



# Environmental and Energy Study Institute

May 13, 2013

## Re: Support Strong Farm Bill Energy Programs with Mandatory Funding

Dear Representative:

Supporting a strong energy title in the *Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management (FARRM) Act of 2013*, with mandatory funding, is key to creating strong, sustainable bio-based products and energy industries using America's cutting edge technologies and working farms and forests. It can be a win-win for creating jobs and economic development, improving both local and national energy security, as well as reducing environmental pollution and harmful climate change.

Domestically-produced biofuels, biomass heat, and bio-based chemicals and products help American consumers and industries avoid the inevitable rise and volatility in prices for petroleum-based fuels and feedstocks. These new cutting edge domestic industries recycle hard-earned energy dollars within the U.S. economy, adding more jobs and investment, while reducing the nation's unsustainable trade deficit. They help put America back to work producing biomass from a broad array of feedstocks across the country, building advanced biorefineries and infrastructure, and advancing U.S. technological leadership in sustainable, renewable energy. Sustainably-produced biomass helps improve environmental quality and reduce pollution from agriculture. And, substituting renewable bio-based fuels, chemicals, and products for fossil petroleum helps protect public health and slow the build-up of harmful greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

Biomass feedstock production systems still need to be developed and established on the ground. Each state and region of the country can benefit from developing its own unique biomass resources. Incentives are still needed to encourage producers to invest in developing these resources, production systems, and equipment. The Biomass Research and Development and the Biomass Crop Assistance Programs are essential for this.

The first dozen commercial-scale advanced biorefineries still need financing to help get off the ground. These biorefineries will demonstrate the viability of these complex, new feedstock production systems and energy conversion technologies to future private investors. The Biorefinery Assistance Program and the Bioenergy Program for Advanced Biofuels are key to success.

Rural schools, communities, farms, and businesses that today depend on expensive oil heat, propane, or electricity, need assistance to improve energy efficiency and to shift to less expensive, locally-produced, bioenergy and other forms of renewable energy. The Rural Energy for America Program and the Community Wood Energy Programs are critical.

The 2008 Farm Bill, with more than \$1 billion in mandatory funding for energy programs over five years, made a good start in the right direction. But it was only a start. A continued, similar commitment is needed in the 2013 Farm Bill. The impact of this relatively small public investment with the first pioneers of these industries today will be magnified many fold in the years ahead as private sector investment takes off. As you consider the Farm Bill in the days ahead, please support a strong energy title, with mandatory funding.

Sincerely,

Carol Werner, Executive Director