

From: "fazunino@aol.com%inter2" <fazunino@aol.com>
Subject: Farm Bill 2007 Official Comments - 12/16/2005 10:52 AM CST
Date Sent: 12/16/2005 10:52:50 CST
Date Received: 12/16/2005 10:53:46 CST

Email: fazunino@aol.com
FirstName: F. Anthony
LastName: Zunino
Address1: 38 Flanders Lane
Address2: P.O. Box 601
City: Kent
State: Connecticut
zipcode: 06757
Question1:
Question2:
Question3:
Question4:

The Highlands Region has been recognized as nationally significant by the USDA Forest Service and Congress through two studies of the NY-NJ Highlands and enactment of the Highlands Conservation Act. Increased funding is needed through USDA programs to help conserve threatened forests and farmlands in the Highlands region and to assist private landowners with stewardship of these lands.

Current spending on USDA conservation and forestry programs should be doubled to better meet the needs in the Highlands and elsewhere. Increased spending on conservation and forestry programs would also help to ensure more regional equity, since the Northeast historically has only received a small fraction of farm spending and does not benefit equally from commodity programs.

The next Farm bill must have a major emphasis on forests as well as farmlands, including a comprehensive Forestry Title to ensure that these programs receive adequate attention.

Less than 15% of forestlands in the East are protected from development and these privately owned forestlands are increasingly threatened by conversion to sprawling development. The Forest Legacy Program is a critical tool to help states conserve private forests, but current funding levels are well short of identified needs, which total over \$300 million annually. The proposed Suburban and Community Forestry and Open Space Program would provide an important complement to the Forest Legacy program by helping local governments and private land trusts conserve suburban and community forests threatened by sprawl development.

USDA Conservation and Forestry programs should be implemented and coordinated across landscapes and watersheds to increase their effectiveness and impact.

USDA Conservation and Forestry programs should do more to promote healthy forests, including directing more EQIP dollars to forest landowners and adequately funding the Healthy Forests Reserve Program and other landowner assistance programs such as FSP, WHIP and FLEP.

USDA Conservation and Forestry programs should be better targeted to protect clean air, clean water and at-risk species, and to meet clear environmental performance standards.

Thank you!

Anthony Zunino
Question5:
Question6: