



Coalition to Congress: Farm Bill Must Address Out-of-Control Subsidy Programs

May 2, 2018

Dear Members of Congress:



The undersigned organizations are leading organizations in the conservative and free-market community, representing millions of members, supporters, and activists. We have come together to urge all House members to play a leading role in making major reforms to the out of control farm subsidy system.



The House Agriculture Committee farm bill, which is expected to be debated on the House floor in May, is unacceptable. It not only fails to make reforms to farm subsidies, but actually makes the subsidies even worse. For example, it creates new ways to funnel more money to agricultural producers, including to individuals who do not even farm.



Our concerns about farm subsidies go well beyond excessive and unjustified costs to taxpayers. Subsidy reform is so important to our organizations because the existing subsidy system violates the most basic principles of conservatism, including a belief in free enterprise and limited government. There is nothing conservative about:



- Cronyism. Our nation's so-called safety net is not really about protecting agriculture so much as protecting a small number of producers, usually the largest operations, growing a small number of commodities.



- Waste. Most agriculture receives little to no subsidies and succeeds without federal intervention. Yet, for some producers of favored commodities, subsidies flow to them through *multiple* programs.



- Central Planning. In 2018, it is hard to believe that the federal government dictates how much of a commodity can be sold, yet this is a key feature of the federal sugar program.
- Promoting Dependence. The current subsidy system creates dependence on federal handouts, instead of empowering individuals to succeed on their own.



Agricultural special interests would have you believe that daring to touch farm subsidies is somehow anti-farmer. Since when do conservatives think that promoting our principles is harmful to Americans, including farmers? It is by promoting our principles that we will best help those small number of producers receiving subsidies. Quite simply, respect for farmers doesn't mean tolerance for wasting taxpayer money on handouts.

There are many important and common sense reforms, including reducing premium subsidies, placing a cap on ARC and PLC costs, reforming the sugar program, prohibiting protection against shallow losses, requiring producers to choose between ARC/PLC and crop insurance, and strengthening means testing and payment limits. Many of these reforms have been included in the Trump Administration budgets, identified by the Government Accountability Office, introduced in bipartisan legislation, and/or passed by the House.

Our organizations are taking farm subsidy reform very seriously in the upcoming farm bill debate. We look forward to working with you to provide more details about reforms and to create a truly conservative and free-market farm bill.

Sincerely,

Campaign for Liberty

Competitive Enterprise Institute

Coalition to Reduce Spending

Club for Growth

Council for Citizens Against Government Waste

FreedomWorks

Heritage Action

Independent Women's Forum

Independent Women's Voice

John Locke Foundation

R Street Institute

Rio Grande Foundation

Taxpayers for Common Sense

Taxpayers Protection Alliance