



McCORMICK FARMS INC.

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Dear Senator Boxer

As a long time farmer-conservationist and NACD board member, as well as a current member of the Natural Resource Policy Committee, I want to voice my strong support for the Clean Water Restoration Act (CWRA). This legislation is meant to restore Clean Water Act protections to our nation's waters prior to the recent Supreme Court decisions that have caused confusion, delays and put many of our waters at risk.

As a farmer-conservationist, I pride myself in producing healthy high value food, as well as caring for the lands, water and wildlife that are part of my operation. Many of our nation's farmers feel the same way I do – they recognize that without conserving the soil that grows our crops, and the water that nourishes them, that we are out of business and the entire world suffers. Water is especially a precious resource, and one that puts extra burden on each of us to care for correctly because it connects us all – what one person does upstream affects everyone downstream. That is why we need to include all waters as protected waters. If someone dumps oil or other pollutants in an intermittent stream up the watershed from my farm, I'm going to get their discharge on my farm during the next big rain event. If we continue to drain all the wetlands and tile, levee and ditch every last stream and wet spot, then the next farmer downstream is going to get flooded out – just makes plain common sense! I've seen enough examples of this on my own river bottom farms in recent years that indicate it's time to put an end to these short sighted land/water use practices. Farmers want to say they were the first environmentalist; well it's time to step to the plate.

That's why I'm supporting the CWRA. We need to step up and be the best land and water stewards in the country. The CWA and the CWRA already has an exemption for normal agricultural practices and operations, including on prior converted cropland, so it won't impact us anymore than prior to the Supreme Court decisions. In reality, we should be doing more than any other group to conserve water and soil and stop demanding exemptions from doing so!

I know some say that this is a land grab and private property intrusion – but the water and land doesn't really belong to us anyway – as stewards, we hold it in trust for the next generation. Explain to me why we would support a weakened Clean Water Act that would let polluters get away with contaminating or destroying our streams, rivers, wetlands? That is the real threat to us down stream stewards of the land.

Conserving our water resources and keeping them abundant, clean and healthy will help us all face the coming changes of global climate change. Model predictions say that the Midwest U.S, the breadbasket of the world, will get drier. Doesn't it make great sense to preserve and protect our precious water resources now so that we will be able to sustain our farming operations through difficult times?

Its time to stop the misconceptions and untruths around the CWRA, and stand up as the nation's best stewards and conservationists and support passage of the CWRA. We should be leaders of good land and water conservation, not just viewed as users who care not for resources beyond our own backyard. I encourage you all, including individuals, companies; farm organizations and industry, to voice support for the Clean Water Restoration Act, and restore protections for the life blood of our farming operations and heritage. The future stewards of our land, who will continue our way of life, deserve nothing less.

Sincerely,

Ray McCormick

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