



The undersigned organizations, representing Illinois corn and soybean farmers, urge Congress to pass a strongly bipartisan farm bill that benefits all Americans, including farmers. Over the past two years, the leadership of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees has emphasized the importance of a bipartisan farm bill, and our organizations applaud the work done to introduce a 2024 Farm Bill.

While we appreciate the challenging work of both the House and Senate Agriculture Committee leadership and staff to build a proposal for review, our organizations are concerned that the increased funding for Title I programs comes at the expense of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Unfortunately, this proposed funding mechanism creates a strict partisan divide, further complicating the passage of an already delayed farm bill. The proposal also limits and reconfigures the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) by potentially tens of billions of dollars. We urge the passage of a farm bill with strong bipartisan support and reaffirm the need for a farm safety net that complements nutrition assistance for all Americans.

The House farm bill proposal also creates regional inequities. The proposed increase in reference prices disproportionately benefits some regions and interests. The Title I program expands under the proposal but does not have likely payment options for all regions. This is an outcome that picks winners and losers. For example, Illinois soybean farmers are unlikely to see any payments from Price Loss Coverage (PLC) enrollments at all based on the new reference price. Illinois corn farmers will see some payments, but enrollments in PLC are low in Illinois because the program does not work well for Illinois farmers. The update will do little to rectify the problem.

Although Title I raises concerns for Illinois farmers, the bill includes positive elements to build on. Illinois farmers support the proposed increases to the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) guarantee in both the House and Senate proposals.

We also support the House's intention to double funding for the Foreign Market Development (FMD) and Market Access Program (MAP). These programs have not received additional funding since the early 2000s and provide an almost \$25 return on investment for every dollar spent. Increased funding for these programs has widespread support from many agricultural groups across the nation. Regrettably, the Senate proposed farm bill offers no additional funding for either MAP or FMD.

The farmers we represent are most concerned about crop insurance, and we are pleased to see crop insurance protected. According to the University of Illinois, over 90 percent of acres in Illinois are covered by crop insurance. Illinois corn and soybean farmers would benefit from the Senate's farm bill provision requiring the Risk Management Agency (RMA) to review actuarial soundness, policies, plans, and regions with consistently high or low loss ratios. Historically, Illinois suffers from low loss ratios, receiving pennies back on every dollar they invest. Other states have loss ratios well

above what is seen in Illinois, earning a dollar or more on every dollar they invest and highlighting the disparity felt by Illinois farmers.

While our top priority is protecting crop insurance, our second is a bipartisan farm bill. We are encouraged by proposals that increase trade program funding and guarantees for ARC. However, we cannot overlook the funding mechanism in the House proposal that undermines SNAP programs Americans rely on and creates a clear partisan divide.

We implore Congress to pass a farm bill with strong bipartisan support that reaffirms the critical farm safety net and nutrition assistance for all Americans.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ron Kindred". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ron Kindred, Chairman
Illinois Soybean Growers

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dave Rylander". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dave Rylander, President
Illinois Corn Growers Association