

**STATEMENT OF KARL LIMVERE, ASSISTANT STATE SECRETARY,
NORTH DAKOTA FARMERS UNION; ALSO REPRESENTING MIN-
NESOTA FARMERS UNION AND SOUTH DAKOTA FARMERS
UNION**

Mr. LIMVERE. Mr. Chairman, Representative Stangeland, Representative Stenholm, we appreciate the opportunity to testify. I am the assistant State secretary of the North Dakota Farmers Union. I am representing not only the North Dakota Farmers Union this morning, but also representing the Minnesota Farmers Union president, Mr. Willis Eken, who is with us also today, and the South Dakota Farmers Union, Dallas Tunsiger, the president.

We are thankful for the actions that have been taken so far and commend the congressional efforts in helping to make disaster assistance available to our States, and while we appreciate what has been done, we also have to be frank. The actions of the Department of Agriculture have not been keeping pace with the need for disaster assistance. Producers are having to make decisions based on what is available now for feed and forage. Considering the economic conditions, they cannot take any further risks waiting to see what and when programs might become available.

To be honest, the opening of the ACR and the conservation-use acres for haying and grazing were more of a goodwill gesture than anything else, than real help. There simply was not very much forage on ACR, or conservation use acreage.

The opening of the Conservation Reserve Program for haying is more significant, but it has not been without its problems. It should also be opened for grazing based on the ability of the individual CRP acres.

Apparently not all CRP acres are open. We have a problem with some that have been designated as wildlife habitat because of a certain mixture of grasses that were planted. These also should be opened up for our producers.

While the Emergency Feed Program has gained rather rapid approval, there has been very serious foot dragging on the Emergency Feed Assistance Program. At this point only three counties in North Dakota are eligible for this program which allows CCC stocks to be purchased by our producers.

When we consider that grain exporters have had access to CCC stocks through the periodic CCC weekly auctions, and have paid—and they have paid significantly less than the normal CCC release price for these stocks, it seems a little inconsistent to delay giving livestock producers facing a drought situation the same kind of opportunity.

We are in an emergency situation that requires very careful management of our remaining reserves, and with the need for making these CCC stocks available for livestock producers, we believe that it is absolutely essential that further CCC auctions are indefinitely postponed.

In addition to dealing with the feed and forage problems arising out of the drought, early action is needed to alleviate some of the economic concerns of producers. We need a legislative change requiring that the 0/92 program be reopened in drought affected counties for failed acres in addition to prevented plantings. This

would allow a producer to lock in the deficiency payment at the 0/92 rate at whatever rate is the percent of failed acreage.

As a part of this legislative change, we need to require the U.S. Secretary to pay the deficiency payment as a disaster payment to producers in drought affected counties. It would be a very cruel irony for drought devastated producers to have to repay the advanced deficiency payments that they have used to plant the crops that they are now losing.

Some farmers who have lost part or all of their crops, the drought cannot benefit from rising prices, so it makes sense to allow these producers to have that deficiency payment as their disaster payment. That way, it has a number of advantages using this approach. These funds have already been appropriated and allocated. We would not require new tax or budget dollars.

Second, it is easily understood. Third, it is readily administered at the county level. And, fourth, it is targeted to those producers that have the need.

The original subject for this hearing was the sodbuster and swampbuster provisions. We have been, as organizations in this three State area, very great advocates of close coordination between conservation measures, Federal price support, and production programs. We supported the sodbuster and swampbuster concepts when they were legislated.

When the regulations came out we emphasized that they have to allow normal accepted farming practices which are consistent with sound conservation plans. Unfortunately, the final regulations were not consistent with normal accepted farming practices, especially as they related to the swampbuster provision.

Nuisance wet spots should not be classified as a wetland. There are nuisance wet spots that are here one year, gone the next, that should not be considered a wetland. It should be under the minimal effects provision.

Farmers should have full information as to what is considered a wetland or highly erodible land before the cropping season. Congress has to recognize the staffing of the Soil Conservation Service has not been sufficient to keep up with the demand for determinations.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I think Congress has to consider the due process rights in the enforcement of both the sodbuster and swampbuster provisions. This means that penalties have to be appropriate to the degree of the infraction by individuals, and inadvertent violations should be allowed to be corrected. Producers with highly erodible soils were able to put good portions of their lands into CRP. The same opportunity should be provided for producers with wetlands.

We all heard the horror stories from various regions of this country in which speculators would knowingly convert thousands and thousands of acres of range or swampland to crop production. They would then proceed to farm the farm programs rather than that land, including disaster assistance, and everything else. The intent of Congress, we believe, was to prevent that kind of exploitation through the sodbuster and swampbuster provisions. It was not to create antagonistic regulations that presume farmers did not give a darn about their environment, nor was it the intent of Congress to

give wildlife interests the right to predetermine the land use of our producers. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Limvere appears at the conclusion of the hearing.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much for a most constructive statement.

