

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 24, 2008

The Honorable Herb Kohl  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development  
Development and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Robert Bennett  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural  
and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Kohl and Ranking Member Bennett:

Adequate funding for the research, higher education, and extension programs conducted at America's land-grant universities and related institutions remain a key priority for us in the Agriculture Appropriations bill. We appreciate your past efforts towards our mutual commitment to maintain – and where possible grow – appropriations to these public universities through the USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES).

As you craft the FY 2009 bill, we urge you to once again focus on the major CSREES funding lines that underwrite the research and extension capacity of the 1862 and 1890 land-grant institutions:

- Hatch Act funding supports food and agricultural research at the land-grant universities created under the First Morrill Act (1862).
- Smith-Lever appropriations sustain the full-range of Cooperative Extension efforts at the 1862 institutions.
- McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry funding maintains forestry and natural resources research at the 1862 land-grants and other state universities.
- Evans-Allen Act appropriations support research at the historically black land-grant universities established under the Second Morrill Act (1890).
- 1890s Institutions Extension, which maintains the Cooperative Extension programs at the 1890 land-grant universities.

Federal appropriations for these five capacity programs are matched by the states on at least a dollar-for-dollar basis, with many states providing much more than the minimum statutory match. These combined federal-state resources leverage competitive grant funds and other public and private monies. But, it all begins with the capacity fund appropriations in the Agriculture Appropriations bill.

The President's budget request for CSREES proposes major reductions in the Hatch and McIntire-Stennis programs and burdensome requirements that more than the current 25 percent of funds distributed under these programs be used for "multistate" projects. We urge you to reject these proposed reductions and new multistate requirements. Instead, we suggest that you again strongly consider making increases to the five programs listed above.

Capacity fund investments in America's land-grant university system — with its integrated mission of research, education, and extension — bear tremendous returns. Recent research conducted by economists at Iowa State and Yale showed that such investments generate a return to society of approximately 50 percent per year.

Who will benefit from increased land-grant capacity funding?

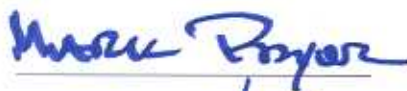
- The consumer ...who benefits from America's abundant, diversified and safe supply of food and fiber.
- America's farmers and foresters... who will receive additional applied and basic research results, and genomic data and biotechnology tools to expand food and fiber production, processing, and international trade.
- U.S. healthcare professionals... who will gain greater insight into the relationships between diet and health in order to combat the twin epidemics of obesity and diabetes.
- Cooperative Extension clients... who will obtain vital information about ways to protect the environment and safeguard our food system.
- The next generation of food, agriculture, and natural resource scientists... who will receive the resources to complete their education and training.

Thank you for your consistent support of the land-grant system's research, education, and extension efforts and your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

  
Blanche L. Lincoln  
United States Senator

  
Olympia J. Snowe  
United States Senator










Kent Conrad

Allye Stewart

Jim Johnson

John F. Kerry

Pat Leahy

Carl Levin

Hillary Rodham Clinton

Susan M. Collins

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Pat Roberts

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Pat V. Doherty

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