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July 13, 2010

The Honorable Rob Bishop  
123 Cannon Office Building  
Washington D.C. 20505

Dear Congressman Bishop,

I am looking forward to meeting with you next week. I will be in Washington D.C. for the National Association of Conservation Districts' legislative conference. This confirms my appointment for Tuesday July 20, 2010 at 1:00 p.m. UACD represents Utah's 38 conservation districts. The districts are political subdivisions of the state and work at the local level to deliver state and federal conservation programs. Below, briefly stated, are some of the issues important to Utah conservation districts. Listed first are those issues that are new this year.

- **Equal Access to Justice Act:** There is a lack of accountability and transparency in the administration and distribution of EAJA payments. Environmental groups are receiving billions of tax payer dollars in attorney fees for settling or winning cases against the federal government. Accurate statistics have not been kept by the Justice Department or the federal agencies. There is no accounting for the total amount of tax dollars paid. Please support H.R. 4717 and S. 3122 introduced in March 2010.
- **BLM Wild Horse and Burro Program:** The BLM's has released for public comment a new direction for the Wild Horse and Burro Program. The agency plans to report to Congress on the strategy. The BLM's options are severely restricted by prior legislation and court decisions. We would appreciate knowing what congress could do so the BLM has better options to manage wild horse and burros. The health and sustainability of western public lands and livestock grazing should be a higher priority.
- **Great Basin Environmental Program:** Utah is a partner with Nevada and other western states advocating the first terrestrial landscape scale project addressing invasive plant species (cheat grass), wildfire, water resources, land use, and biodiversity. Utah's Grazing Improvement Program (GIP) administered by the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food, assisted by conservation districts and input from local grazing advisory boards, is a model of getting state and federal assistance to private land managers. Federal funding is needed to match state funds to expand the Utah GIP and the Great Basin Environmental Program.

- **The Farm, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008:** Please work to maintain the mandatory levels of program funding as included in the 2008 Farm Bill and reject any efforts to reduce conservation program spending.
- **Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA)** in the USDA NRCS Conservation Operations account. CTA provides a funding base ensuring the best technical and scientific knowledge in planning and design of conservation projects. Funding for CTA remains critically low as demand for this planning across the country increases. Please support **\$960.678 million** in the Agriculture Appropriations Bill.
- **Clean Water Act Section 319, Nonpoint Source Grants Program** administered by the EPA addresses water pollution from diffuse sources that impair water quality including nutrient runoff from agriculture, faulty septic systems from residential property, or urban runoff such as oil and toxic chemicals. Please support **\$227.715 million** in the Interior Appropriations Bill.
- **State and Private Forestry** programs under the USDA Forest Service are necessary to the continued maintenance of healthy and productive forest lands. Please support **\$355.040 million** in the Interior Appropriations Bill.
- **Energy and Climate Change** policy and legislation should not increase the cost of agricultural and forestry productivity. We oppose any federal, state, or local government emissions tax that would increase the energy cost for agriculture and forestry producers.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of our requests. Please feel free to call if we can be of further assistance and support to you. I can be reached at 435-828-6656 or 435-789-2100 or contact our executive vice president, Gordon Younker, at 435-753-6029 extension 31 or 435-881-4372.

Sincerely,



Bill Rasmussen  
President

cc: Wayne Bradshaw  
Cody Stewart  
Norma Peters