Mr. Anderson.

STATEMENT OF CARL A. ANDERSON, PRESIDENT, MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION OF SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Mr. ANDERSON. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, my name is Carl Anderson. I am presently serving as president of the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

I farm 480 acres near Chokio, Minnesota. I have been a farmer since 1943 and a local soil and water conservation supervisor for about 25 years.

The Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts is a statewide organization representing 91 soil and water conservation districts. We have 455 elected supervisors in Minnesota, and 240 district employees. We in Minnesota are proud of our conservation programs. We have made a strong commitment to conserving our natural resources for the benefit of future generations. Our reinvest in Minnesota program has won national attention for the benefits it provides to wildlife, improving water quality, and removing marginal ag lands from production.

Soil and Water Conservation Districts are responsible for developing and implementing the RIM Reserve. Although in many ways similar to CRP, RIM is a long-term program focused on improving fish and wildlife habitat, and increasing fish and wildlife populations. CRP on the other hand is a commodity-oriented program which benefits our environment by taking marginal agricultural lands and highly erodable lands out of production. This distinction is important to note.

Our success in Minnesota can be attributed to the strong partnership between local, State, and Federal interests. Because of their commitment, Soil and Water Conservation Districts have time and time again successfully delivered when called upon.

However, insisting on the implementation of the Food Security Act is the most significant challenge districts face in this decade, and it is clear that challenge will continue into the next when it is time to implement conservation compliance plans.

Minnesota is among the Nation's leaders in number of acres enrolled, or CRP, and in the number of wetland determinations. Currently 2.1 million acres have been identified as highly erodable. Estimates are that we could have up to 2.5 million acres. Highly erodable land determinations are 74 percent completed, and 34 percent of the conservation compliance plans are completed.

So far we have done well in Minnesota. The partnership is working. Assistance has been forthcoming to the districts from the SCS, but we are only at the beginning. The fact of the matter is our districts had their backs against the wall. We have over 200-staff years available to districts in Minnesota to carry out local and State conservation programs. Over 100-staff years are being put

STATEMENT OF
KARL LIMVERE, ASSISTANT STATE SECRETARY
NORTH DAKOTA FARMERS UNION
BEFORE THE
HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE
HEARING WITH REP. ARLAN STANGELAND
MOORHEAD, MINNESOTA
FRIDAY, JUNE 24, 1988

My name is Karl Limvere. I am the Assistant State Secretary of the North Dakota Farmers Union and have been a staff member of the organization for the past 20 years. I live in rural North Dakota on a farmstead near Ypsilanti.

This prepared testimony is presented on behalf of the North Dakota Farmers Union President Alan Bergman. He will be presenting the same testimony on drought issues this afternoon at Bismarck before the livestock subcommittee. We also have concurrence on this testimony from the Minnesota Farmers Union and the South Dakota Farmers Union.

We are thankful for the actions that have been taken so far and commend Congressional efforts at helping to make disaster assistance available to our state. While we appreciate what has been done, we must also be frank. The actions of the Department of Agriculture are not keeping pace with the need for disaster assistance.

There has been a wait and see attitude which has been costly to producers. North Dakota is facing the most serious and widespread drought since the 1930s. This is well documented and should be self-evident to anyone who takes the time to walk through fields and pastures almost anywhere in this state. We cannot afford to wait and see.

Producers are having to make decisions based on what is available now for feed and forage. Considering the economic conditions, they cannot take any further risks waiting to see what and when programs might become available.

Livestock sales rings have had increased numbers ranging from 100 to 1,000 percent increases in recent weeks. The greater the indecision on the availability of disaster programs, the more likely it will be that livestock producers will move their livestock to market. Because of the additional local pressure on the marketplace, our producers are being caught two ways. The drought is forcing herd reduction and the herd reduction inevitably creates downward pressure on prices.

We have been very concerned that disaster programs have not been made available on a more timely basis. We have been surprised by the optimistic projection of relief that some programs were expected to provide. We have been confounded by the regulations that have accompanied and been counterproductive to relief.

To be honest, the opening of the Acreage Conservation Reserve (ACR) and Conserving Use (CU) acres for haying and grazing was more of a good will and public relations gesture than real help. There simply was not very much forage on ACR and CU acreage.

The opening of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acreage for haying is more significant, but it has not been without its problems.

First of all, we cannot understand why it is necessary to limit haying to a 30-day period, nor can we understand the necessity of limiting it to haying. There is no universal reason that should prevent grazing on CRP.

