

December 12, 2006

Dear Colleagues:

The 2007 Farm Bill presents an unparalleled opportunity for building alliances and identifying workable policy tools to renew American agriculture, reduce hunger and improve health, enhance rural and urban community development, and protect the environment.

Over the past year, a large group of organizations – including sustainable agriculture, family farm, minority farmer and rancher, conservation and environment, rural and community development, anti-hunger, nutrition, public health, faith, and others – have met under the auspices of the *Farm and Food Policy Project* to discuss the future of U.S. farm and food policy.

In January we will release a public statement entitled “Seeking Balance in U.S. Farm and Food Policy,” which outlines a series of broad goals and specific measures that we believe will secure a brighter future for farmers and ranchers, for rural and urban communities, and for all of us who depend on a healthy food system.

This statement is positive and forward-looking. It identifies opportunities for advancing entrepreneurial agriculture and developing new markets – from local and regional to organic to renewable energy. It looks to strengthen critical food assistance programs and improve access to healthier foods. It seeks to foster entrepreneurship and rural community development. It calls for significant expansion and improvement of agricultural conservation programs. And it calls for farm and food policies that are more equitable and that better serve all people in our increasingly diverse society.

We ask you to join our effort by supporting this statement and working with us to advance its goals. “Support” means that your organization is willing to be listed on printed and web-based versions of the statement (www.farmandfoodproject.org). It means that you see significant opportunities for positive change in the next Farm Bill and support the general direction called for in the statement. It indicates that you see value in a cross-sector dialogue about the future of the U.S. agriculture and food system and support efforts to identify cross-cutting policy innovations. It does not imply support for any particular piece of legislation or legislative language, or for any specific policy proposal in this document. It does not mean that all the policy issues addressed in the statement are priorities for your organization. Rather, it signals support for efforts to join forces across the public interest community to create change, change that is far more likely to occur through unity and coordination than through each organization working alone.

Help us send a message to Congress and to the American public that federal farm and food policy needs to serve all people in our country and that many organizations – including many new stakeholders – believe that significant steps must be taken through the 2007 Farm Bill.

Sincerely,

Allen Hance
Coordinator, Farm and Food Policy Project

For more information, see: www.farmandfoodproject.org. To join the growing list of organizations supporting this statement, contact Jessie Dowling at info@farmandfoodproject.org or 202-543-1300.