



National Association of Conservation Districts

January 30, 2008

The Honorable Norm Dicks
Chairman
Interior and Environment Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
2467 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Todd Tiahrt
Ranking Member
Interior and Environment Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
2441 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman and Ranking Member:

The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) represents the nation's 3,000 conservation districts and 17,000 men and women who serve on their governing boards. Conservation districts are local units of government established under state law to carry out natural resource management programs at the local level.

Conservation districts work at the local level with a variety state and federal partners in the delivery of federal programs. One such program is the 319 Nonpoint Source Grants Program, administered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and authorized under the Clean Water Act.

The 319 Nonpoint Source Program addresses water pollution from diffuse sources that affect water quality. Nonpoint sources of pollution are varied and can include nutrient runoff from agriculture, faulty septic systems from residential property, or urban runoff such as oil and toxic chemicals. Under this program, EPA awards funding to states that are then used by the state and local government to address nonpoint source pollution problems. The 319 program is critically important to conservation districts in maintaining and improving water quality in their local area. The program provides flexibility to address resources concerns that are outside the scope of many traditional United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) conservation programs.

NACD respectfully supports a funding level of **\$210.536 million** for 319 Nonpoint Source Grants in the FY 2009 Interior Appropriations Bill. This increase in funding will provide necessary support in addressing nonpoint source pollution, ensuring that local communities will continue to realize the benefits of clean water. The increased funding will also help leverage cost-share funding at the state and local level, providing added benefit for the federal dollars spent.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. We look forward to working with you as we continue to provide the benefits of natural resource conservation across the country.

Sincerely,

Steve Robinson
Acting President

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