



Agriculture Energy Alliance

Representing agriculture as a producer and consumer of energy

January 18, 2006

The Honorable Richard Pombo
United States House of Representatives
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Pombo:

The 101 members of the Agriculture Energy Alliance (AEA) urge you to resume your strong effort to pass legislation quickly that will significantly improve our natural gas supply in the United States. Throughout debate on energy policy the AEA has consistently encouraged Congress to pass legislation that would allow expanded natural gas production in the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). AEA is very grateful for your leadership on an issue that is critical to American agriculture.

The AEA represents a broad-based coalition of farm organizations and agribusiness that faces a crisis because of public policies that have created demand for natural gas while at the same time have restricted access to supply sources. The farm sector depends on significant amounts of natural gas for food processing, irrigation, crop drying, heating farm buildings and homes, and production of crop protection chemicals and nitrogen fertilizers.

Congress must enact energy policies that will enable us to produce an abundant, affordable, and healthy food supply. American agriculture has become much more efficient in its use of energy resources. Since 1980, U.S. farmers have increased nitrogen use efficiency by 35 percent while boosting corn yields by 40 percent. We are doing whatever we can to conserve energy in our operations, but we need additional natural gas supply to be competitive in the global marketplace.

Development of offshore natural gas reserves is crucial for both homeowners as well as for manufacturers that use natural gas as a feedstock, like nitrogen fertilizer producers. At today's natural gas price levels of approximately \$9 per mmBTU the U.S. can expect continued demand destruction in the manufacturing sector along with additional loss of good jobs. Ammonia fertilizer clearly demonstrates the problem. Anhydrous ammonia is the most widely used and the most energy intensive nitrogen fertilizer. Today, the cash cost of production is approximately \$340 per ton when using a \$9 price per mmBTU for the natural gas input. **The natural gas component of this cost is approximately \$320, or 94 % of the total production cost.** American farmers suffer everyday that the supply/demand situation remains unbalanced through lack of substantive policy changes.

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Exploration in the OCS will improve energy independence and help maintain a competitive American manufacturing base. Passing an energy bill that includes provisions for states to opt out of the current moratorium and explore for and develop natural gas supplies in the OCS is an important step in expediting our country's move toward energy independence.

The Agriculture Energy Alliance thanks you for your leadership in promoting the development of American energy resources so important to maintaining a competitive agricultural sector. We support your efforts to pass legislation that will provide an enhanced role for development of offshore energy resources leading to a more diverse portfolio and additional supplies of natural gas. We stand ready to work with you on this extremely important legislation that is critical to U.S. farmers, agribusiness and homeowners.

Sincerely,

**Agribusiness Association of Iowa
Agribusiness Council of Indiana
Agricultural Council of California
Agricultural Retailers Assn.
Agriliance, LLC
Agrium Inc.
Alabama Crop Management Assn.
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Plant Food Corporation
American Soybean Assn.
Arkansas Plant Food Assn.
Ben-Trei Ltd.
Brandt Consolidated
CF Industries
CHS Inc.
California League of Food Processors
Chemical Industry Council of Illinois
CoBank (CO)
Colorado Grain & Feed Assn.
Crop Production Services
CropLife America
D.B. Western, Inc.—Texas
Delaware Maryland Agribusiness Assn.
Diamond of California
Far West Agribusiness Assn. (WA)
Florida Fertilizer & Agrichemical Assn.
Georgia Agribusiness Council, Inc.
Georgia Feed & Grain Assn., Inc.
GROWMARK, Inc.
Hartung Brothers, Inc.**

**Hawaiian Alliance for Responsible
Technology & Science
Helena Chemical Company
Illinois Fertilizer & Chemical Assn.
Indiana Grain & Feed Association
Indiana Plant Food & Ag
Chemicals Assn.
Intermountain Farmers Assn.
International Chemical Corporation
International Commodities Export Corp.
International Raw Materials Ltd.
Iowa Institute for Cooperatives
JR Simplot Company
Jim Hicks & Company
Johnston Seed Company
Kansas Agribusiness Retailers Assn.
Kansas Grain and Feed Assn.
Land O' Lakes, Inc.
Louisiana Ammonia Producers
MFA Incorporated
Mayo Fertilizer Inc.
Michigan Agri-Business Assn.
Minnesota Agri-Growth Council
Minnesota Crop Production Retailers
Missouri Ag Industries Council, Inc.
Monsanto Company
Montana Agricultural Business Assn.
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Barley Growers Assn.**

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National Chicken Council
National Corn Growers Assn.
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Grange
National Renderers Association, Inc.
National Sorghum Producers
National Sunflower Assn.
National Turkey Federation
Nebraska Agri-Business Assn.
North Dakota Agricultural Assn.
Northern Ag Suppliers, Inc.
Oklahoma Ag Retailers
Oregon Wheat Growers League
**Plant Food Association of North
Carolina, Inc.**
PotashCorp
Rocky Mountain Agri-Business Assn.
Society of American Florists
**South Carolina Fertilizer and
Agrichemical Assn.**
South Dakota Agri-Business Assn.
Southern Crop Production Assn. (GA)
Southern States Cooperative, Inc.
Tennessee Agricultural Production Assn.
Tennessee Farmers Cooperative

Terra Industries
Texas Ag Industries Assn.
Texas Agricultural Cooperative Council
The Andersons, Inc.
The Fertilizer Institute
The McGregor Company (WA)
The Mosaic Company
3-D Fertilizer
U.S. Canola Assn.
USA Rice Federation
United Suppliers, Inc.
Virginia Crop Production Assn.
Virginia Poultry Federation, Inc.
W.B. Johnston Grain Company
**Washington State Council of Farmer
Cooperatives**
West Central Inc.
**Western Peanut Growers Association
(TX)**
Western Plant Health Association (CA)
Wheeler Bros. Grain and Fertilizer Co.
**Willard Agri-Service of Frederick, Inc.
(MD)**
Wisconsin Fertilizer and Chemical Assn.