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# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON  
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January 26, 2006

The Honorable Michael O. Johanns  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Johanns:

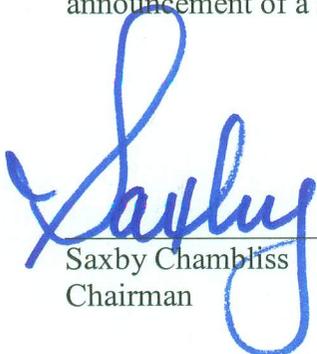
We strongly encourage you to conduct the 2006 sign-up for the Conservation Security Program (CSP) within the next few weeks. The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) has finalized its plans for 2006 and is ready to begin enrollment but is being prohibited by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) from doing so.

Many farmers and ranchers use the winter months to make plans for their farming and conservation needs. We believe the success of many conservation programs could be improved by scheduling sign-up periods to coincide at the same time.

This year, the Senate Agriculture Committee will begin preparing for the 2007 farm bill. We will be carefully examining CSP and the other farm bill conservation programs to determine how well they are serving farmers and ranchers and meeting their conservation and environmental objectives. In order to fully assess CSP, we need to have had the program implemented to the greatest extent possible. Unnecessary, bureaucratic administrative delays only frustrate the farmers and ranchers who want to participate in the program. They also will make our job during the farm bill debate more difficult for no reason.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to your announcement of a sign up in the very near future.

Sincerely,



Saxby Chambliss  
Chairman



Tom Harkin  
Ranking Member