



October 23, 2007

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
Committee on Agriculture,
Nutrition, and Forestry
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Saxby Chambliss
Ranking Member
Committee on Agriculture,
Nutrition, and Forestry
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Chambliss:

On behalf of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) and its Board on Agriculture Assembly, I am writing to express our support for your committee's 2007 Farm Bill as set forth in the latest "Chairman's Mark" with a single major reservation (concerning the IFAFS funding stream) that we hope will be resolved during subsequent stages of the legislative process.

NASULGC, as you know, represents 75 land-grant universities, including 57 1862, 18 1890, and 32 1994 institutions. We also count, as affiliate members, the 44 universities of the American Association of Schools and Colleges of Agriculture and Renewable Resources (AASCARR). This is a very diverse group of universities with many interests, and we are pleased that you and the committee staff have gone the extra mile to accommodate as many of our requests as possible.

An extremely high priority for our land-grant universities and related institutions is the CREATE-21 initiative developed by NASULGC and our partners. We are particularly gratified to see that the committee has embraced many of the central precepts of CREATE-21. We believe that your legislative product will provide enhanced integration among USDA's science agencies and expanded funding for the vital capacity and competitive programs which benefit the land-grant system and through our research, education, and extension efforts the citizens of the United States.

However, our only deep concern and major reservation with respect to the bill concerns the diversion of \$200 million per year in mandatory funding that would otherwise be available to the land-grant system through the existing Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems (IFAFS) program. This money is the basis upon which many of the large land-grant institutions can build greater excellence in needed research endeavors and they have been supportive. While we are appreciative of the funding provided for the new organics and specialty crops research programs, we remain extremely supportive of the broad-based IFAFS funding and strongly urge that this funding be restored before the Farm Bill is enacted into law.

NASULGC is pleased to work with you and your Agriculture Committee colleagues at this important juncture, and we look forward to remaining in close communication with you and your staff in the weeks ahead.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

Peter McPherson
President