

Murphy Leads the Charge to Fund Conservation Programs

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - As Congress begins negotiating an overhaul of federal farm policy, Congressman Chris Murphy (CT-5) urged the lead negotiators to include at least \$5.1 billion in new funding for conservation programs.

Murphy organized an effort to sway negotiators as they begin to work out the differences between the farm bill that the House passed and the farm bill that the Senate passed. The Senate passed version includes \$5.1 billion for conservation funding. Murphy got nearly 60 of his colleagues to join him in writing to Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader Boehner, Agriculture Committee Chairman Peterson, and Ranking Member Goodlatte to request that funding level be preserved.

"Our farm policy should not only promote the well being and stability of American farmers, but the health and vitality of the land they farm as well. Our farmers want to be partners in smart, sensible land conservation, and these programs empower them to do just that," said Murphy.

Nationwide, two out of three farmers are turned away by the USDA when they apply to participate in conservation programs due to insufficient funding. In Connecticut in 2006, 120 farmers received \$9.4 million in voluntary conservation incentives program funding, while an additional 67 farmers were turned away when they applied. Without a larger federal commitment to this program, we could continue to lose thousands of acres of valuable farmland, wetlands, grasslands, and private forest lands, and our efforts to clean up rivers, lakes, and bays are falling further behind schedule.

"We cannot and should not ask American farmers to choose between their bottom line and the smart, sensible preservation

of the land they safeguard," wrote Murphy.

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