

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 17, 2010

The Honorable Herb Kohl
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture,
Rural Development, and Related Agencies
129 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Sam Brownback
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture,
Rural Development, and Related Agencies
129 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Kohl and Ranking Member Brownback:

We write to express our support for the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Individual Development Account (BFRIDA) program and request that the Subcommittee include \$5 million in the FY 2011 Agriculture Appropriations bill to fully fund this new program.

The BFRIDA, which was authorized as part of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, is a critical step towards broadening and diversifying our network of current farmers, promoting rural development and securitizing our food sources.

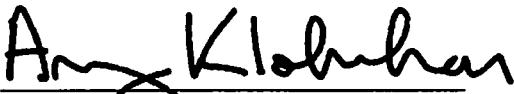
BFRIDA is a competitive matching grant program available to non-profits, tribes, and local government agencies that enables beginning farmers and ranchers to open individual development accounts (IDAs) to save for a farming-related asset such as farmland, farming equipment, and breeding stock or trees. To ensure their future success, program participants are required to complete financial training programs – business planning, banking, market development - and develop a savings and business plan before the funds may be used.

Existing IDA programs have been highly successful. Participants in IDA programs designed to start up small businesses are 84 percent more likely to become business owners than those who have not participated in IDA programs, while 35 percent of individuals are more likely to own houses than non-participants.


With approximately 70 percent of U.S. agricultural land expected to change hands in the next 20 years, this program represents a proactive and innovative approach to the long-term sustainable success of new farmers. If fully funded at \$5 million per year for the remaining 2 years, BFRIDA could provide important assistance and financial training to up to 3,200 new agricultural entrepreneurs.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Amy Klobuchar



Max Baucus

Al Franken

Tom Udall

Nancy Fairclough

Barbara Boxer

Debbie Stabenow

Ben Rayburn

Jeffrey A. Merkley

Richard W. Blumenthal

Kirsten E. Gillibrand

Mike Johanns

Zoe Lofgren

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