



June 4, 2012

The Honorable Frank Lucas  
Chairman  
Committee on Agriculture  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Collin Peterson  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Agriculture  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Lucas and Ranking Member Peterson:

I write to you on behalf of the farmers, ranchers and rural members of the National Farmers Union (NFU) regarding legislation, the Protect our Prairies Act, recently introduced by Reps. Kristi Noem and Tim Walz that would establish a sodsaver provision to help conserve native sod and grasslands.

NFU has represented family farmers, ranchers and rural residents since 1902, and we work to improve the well-being and quality of life for family farmers, ranchers and rural communities by advocating for grassroots-driven policy adopted annually by our membership. Our policy supports a federal sodsaver provision which disallows the payment of farm and crop insurance subsidies and linked federal or disaster relief for the financial assurance of crops planted on land without any previous cropping history.

Native grasslands are significant natural resources, both for agricultural production and for the abundance of wildlife benefits they provide. Planting decisions that convert native grassland to crop production should not be incentivized by federal farm policy. The legislation by Reps. Walz and Noem would address this by reducing crop insurance assistance for the first four years for crops grown on native sod and certain grasslands converted to cropland. Additionally, the Congressional Budget Office estimates that this legislation would provide additional public benefit by saving nearly \$200 million.

I ask that you support this common sense legislation that maintains farmer control over planting decisions, encourages good land stewardship practices and preserves wildlife habitat.

Sincerely,

Roger Johnson  
President

RJ:jp

Cc: House Agriculture Committee Members