies administration of the RCPP program, includes mandatory funding for the Small Watersheds program, seeks to better support beginning farmers and ranchers, and improves the flexibility of existing programs to better serve multi-producer, water-delivery entities.

These improvements strengthen management of western landscapes for agricultural production and conservation. We hope that these improvements, and the rest of WACC's recommendations to the Committee, are included with robust funding in a bipartisan bill that passes the House and ultimately is enacted into law.

If you have any questions regarding this letter or WACC's activities, please feel free to contact Jeff Eisenberg, coalition director, or any of the members of the coalition. Jeff can be reached at [jeffeisenberg@rockspringrs.com](mailto:jeffeisenberg@rockspringrs.com) or 571.355.3073.

Sincerely,

Members of the Western Agriculture and Conservation Coalition

Steering Committee: Arizona Cattle Growers Association, California Farm Bureau Federation, Environmental Defense Fund, Family Farm Alliance, Irrigation Association, The Nature Conservancy, Public Lands Council, Trout Unlimited, Wyoming Stock Growers Association

Members: California Agricultural Irrigation Association, Montana Stock Growers Association, National Audubon Society, Farmers Conservation Alliance, Oregon Water Resources Congress, Western Growers Association, World Wildlife Fund