TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

TODD STAPLES
COMMISSIONER

June 10, 2009

The Honorable Joe Barton
U.S. House of Representatives
Rayburn House Office Building
Room 2109
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Barton:

As the House of Representatives considers H.R. 2454, the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009, I want to bring to your attention the significant impact this legislation will have on Texas agriculture. After careful consideration, I have come to the conclusion this bill will offer more harm than benefit to Texas. Protecting our environment is essential. However, adopting a program with speculative benefits such as this will lead to the certain detriment of domestic food and fiber production, is risky at best, and would be yet another blow to an already struggling economy.

I am first and foremost concerned with the significant cost increases associated with the policies proposed in the bill. A recent study commissioned by The Fertilizer Institute demonstrated the effects of a similar bill, S. 2191, showed the proposed policies would significantly increase the input costs for corn, soybeans, wheat, cotton, rice, sorghum, barley and oats. These estimates indicate Texas producers would face an additional $400 million to $779 million in input costs. When other Texas agricultural products like livestock, peanuts and hay are included, the impact on Texas will increase significantly. Saddling an industry already facing razor-thin profit margins with these significant cost increases will only serve to force more and more family farms and ranches out of production.

Another concern I have with the proposed legislation is the complete lack of input from the agriculture community. It is undeniable that agricultural production relies on fossil fuels and would face significant hardship under the policies outlined in this bill. While the bill does not include agriculture as a covered industry, the lack of a specific exemption opens the door for its inclusion through the Environmental Protection Agency rulemaking process. Furthermore, the administration has repeatedly stated its intent to roll back the 2008 Farm Bill safety net provisions, approved less than a year ago, in exchange for the potential income from carbon sequestration incentives included in this proposal. Doing so would place the future of agriculture and our nation's food security in

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an unproven and untested system. Given this desire to substantially rewrite agricultural policy, I am pleased to see the House Agriculture Committee granted jurisdiction over this legislative proposal, and I am hopeful that America's farmers and ranchers will be given a significant seat at the table in developing this proposal, which will greatly affect their daily lives.

As H.R. 2454 progresses through the legislative process, I encourage you to consider carefully its broad implications to our economy. The significant negative impact on Texas agriculture is undeniable, and the benefits are far from assured. Thank you for your service to the State of Texas. If I may be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

Todd Staples

TS/CJF/cjf

cc: The Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchison
The Honorable John Cornyn