

March 24, 2015

The Honorable Kevin Brady (R-TX, 8th)
U.S. House of Representatives
301 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sanford Bishop (D-GA, 2nd)
U.S. House of Representatives
2407 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Brady and Congressman Bishop:

The organizations listed below represent family farmers and ranchers who provide food and fiber for our nation's citizens as well as for people around the globe. Over the years, our members have shared personal stories about how their farms and livelihoods have been jeopardized by estate taxes. We come together now to support your effort for full and permanent relief from the estate tax.

At the end of 2012, Congress passed the American Taxpayer Relief Act (ATRA) narrowly avoiding a return to a \$1 million estate tax exemption with a 55 percent tax rate. ATRA permanently extended the estate tax exemption level at \$5 million per individual (\$10 million per couple) and raised the top tax rate to 40 percent, while maintaining the spousal transfer, step-up in basis and indexing the estate tax for inflation. Arguably, ATRA provided permanency in the tax code and permanent relief for some farmers and ranchers, but not all.

Family farmers and ranchers are not only the caretakers of our nation's rural lands but they are also small businesses. The estate tax is a disservice to agriculture because we are a land-based, capital-intensive industry with few options for paying estate taxes when they come due. Unfortunately, all too often at the time of death, farming and ranching families are forced to sell off land, farm equipment, parts of the operation or take out loans to pay off tax liabilities and attorney's fees. With rising farm land values across America the estate tax will continue to plague farm and ranch families until it is repealed.

We urge all of Congress to join you as a cosponsor of H.R. 1105, the Death Tax Repeal Act of 2015, and send the message that now is the time to enact full and permanent estate tax relief. We look forward to working with you on this very important issue.

Sincerely,

Agricultural & Food Transporters Conference
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Mushroom Institute
American Sheep Industry Association
American Sugarbeet Growers Association
Association of Equipment Manufacturers
Livestock Marketing Association
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Association of Wheat Growers

National Cattlemen's Beef Association
National Cotton Council
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Milk Producers Federation
National Peach Council
National Pork Producers Council
National Potato Council
National Renderers Association
National Sorghum Producers
National Turkey Federation
Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association
Public Lands Council
United Fresh Produce Association
United Producers, Inc.
U.S. Sweet Potato Council
USA Rice Federation
Western Growers Association