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Subject: Farm Bill 2007 Official Comments - 12/28/2005 10:44 AM CST
Date Sent: 12/28/2005 10:44:16 CST
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FirstName: David

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Question1:

Question2:

Question3:

Question4: My name is David A. Watson. My family owns a certified tree farm in Howard County, Missouri. It is a 300 acre operation that produces quality hardwood timber, as well as grain.

I am writing to you to request that more attention be paid to timberland owners and their related issues in the next Farm Bill. As a participant in the agricultural programs contained in the current version of the farm bill, I applaud the balance of commercial and conservation programs that it contains. However, I believe more needs to be done for the nation's timberland owners, especially the family-owned tree farms.

Consider the following:

- Approximately 42% of the nation's forestland is family-owned.
- Many of these holdings are small tracts (under 100 acres).
- Nearly two thirds of the nation's drinking water is supplied by privately-owned woodlands. (Many economists believe clean water will be the most important resource in the next century.)
- Forestland removes large quantities of carbon dioxide from the air, consistent with national concerns about air-quality.
- Nearly 90% of the nation's endangered species rely on forestland for their continued existence.
- Our nation's forests provide for crucial jobs through the timber production, hunting, and fishing industries.
- It is difficult for families to maintain these forestland holdings, over the long term, due to economic concerns.

Currently, less than 1% of the Farm bill programs are directed at forestland owners. I am especially concerned about the lack of funding for the "Forest Land Enhancement Program". In the next farm bill, I urge the federal government to create more incentives for forest landowners to create and implement sound management strategies that will protect the environment, and create a long term renewable timber resource. Programs similar to the Conservation Reserve Program would be a huge step in the right direction. Like our agricultural lands, timberlands are an important national resource, and should be a priority to preserve.

Question5:

Question6: