



June 19, 2012

**Support Deficit Reduction and Transparency Reform Amendments
in the *Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act of 2012 (S. 3240)***

Dear Platts,

Taxpayers for Common Sense Action (TCS Action) urges you to vote no on The Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act of 2012 (S. 3240) which is currently being debated in the Senate after reaching the Floor through a flawed process. While the Senate is scheduled to vote on 73 amendments, more than three times as many amendments will not receive a vote. On a bill that authorizes \$967 billion in mandatory spending, there must be more opportunities for savings and open debate on what is an appropriate and affordable agricultural safety net.

There is significant room for greater deficit reduction and transparency in S. 3240. This bill only achieves a mere \$23 billion in deficit reduction, significantly less than the President's fiscal year 2013 budget request, by failing to reform outdated and wasteful agricultural subsidies. It will actually increase the costs of the largest support for agricultural businesses, taxpayer-subsidized crop insurance. And while some unnecessary programs like direct payments, counter-cyclical payments, and Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) are eliminated, savings were diverted from deficit reduction to new "shallow loss" entitlement programs that guarantee agricultural business profits.

TCS Action also urges you to support the following amendments to help rein in the spiraling costs of agricultural commodity entitlements and increase transparency:

- Sen. Grassley's (R-IA) amendments (**#2167 and #2168**) to apply payment limitations to agricultural marketing loan gains and loan deficiency payments
- Sen. Paul's (R-KY) amendment (**#2181**) to prohibit people or entities earning over \$250,000 per year in adjusted gross income from receiving payments or other benefits in the Farm Bill
- Sen. Ayotte's (R-NH) amendment (**#2195**) to require the Government Accountability Office to conduct a report on crop insurance fraud
- Sen. McCain's (R-AZ) amendment (**#2199**) to eliminate the duplicative USDA catfish inspection office
- Sen. Toomey's (R-PA) amendment (**#2216**) to eliminate a new program to provide margin insurance for catfish
- Sen. Toomey's (R-PA) amendment (**#2226**) to eliminate grants and loan guarantees for biorefineries and renewable chemical and biobased manufacturing facilities
- Sen. Demint's (R-SC) amendment (**#2268**) to prohibit loan guarantees in the Farm Bill
- Sen. Coburn's (R-OK) amendment (**#2289**) to reduce the Market Access Program by \$40 million per year and prohibit funding for certain projects like wine tastings, animal spa products, reality TV, and cat and dog food
- Sen. Chambliss's (R-SC) amendment (**#2438**) to re-attach conservation compliance to eligibility for crop insurance premium subsidies
- Sens. Coburn (R-OK) and Durbin's (D-IL) amendment (**#2439**) to reduce crop insurance premium subsidies to producers earning over \$750,000 per year in adjusted gross income as long as a

report finds that the limit will not increase total cost of the crop insurance program, among other requirements

To ensure that the Farm Bill does not spend even more taxpayer funds on unnecessary programs and special interests, we also urge you to oppose the following amendments:

- Sens. Feinstein (D-CA) and Chambliss (R-GA) amendment (#2309) to require a study for food safety insurance for specialty crops
- Sens. Coons (D-DE) and Chambliss (R-GA) amendment (#2426) to require studies of insuring poultry producers against business disruption and catastrophic events

The Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act of 2012 is a missed opportunity for creating an appropriate and affordable safety net for American agriculture. The restrictive process in getting this bill to the Senate Floor limits the opportunity for real debate. Amendments offering greater savings and increased transparency—amendments setting common sense limits on crop insurance premium subsidies, prohibiting Members of Congress from benefiting from programs in this bill, eliminating the new agricultural entitlement program Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC), and increasing transparency for crop insurance premium subsidy recipients, as well as many others—will not get the full debate and vote that taxpayers deserve.

Taxpayers for Common Sense Action (TCS Action) urges you to **vote no on The Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act of 2012 (S. 3240)**.

Sincerely,

Taxpayers for Common Sense Action