

January 11, 2011

The Honorable Barack Obama  
President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W.  
Washington D.C. 20501

Dear President Obama:

The organizations below urge your Administration to maintain robust funding levels for the Department of Agriculture's innovative clean energy programs in its upcoming Fiscal Year 2012 budget proposal. We recognize that the Administration and Congress will continue to carefully scrutinize programs and policies for cost savings and effectiveness. That is to be commended. However, it is our very firm belief that these initiatives, representing a small fraction of the Agriculture Department's budget, deserve significant and consistent support in the months ahead.

The Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP) is just beginning to take shape in transforming rural America's contribution to the nation's renewable energy supply. BCAP provides important assistance to help farmers and foresters plant and collect next generation, purpose grown energy crops and other biomass that are key to ensuring the near-term commercialization of low-carbon advanced biofuels, power, and products. The program is also vital to ensuring that the Renewable Fuels Standard goals are met. Simply put, BCAP is a pivotal program for our clean energy future and is essential to reducing the nation's overdependence on foreign oil.

In addition to BCAP, the farm bill's other energy title programs are of great importance to the nation and in particular rural communities. The Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) program supports a variety of agriculture-based renewable energy and energy efficiency projects and has positively impacted every state in America. The Biorefinery Assistance Program is helping advanced biofuels and products become a reality in areas in need of green jobs. Other programs, including the Bioenergy Program for Advanced Biofuels, will help maximize renewable energy deployment.

This very modest funding is essential to realizing your Administration's vision for a clean energy economy. And just as important, these programs support your goal of improving economic opportunity in rural America while providing opportunities for farmers and foresters to produce real energy solutions. Now is not the time to waiver from this support, just as the hard work by so many in and outside of government is paying off.

We call upon your Administration to keep strong funding for these valuable programs intact. Thank you.

Sincerely,

25x25 Alliance

ACORE

Advanced Biofuels Association

American Coalition for Ethanol

American Forest Foundation

ASERTTI

BIO

Biomass Coordinating Council

Biomass Power Association

Distributed Wind Energy Association

Energy Future Coalition

Environmental and Energy Study Institute

Environmental Law & Policy Center

Growth Energy

Iowa Renewable Fuels Association

National Alliance of Forest Owners

National Corn Growers Association

National Farmers Union

National Sorghum Producers

National Wildlife Federation

Remineralize the Earth

Renewable Fuels Association

Renew the Earth

Windustry

cc: OMB Director Jacob Lew