



City of Austin

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February 24, 2012

The Honorable John Carter
408 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Carter:

As Mayor of the City of Austin, I am writing on behalf of our community to express our support for several articles related to the 2012 Farm Bill. Austin and communities throughout the United States face multiple health, social and environmental problems connected to food. Supporting public health and protecting our environment are essential to our city and the region's viability and livability.

We support the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Opportunity Act, the Local Farm, Food, and Jobs Act, and the Expanding Access to Farmers Markets Act to increase purchases of local and healthy foods through the SNAP program. We'd like to see the bill limit direct farm subsidy payments and re-align subsidies to reward farmers for climate friendly methods. We support the authorization of both WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program and an elimination of the state match requirement for both programs. We'd like the Farm Bill to ensure that effective conservation programs remain in place, including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program Organic Initiative and the Conservation Stewardship Program.

We ask for your support for important changes in the 2012 Farm Bill and we will do our best to make sure families know about the programs that exist to help them make ends meet. Farmers and their products are vitally important to the economic health of our country. In addition, the many programs funded by the Farm Bill help families in need, send more money into our local economy, encourage conservation of the very resources that make food production possible and will allow Austin and Central Texas to continue to address the needs of a growing population.

Thank you for your attention to this issue and for all of your efforts on Austin's behalf.

Sincerely,

Lee Leffingwell
Mayor