

March 02, 2010

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator,

On behalf of our farmer and rural members and supporters nationwide, we the undersigned organizations urge you to oppose Senate Joint Resolution No. 26, Senator Lisa Murkowski's attempt to weaken the Clean Air Act. While we strongly believe that the best way to tackle climate change is through comprehensive legislative action, interfering in the EPA's legal responsibility to regulate greenhouse gases under the Clean Air Act will hinder immediate action to mitigate global warming and protect public health.

Agriculture is uniquely vulnerable to the effects of climate change. From persistent droughts in the South to increased flooding in the Midwest, farmers are already experiencing the effects of a changing climate. To produce healthy, abundant and safe food crops, farmers need not only clean air and water, but also protection from the increased risk of droughts, floods and temperature extremes that climate change is already threatening. Failure to act on climate change therefore puts at risk not only farmers' livelihoods, but also the security of our nation's food supply.

Support for Senator Murkowski's resolution to block EPA regulation of greenhouse gases would be a vote against the health and security of our nation's farms and of the livelihoods of our farmers. Fears that farmers and ranchers would be unduly burdened by these regulations appear to be not only short-sighted, but incorrect. The EPA has already proposed to tailor the rules to exempt small carbon emitters and hold accountable only large emitters who have long been subject to similar standards for other pollutants, which by all accounts would exclude most farms and ranches.

We do not expect or desire for climate change actions to be limited to the Clean Air Act. As stated above, we prefer a legislative approach to enact comprehensive climate policy, and urge Congress to act swiftly on the issue. But movement toward a legislative approach cannot preclude the EPA from effectively enforcing the Clean Air Act. We ask the Senate to act quickly against Murkowski's resolution, and to move forward on robust climate legislation that supports healthy, sustainable farms and rural communities.

Sincerely,

Alabama Sustainable Agriculture Network
Appalachian Sustainable Development
Beyond Pesticides
California Certified Organic Farmers
California Climate and Agriculture Network

Center for Rural Affairs
Family Farm Defenders
Food and Water Watch
Iowa Environmental Council
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Island Grown Initiative
Kansas Rural Center
League of Rural Voters
Michael Fields Agricultural Institute
Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service
National Organic Coalition
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society
Nebraska Wildlife Federation
Northeast Organic Farming Association Interstate Council
Organic Valley
Pesticide Action Network North America
Rodale Institute
Rural Advantage
Slow Food USA
The Organic Center