February 10, 2011

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221 U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

Subject: Water Quality and the Farm Bill

Dear Majority Leader Reid:

As a diverse cross-section of conservation, municipal water, state, agriculture and forest organizations, we have long recognized the relationship between the quality of our nation’s waters and agriculture practices and policies. America’s clean water and agriculture practices are inextricably linked. In fact, over the next five years agricultural practices and policies will have the single greatest impact on our lakes, rivers and estuaries.

During the 112th Congress, the Farm Bill will provide an opportunity to substantially improve our nation’s waters through the promotion of practices that improve the conservation performance of our farms and ranches. To this end, we look forward to working with you to craft a Farm Bill that better connects agricultural systems and practices to water quality improvements.

Whether you’re a fisherman, a farmer or a family in a small town or major city, clean and safe water is central to your life. America’s rich endowment of water resources has been a cornerstone of our nation’s economic success. We must develop a Farm Bill that improves both our nation’s water resources and the health of our agricultural working lands.

Again, we appreciate your early attention to this important matter and look forward to working with you on the upcoming Farm Bill. If you are interested in discussing ways in which agricultural policy can better support clean water goals, please contact Doug Siglin, Federal Affairs Director at the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, at 202-544-2232 or dsiglin@cbf.org; or Pat Sinicropi, Director of Legislative Affairs at the National Association of Clean Water Agencies, at 202-533-1823 or psinicropi@nacwa.org.

Sincerely,

ADS Corporation
Alliance for Earth Observations
CDM
American Canoe Association
American Fisheries Society
American Fly Fishing Trade Association
American Public Works Association
American Rivers
American Water Works Association
Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies
Association of State Drinking Water Administrators
Association of State & Interstate Water Pollution Control Administrators
Atlantic Salmon Federation
Endangered Habitats League
Environmental Defense Fund
Environmental Law and Policy Center
Environmental Working Group
Greenpeace USA
National Association of Clean Water Agencies
National Association of Water Companies
National Audubon Society
National Parks Conservation Association
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
National Wildlife Federation
Natural Resources Defense Council
Restore America’s Estuaries
Sierra Club
Southern Environmental Law Center
Water Environment Federation
World Wildlife Fund
Renewable Water Resources
Rocky Mountain Water Environment Association
Saint Paul Riverfront Corporation, Saint Paul, MN
Sanitary District No. 1, KY
Save the Bay, Narragansett Bay, RI
Save the Dunes
Shenandoah Riverkeeper
South Carolina Coastal Conservation League
Southern California Alliance of Publicly Owned Treatment Works
Spartanburg (S.C.) Water
Stewards of the Lower Susquehanna
Tarrant Regional Water District
Tennessee Clean Water Network
The Georgia Conservancy
Upper Blackstone Water Pollution Abatement District
Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper
Upper Occoquan Service Authority
Upper Trinity Regional Water District
Virginia Conservation Network
Virginia League of Conservation Voters
Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission
Western Lake Superior Sanitary District
West Virginia Rivers Coalition