

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 26, 2011

The Honorable Herb Kohl
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture,
Rural Development, Food and
Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture,
Rural Development, Food and
Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Kohl and Ranking Member Blunt,

As you begin drafting the Fiscal Year 2012 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, we write to respectfully request your support for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) program.

The projects that are funded through the USDA RC&D program enhance the economic viability of rural communities across America. When adequately funded, the USDA RC&D program completes about 4,500 projects annually to create, expand, and financially assist 6,000 to 7,000 businesses and create and retain 11,000 to 12,000 jobs per year.

Comprised of local leaders and community stakeholders, USDA RC&D councils have a history of partnering with federal and state agencies and non-governmental agencies to achieve community goals. The USDA RC&D program has proven to be a very valuable and worthwhile investment in our communities. Every dollar of federal investment in this program has the ability to return \$8.00 to support economic development and resource protection in rural areas.

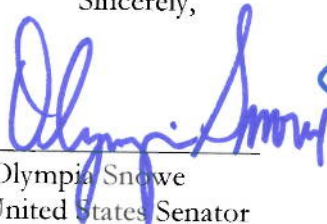
We were very disappointed to see that the funding for this important program was zeroed out in the Fiscal Year 2011 budget, and ask that you restore this program's funding of \$51 million in Fiscal Year 2012.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,



Kirsten E. Gillibrand
United States Senator



Olympia Snowe
United States Senator



Robert Menendez
United States Senator

Ron Wyden

Ron Wyden
United States Senator

Carl Levin

Carl Levin
United States Senator

Jack Reed

Jack Reed
United States Senator

Tim Johnson

Tim Johnson
United States Senator

Jeffrey A. Merkley

Jeff Merkley
United States Senator

John Hoeven

John Hoeven
United States Senator

Tom Harkin

Tom Harkin
United States Senator