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## United States Senate

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Senator Tom Harkin  
Chairman  
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Saxby Chambliss  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Representative Collin Peterson  
Chairman  
Committee on Agriculture  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Bob Goodlatte  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Agriculture  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Harkin, Chairman Peterson, Ranking Member Chambliss and Ranking Member Goodlatte:

I write to strongly encourage the inclusion of the same Sodsaver provision in the final Farm Bill that was included in the Senate-passed version of the Farm Bill. Our native grasslands are an invaluable and critically important asset, and it is our responsibility to ensure this national and irreplaceable treasure remains intact.

My home state of South Dakota and the Great Plains are at a particularly critical juncture with respect to native grasslands. From 2002-2007 alone, for example, roughly 331,000 native sod acres were plowed under in South Dakota. The effects of putting more and more of these acres into production agriculture will be irreparable, and many ranching families in South Dakota rely on these acres for grazing purposes. Grasslands function to maintain biological diversity, reduce soil erosion, and preserve native habitat for wildlife. A Sodsaver provision simply makes for sound policy, ensuring that native grasslands aren't converted into marginal production land.

Additionally, in a time of budgetary strain, the Sodsaver program very effectively saves money as an additional revenue stream during this Farm Bill reauthorization process. The Senate version of the Sodsaver program, which would indefinitely prohibit federal crop insurance and assistance through the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program, or NAP, would generate a savings of \$23 million over five years and \$119 million over ten years. Additionally, plots of native sod only as large as five acres would be eligible for an exemption from this insurance prohibition, and I strongly urge that this exemption not be increased above five acres.

Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this urgent request.

Sincerely,



Tim Johnson  
United States Senate