

LAKE AND VALLEY GARDEN CLUB
Legislation Report

November 2013

Please go to the GCA report on the web nal@gcamerica.org and see if your Congressman/Senator is listed as being on the Senate Agriculture Committee....and call them, write them, or just communicate with them in your best fashion...even those representatives who are not on the committee. We need to stress the importance of protecting land, water, and wildlife habitats in our nation's vast farming areas.

Congress needs to enact a new farm bill by January 1, or farm prices and subsidies will revert to levels of 60-70 years ago. Farmers need a full five-year extension, especially if they plan to undertake serious conservation efforts. The Senate bill would link sound agricultural land and water conservation practices to qualify for federal crop insurance subsidies, thereby restoring a provision that was first enacted in the 1984 farm bill for sound agricultural land and water conservation practices in order to qualify for federal crop insurance subsidies.

GCA supports the Senate versions over the House versions with its linkage requirements. The House bill would cut another \$7 billion from sustainable agriculture, seed diversity and food security, as stated in our GCA Position Paper; the Senate has cut \$3 billion since the 2008 farm bill.

There are many other issues, other than GCA issues, in these bills, but it would be well for all of us to pay attention to those issues.

If we don't have a new farm bill by January 1, many of the agricultural provisions will expire and others will revert to 1949 farm price and subsidy levels, which makes no sense in today's market. Again, farmers need a full five-year extension. If the Agriculture conferees don't reach an agreement quickly, the worry is that the budget conference will hi-jack their bill and use its savings in the budget/debt chess game. Their conference should write the farm bill--not the budget conference.

To send e-mail to your senator, go to http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm and scroll to the senator's name. There you will see a "web form" address in red type. Click on that address and follow the directions for sending e-mail.

To send email to your representative, go to <https://writerep.house.gov/writerep/welcome.shtml>

To telephone any legislator, call the Capitol switchboard: 202-224-3121. Ask for your senator's office by name. When the phone is answered, say that you want to leave a message about an issue. A very young aide will take the message or send you to the legislator's voice mail. This seems impersonal, but is nevertheless effective—legislators keep track of how many calls come in on different issues and the direction in which sentiment is running. Even a relatively small number of calls are enough to warrant serious consideration of the views expressed.

Respectfully submitted,
Patricia M. Smith
Chair