

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 11, 2007

The Honorable Collin Peterson
Chairman
Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Bob Goodlatte
Ranking Member
Committee on Agriculture
1305 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Peterson and Ranking Member Goodlatte,

As the House Agriculture Committee furthers legislation regarding the conservation title of the 2007 Farm Bill we ask that you reauthorize the Klamath Basin portion of Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) at \$50 million, which was included in the 2002 Farm Bill and again requested in the Administration's 2007 Farm Bill proposal. Additionally, we believe the concept proposed by the Administration for a Regional Water Enhancement Program could help address the water supply and quality challenges that face irrigated agriculture in this area and is worthy of the Committee's consideration. We have also included below a list of particular programmatic needs for agriculture production in the Klamath Basin and would appreciate your consideration of these requested items.

The 2002 Farm Bill EQIP funding provided the critical resources to address farm water efficiency through the use of technology, further reducing erosion and sediment, recirculation projects to recycle and "clean" tail water, promoted agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible goals, and helped local producers stay in business and meet the litany of state and federal requirements.

As you both know, we have been deeply involved in the many natural resource issues in the Klamath Basin since April 6, 2001, when the Bureau of Reclamation announced that, for the first time since the establishment of the Klamath Reclamation Project in 1905, no water from the Upper Klamath Lake would be made available for irrigation on more than 200,000 acres in the Klamath Basin. We witnessed first hand the devastating impacts to communities and the environment which can occur as the result of federal decisions – the cost to the environment and affected farmers, ranchers, fishermen and their communities was enormous, threatening the economy of the areas and causing great despair among residents. Since 2001, the Administration has proposed, and Congress has authorized, tens of millions of dollars for agency work in the Klamath Basin. Much of it has focused on water conservation and environmental restoration which benefit endangered and threatened fish yielding projects like state-of-the-art fish screens and fish ladders at the A Canal and Link River Dam.

At this time, conservation organizations, Indian tribes, fishermen, agriculture groups, county governments, and the states of California and Oregon are working together to maintain the bounty of the Klamath River available for all who depend on it. Water management is already a critical issue for agriculture in the West and will only increase in importance in the coming years. To provide assistance in meeting these challenges, we have included the following list of the suggested programmatic needs for agricultural production and environmental work in the Klamath Basin which we believe will provide significant long term environmental and economic benefits:

Water Conservation and Management on a Basin Wide Scale

- Make irrigation districts, drainage districts, improvement districts, and ditch companies eligible to participate in Farm Bill programs. Significant conservation on a larger scale can occur with the involvement of these groups.
- Funding to develop water distribution/conservation management plans and implementation.
- Establishment of locally-driven management/conservation advisory groups for large-scale water conservation projects.
- Continuation of component practices of water conservation projects which include land treatment, water recirculation projects, groundwater substitution, water gauges at points of diversion, conjunctive uses, water quality enhancement planning and implementation, and groundwater enhancement/conservation planning and implementation.

On-Farm Water Conservation and Water Quality Management

- Build on the momentum of 2002 Farm Bill EQIP funding. Continue on-farm investment in conservation.
- Promote agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible goals and continue to help local producers meet regulatory requirements.
- Examples of component on-farm objectives include further reduction in erosion, sediment and other non-point source pollution and continued improvement in water conservation.

Renewable Energy

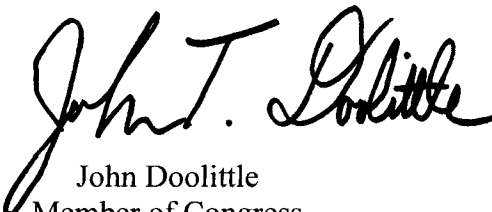
- Research assistance and other incentives within the Committee's jurisdiction to further the development of renewable fuels and electricity production and on-farm renewable projects that reduce overall commercial loads.

Thank you for taking time to consider our requests and should you have any questions please contact us or have your staff contact Colby Marshall (Walden – 67337), Alex Oehler (Herger – 55560), or Evan Goitein (Doolittle – 52511).

Best regards,


Greg Walden
Member of Congress


Wally Herger
Member of Congress


John Doolittle
Member of Congress