



October 22, 2007

The Honorable Tom Harkin,
Chairman
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

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

Dear Chairmen Harkin and Peterson:

On behalf of the family farmers, ranchers and rural residents of the National Farmers Union (NFU), I write on behalf of the NFU Board of Directors who recently voted to support making funds under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) available for the purposes of on-farm secondary containment of petroleum, petroleum byproduct, fertilizer and chemicals. The protection of our land and water resources is critical not only to continuing farm operations, but also as a source of clean water for the nation's rural residents. NFU supports funding for EQIP which provides federal cost-share and technical assistance to enable farmers to comply with environmental regulations and serve as good environmental stewards for the land on which they depend.

Since 1974, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has produced a number of rules requiring agricultural producers to have Spill Prevention, Control and Countermeasure (SPCC) Plans and to install secondary containment around on-farm storage of fuel. Current regulations establish a minimum of 1320 aggregate gallons of storage capacity to come under EPA jurisdiction. Many states have developed their own secondary containment regulations, often times more stringent than those established at the federal level.

Agricultural producers must comply with myriad regulations designed to address environmental concerns in their communities; an effective method by which to address the issue of secondary containment is to provide cost-share incentives to producers. We ask for your support in furthering prioritization for cost-sharing on farm storage secondary containment for fuel, fertilizer and chemicals.

Thank you for consideration of this request; I look forward to continued collaborations throughout the farm bill process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Buis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tom" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Buis".

Tom Buis, President
National Farmers Union