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TO: Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns

Re: Farm Bill Forum - Topic 4: The Achievement of Conservation and Environmental Goals.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

On June 17, 2005, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) requested public comments to be used in developing USDA recommendations for the 2007 Farm Bill (Federal Register, Vol. 70, No. 116, page 35221). Enclosed are the American Water Works Association's (AWWA) comments that address the question asked in Topic 4, "How can farm policy best achieve conservation and environmental goals?"

Protecting sources of drinking water is fundamental to providing safe drinking water to the American public. While the Safe Drinking Water Act and the Clean Water Act provide statutory requirements that protect public health and the environment, a stronger emphasis on conservation, pollution prevention, and the protection of our vital water resources in the Farm Bill is needed to meet these requirements. Specifically, we recommend a significant increase in funding for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program aimed at improving water quality in watersheds nationwide in cooperation with local water utilities.

AWWA appreciates your attention to these comments. If you have any questions regarding the above, please contact me.

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American Water Works Association  
The Authoritative Resource on Safe Water (SM)

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