



The Honorable Debbie Stabenow,  
Chairwoman  
The Honorable Pat Roberts,  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Agriculture,  
Nutrition and Forestry  
328A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC, 20510

The Honorable Frank D. Lucas,  
Chairman  
The Honorable Collin Peterson,  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Agriculture  
1301 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC, 20515

February 27, 2012

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow, Ranking Member Roberts, Chairman Lucas and Ranking Member Peterson:

The Partnership of Rangeland Trusts (PORT) is an association of seven statewide, agriculturally oriented land trusts in California, Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Oregon, Texas and Wyoming, which are affiliated with statewide agricultural organizations in our respective states. Collectively, PORT members hold and administer over 1,150 permanent conservation easements encompassing more than 1.8 million acres of private, working lands. We believe that voluntary agreements on private lands provide one of the most efficient uses of limited public conservation dollars, produces extraordinary conservation results, and also supports the natural and economic health of our nation. **We therefore believe that the proposal made by the leadership of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees in the Budget Control Act process last year demonstrates that the Conservation Title can continue to meet vital national needs while sharing in budget reductions.**

Essential to America's great landscapes and the people, economies and wildlife that depend on them are critically situated, privately owned agricultural lands. These are lands of significant and under-rated value for public resources that supply essential services and benefits to citizens across the nation: the watersheds that store drinking water for America's cities and which provide essential winter ranges and migratory habitats for game species from ducks to deer; the meadows and fields that grow food and offer national food security and the open lands that buffer streams and rivers carrying water and nutrients for commerce and recreation.

Conservation Title programs in the Farm Bill help to protect these resources in a uniquely successful way – by funding a variety of voluntary partnerships and cooperative conservation efforts between the U.S. Department of Agriculture and private landowners. These conservation programs are essential to the sustainability of U.S. agriculture and forestry and to meeting the growing demand for food and fiber at home and abroad. Voluntary agreements between the USDA, non-governmental organizations and farmers and ranchers result in real conservation with multiple benefits for every region of America.

While America has become a more urban nation, agriculture, forestry and outdoor recreation continue to be essential to America's economy. According to USDA, farm and farm-related employment includes about 24 million jobs.

American's Ranchlands... A Legacy of Stewardship

California Rangeland Trust • Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust • Ranchland Trust of Kansas  
Montana Land Reliance • Oregon Rangeland Trust • Texas Agricultural Land Trust • Wyoming Stock Growers Agricultural Land Trust

Estimates by the American Forest and Paper Association are that forest management and forest dependent industries account for approximately 5 percent of the total U.S. manufacturing GDP, produce about \$175 billion in products annually, and employ nearly 900,000 people.

A study by US Fish and Wildlife Service found that hunting, angling and wildlife-dependent recreation contribute \$122 billion annually to our national economy. Much of this economic activity is located in rural areas where these activities are vital to local economies. Natural resources-based products represent a significant proportion of the export sector so essential to our economic health. Indeed, U.S. agricultural exports exceeded \$137 billion and accounted for a \$42 billion farm trade surplus in 2011, one of the few bright spots in the American economy last year.

**We urge you to reauthorize the Farm Bill in a manner that sustains the integrity and effectiveness of the Conservation Title. We, along with agricultural affiliates and conservation-minded landowners with whom we work, urge you to maintain conservation funding that meets our national needs by keeping our working lands in agriculture and available to wildlife and the rural communities which depend on them.**

Thank you for your consideration of our views on this critical matter and for your service to the United States of America in these challenging times.

Signed,

California Rangeland Trust  
Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust  
Ranchland Trust of Kansas  
Montana Land Reliance  
Oregon Rangeland Trust  
Texas Agricultural Land Trust  
Wyoming Stock Growers Agricultural Land Trust

For more information, please contact:  
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Email: [mike@kla.org](mailto:mike@kla.org)  
Cell: (785) 224-0086

**Other Supporting Organizations:**

California Cattlemen's Association  
Sacramento, CA

Colorado Cattlemen's Association  
Arvada, CO

Kansas Livestock Association  
Topeka, KS

National Cattlemen's Beef Association  
Washington, DC

Northwest Rangeland Trust  
Walla Walla, WA

Washington Cattlemen's Association  
Ellensburg, WA

Wyoming Stock Growers Association  
Cheyenne, WY

**Supporting Individuals:**

7K Ranch  
Casper, WY

Allison Ranch  
Hillside, CO

Banjo Sheep Company  
Slater, CO

Barnett Ranch  
Meeteetse, WY

Battle Creek Ranch  
Parshall, CO

Beaver Mesa Ranch  
Norwood, CO

Bear Lodge Cattle Co.  
Devils Tower, WY

Beatty Canyon Ranch  
Kim, CO

Bray Ranch  
Norwood, CO

Brush Creek Ranch  
Saratoga, WY

Budd Ranches Inc.  
Big Piney, WY

C Lazy J Ranch  
Savery, WY

Centennial Ranch,  
Montrose, CO

Clear Creek Cattle Co.  
Lost Cabin, WY

Cold Mountain Ranch  
Carbondale, CO

Cordova Ranch  
Colorado Springs, CO

Cummings Ranch  
Trinchera, CO

D & W Livestock Co.  
Newcastle, WY

Darnell Ranch  
Newcastle, WY

Double D Ranch  
Ridgway, CO

Drews Valley Ranch  
Jack and Bev Sparrowk  
Lakeview, OR

Focus Ranch  
Slater, CO

Grindstone Cattle Co.  
Daniel, WY

Hanson Ranch  
Lusk, WY

Hat Ranch  
Meeteetse, WY

Hell Creek Ranch  
Walden, CO

Herbst Lazy TY Ranch, LLP  
Shoshoni, WY

Hellyer Ranch  
Lander, WY

Highline Ranch  
Saratoga, WY

Holmestead Ranch  
Fairplay, CO

Iva Mae Ranch  
Walden, CO

King Ranch  
Cheyenne, WY

Levalley Ranch  
Hotchkiss, CO

Maxwell Cattle, Inc.  
Larry and Sally Maxwell  
Lakeview, OR

Mishurda Mountain Ranches  
Thermopolis, WY

M and D Land Company  
Casper, WY

Nuckolls Ranch Inc.  
Hulett, WY

Lazy EZ LLC  
Cheyenne, WY

Maxwell Cattle, Inc.  
Lakeview, OR

Mendenhall Ranch  
Rocky Ford, CO

North Fork Land & Cattle  
Company  
Lander, WY

Notquitea Ranch  
Freedom, WY

Oxbow Lazy U  
Torrington, WY

Padlock Ranch Company  
Dayton, WY

Patterson Ranches  
Kim, CO

Rocking U7 Ranch  
Collbran, CO

Rafter 26 Ranch  
Buena Vista, CO

Ramblin M Ranch  
Cody, WY

Razor Creek Ranch  
Gunnison, CO

River Meadows Ranch  
Saratoga, WY

Rocking U7 Ranch  
Collbran, CO

Rusk Ranch  
Westcliffe, CO

Salisbury Livestock  
Company  
Savery, WY

Salt Works Ranch  
Hartsel, CO

Scanga Ranch  
Poncha Springs, CO

Shahan Ranch  
Chromo, CO

Summer Ranch  
Steamboat Springs, CO

Sunnyside Farm  
Durango, CO

Sheeprock Ranch LLC  
Saratoga, WY

V Ranch  
Thermopolis, WY

Wagon Wheel Ranch  
Yuma, CO

Warren Livestock Company  
Cheyenne, WY

Whitecloud Ranch  
Steamboat Springs, CO

Wild Divine Ranch  
Nederland, CO

Wilson Rio Grande Ranch  
Del Norte, CO

Wood River Ranch, LLC  
Meetetse, WY

XH Land and Cattle  
Company  
Saratoga, WY