



News Release

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Congress Needs to Pass a New Farm Bill

Last week the Congress passed a one-month extension to April 18, 2008 of the 2002 Farm Bill. This came after months of informal negotiations between the House, Senate and the Administration. The main issue of contention is finding additional funds to support key farm bill programs such as nutrition, conservation, disaster aid and energy.

On Monday, March 17, the House and Senate Agriculture Committee Chairmen and Ranking Members reached an agreement on a 'Framework' to allocate an additional \$10 billion among the different titles of the farm bill. Other key members of the negotiations, including Senate Finance Chairman Baucus (D-MT) and Senate Budget Chairman Conrad (D-ND), have declared the 'Framework' unacceptable because of reductions made in the disaster aid program created by the Senate Finance Committee last fall. Unfortunately, time is running out and a compromise must be brokered which will benefit farmers, foresters and ranchers preparing for the upcoming planting season.

Although, the energy portion of this 'Framework' is considerably less than what EESI would like to see, we are encouraged that the Congress may be moving forward to finish the bill. Sustainable and diversified energy production provides a great opportunity to change the agriculture and forestry sectors across the country. The inclusion of renewable energy as a new 'crop' or revenue stream in these sectors could not have come at a better time, but until this bill is enacted farmers and foresters will move slowly in a world of uncertainty. EESI hopes that the new deadline will allow Congress to finalize this much needed farm bill.

If you have questions, please email or call Jetta Wong at [jwong \[at\] eesi.org](mailto:jwong@eesi.org) or (202) 662-1885.

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