

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) spoke on the House floor today in support of the Farm, Nutrition, and Bioenergy Act of 2007 (H.R. 2419), the legislation reauthorizing federal agriculture and nutrition policy for the next five years. The bill includes more than \$175 million for Chesapeake Bay for direct conservation programs to reduce nutrient and sediment build-up and to help farmers in their efforts to be good stewards of the Bay.

Rep. Hoyer called the legislation, “a farm bill that stakes out a new direction and lays a strong foundation on which to build,” and praised its focus on “getting vital benefits to family farmers, investing in America's producers, stimulating rural economies and securing renewable energy resources.”

“I am particularly pleased that this legislation includes more than \$175 million in direct assistance to help our farmers in their ongoing efforts to be good stewards of the Chesapeake Bay,” stated Rep. Hoyer. “We have made some strides to restore this magnificent estuary, but much more work must be done. To move us forward in this regard, the bill will implement an innovative strategy - targeting individual river watersheds, including the Patuxent and Potomac - to help our producers prevent shoreline erosion, control sediments, reduce nitrogen loads, and establish a long-term monitoring program.”

The \$175 million for the Chesapeake Bay includes \$150 million for targeted nutrient reduction and sediment control in the rivers of the watershed to improve water quality, and restore and enhance wildlife, beginning with the Susquehanna, Patuxent, Shenandoah, and Potomac Rivers. An additional \$25 million will be used for a pilot program to help producers in the watershed find cost effective strategies to address the resource needs of their farms, while helping to meet key environmental goals.

“Having heard the passage of the Farm Bill through the House of Representatives, I am absolutely more than pleased and hopeful that this will be the beginning of some real progress in cleaning up our watershed,” said former Senator Bernie Fowler, a long-time champion of clean up efforts for the Chesapeake Bay and Patuxent River. “Hats off to our good friend and great congressman, Steny Hoyer, for his ceaseless advocacy for what he knows is right – cleaning up the Chesapeake Bay.”

Overall, the Farm, Nutrition, and Bioenergy Act of 2007 makes significant modifications to federal farm policy to address the needs of working family farmers and ranchers while imposing payment limits that prevent millionaires from receiving farm subsidy benefits. The bill also

improves funding and access to conservation programs, and includes new transparency rules to ensure the public knows taxpayer dollars are getting to the family farmers who need them.

Also included in the legislation are historic investments in renewable energy initiatives and fruit and vegetable programs, which have not received traditional Farm Bill benefits. Overall, the bill provides \$2 billion in loan guarantees for the development of refineries that produce renewable fuels -a key step toward bringing more renewable fuels to market in America - and includes \$1.5 billion for production incentives for ethanol and biodiesel made from agricultural, forest, and waste plant materials. The bill also contains \$1.6 billion to support the fruit and vegetable industry in the United States.

Finally, the Farm Bill expands nutrition programs that help 35 million low-income families, including nearly doubling the funding for the Emergency Food Assistance Program, so that food banks, soup kitchens, and other emergency feeding sites have needed resources, and expanding the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program to all 50 states.

The legislation approved today was supported by a broad range of farm organizations, including the American Farm Bureau, the National Farmers Union, and a wide range of key commodity organizations. Other organizations backing the legislation include conservation groups such as The Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, The Wildlife Society, and American Farmland Trust and nutrition organizations including Second Harvest, Voices for America's Children, and the NCS Food Program Association. However, even in the face of this broad support, the President has threatened to veto this legislation.

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