

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 31, 2013

The Honorable Frank Lucas
Chairman
House Committee on Agriculture
Longworth House Office Building 1301
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Lucas:

We know you face challenges in negotiating a Farm Bill conference report that meets the needs of our nation's farmers and consumers and that can command majorities in both chambers. Like all other House Members, including you, we each favor some elements of the House-passed bill and we are critical of others. We don't expect perfection, but progress.

We write today, though, to express our concerns about Sec. 11312, from Rep. Steve King, to H.R. 2642. We strongly oppose the King amendment to the Farm bill, and we will give this issue great weight in making any final judgments about the conference report.

As you know, the House Committee on Agriculture approved this amendment by voice vote in its mark-up after some limited debate, over the objections of Congressman Denham. There was no free-standing bill that mirrored the provisions of the King amendment and it was not the subject of any hearings. There is no similar provision in the Senate Farm Bill, nor any free-standing Senate bill on this.

The King amendment is very broadly written to nullify state laws that impose "a standard or condition" on agricultural products and to establish federal supremacy. There is much debate about the potential reach of this provision, but we believe it has the potential to repeal a vast array of state laws and regulations ranging from animal welfare to food safety to labeling of products such as farm-raised fish, and raw milk, to restrictions on import of firewood carrying invasive pests. It is so broadly written that it could potentially sweep up state laws that relate to the sale of dogs from commercial breeders, the sale of meat from slaughtered horses, and even the sale of dog meat.

Congressman Denham was the lead author of a bipartisan amendment to strike the King provision on the floor. The Rules Committee decided that this amendment was out of order, preventing us from debating the issue and voting to strike the provision.

We are strong proponents of animal welfare and a deliberative legislative process. We believe that the states have a legitimate role to play in agricultural policy in our nation. We need not agree with every law or rule adopted by each state to adhere to this principle of federalism. The

federal government should play a complementary role to the states on agriculture policy, rather than rendering them powerless.

We are glad to see the Farm Bill approaching conference. We know how difficult this process has been, and we know that final passage is a delicate and difficult balancing act. For us, the King amendment is detrimental and we believe it could jeopardize the entire Farm Bill. We strongly urge its removal.

Thank you for your attention to this issue, and we look forward to working with you on this important legislation in the weeks ahead.

Sincerely,

Gene Cagle

Ann Smith

Richard

Ray & Mark

[Signature]

E. White

AB

Vern Buchanan

Paul P. Rice

Leonard Lence

Joe Peak

Michael A. Quinn

Alvin

Mike [Signature]

Richard Hane