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October 27, 2003

Senate Appropriations Committee
House Appropriations Committee
Senate Agriculture Committee
House Agriculture Committee

Dear Members of Congress,

The National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) is writing to express our support for the Conservation Security Program (CSP) which is authorized in the 2002 farm bill.

NASDA represents the commissioners, secretaries and directors of the state departments of agriculture in the fifty states and four territories. Our members have been strong proponents of a voluntary, incentive-based approach for soil and water conservation programs. The CSP provides producers with incentives to make and sustain improvements to water, soil, and air quality through the use of environmentally-friendly agricultural practices. The CSP accomplishes these goals and has significant potential to help farmers and ranchers address unmet conservation needs on working lands. We like CSP's "win-win" approach of providing the public with conservation benefits while offering financial rewards and incentives to producers for voluntary conservation work.

As you continue to work on the FY04 Agriculture Appropriations bill, we encourage you to support full funding for the CSP as authorized in the 2002 farm bill. The state departments of agriculture believe the CSP should be implemented on a nation-wide basis and made available to all producers as soon as possible. By providing full funding and allowing a national CSP to proceed you are sending a strong message to the American people that Congress, in partnership with agricultural producers, is committed to conserving our natural resources for future generations.

Thank you for your support of this vital program.

Sincerely,

Gene Hugoson
President, NASDA
Commissioner, Minnesota Department
of Agriculture

Don Ament
Chairman, NASDA Natural Resource & Pesticide
Management Committee
Commissioner, Colorado Department of Agriculture



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NASDA is a nonprofit association of public officials comprised of the Commissioners, Secretaries, and Directors of agriculture in the fifty states and four territories