We would be the first to recognize that CRP acres should not be grazed if the stand is not well established and if grazing would create serious soil erosion potential. However, to have a blanket prohibition against grazing when every bit of forage is needed in this emergency is an arbitrary and unnecessary determination.

Both haying and grazing should be allowed through a determination of the county ASCS committee with the technical advice and support of the ASCS and SCS staff. Grazing needs to be an available option that should be based on the capacity of the land.

The next problem to arise with CRP was brought to our attention in the county in which our home office is located. Apparently all CRP acres are open, except if those CRP acres have been designated as wildlife habitat.

In Stutsman County, which has the largest number of CRP acres of any county in our state, under the recommendation of the SCS technicians, most CRP land was seeded to grass with a mixture of grasses that contains tall wheat grass. By using this particular mixture of grasses, these CRP acres became designated as a CP-4 practice and therefore as wildlife habitat. Over 95% of the CRP acres in Stutsman County are under CP-4 and therefore ineligible for haying.

If a slightly different mixture of grass seed were used (which did not include tall wheat grass), these acres would have come under the CP-1 designation and been made available for haying by producers. It is our understanding that in another county, the same mixture of grass seeds was allowed under both CP-1 and CP-4 and thus the designation was virtually arbitrary.

This is far different than a case in which a producer signed up CRP acres into a wildlife food plot with the assistance of state or private funding. We are not asking for release of such specific wildlife food plots. However, to prevent producers from haying lands because they planted one type of grass mixture, rather than another is totally illogical and indefensible.

Last weekend it was announced that waterbank would be opened up for haying. However, as we prepared this testimony no date had been set for opening up waterbank acreage nor had any mechanics been established for its operation.

As of Tuesday of this week, 45 of our state's 53 counties had filed requests for emergency feed programs. Thirty-four counties had been approved for Emergency Feed Program (EFP) which reimburses producers up to 50 percent of the cost of feed purchased from commercial sources. It was expected that most of the other counties would be approved for this program.

While EFP has been gaining quick approval, there has been serious foot-dragging on the Emergency Feed Assistance Program (EFAP) in which CCC stocks are made available to livestock producers for their foundation herds at 75 percent of the county loan rate. Not a single county in North Dakota has been approved for EFAP.

When we consider that grain exporters have had access to CCC stocks through the periodic CCC auctions and have paid significantly less than the normal CCC release price for these stocks, it seems totally inconsistent to delay giving livestock producers facing drought the same opportunity.

These CCC stocks are supposed to be this nation's ace-in-the-hole for meeting emergency situations throughout the world. Why can't these stocks be released on a timely basis to producers who are facing one of the most serious drought situations of modern agricultural times?

As an organization we have had fundamental disagreements with the administration in the management of our nation's grain reserves. Rather than being used as reserves and isolated from the market, our reserves have consistently been used to artificially lower market prices both internationally and domestically.

Now that we are in an emergency situation that requires the careful management of remaining reserves, and with the need for making these CCC stocks available for livestock producers, we believe that it is absolutely essential that further CCC auctions are indefinitely postponed.

We need to get a handle on where these stocks are located, so that they do not have to be repositioned and transported at a later date back to areas in need of livestock feed. We also need some assurance that there is an adequacy of supply if this drought continues and deepens.

In addition, we believe the diversified producer should not be penalized for being diversified. In the past, a diversified operator who had CCC stocks on the farm and was eligible for EFAP would be required to purchase the grain under loan on his farm.

If the producer had only been in grain, with rising prices, he could redeem the loan and advantage himself in the marketplace. This was the purpose of the CCC loan program—to give the producer the best marketing

options. The requirement of using his farm-stored grain under loan for the EFAP denies the livestock producer these marketing options and opportunities.

We, therefore, request that livestock producers be allowed to market their CCC-loan grain as any other grain producer, and that EFAP purchases be made from warehouse-stored grain. We readily admit this would give the livestock producer the best of both worlds. However, we believe that is not only equitable, but also is an appropriate means of providing drought assistance. Producers should have equal opportunity with the grain trade to take advantage of the rising market.

We are working with state and federal agencies to encourage haying and grazing of public lands to the most feasible and practical extent possible.

If we make the best use of the hay and feed available in this region, we will be able to postpone the need for the Emergency Hay Assistance Program which provides transportation assistance for moving feed to drought areas. This has been an expensive program in the past for both producers and the government and should be used after all other options have been exhausted.

I would like to underscore that disaster assistance, especially for the livestock producer, has not kept pace with the need. While the impact of this drought upon our farmers and our rural economy is already being measured in billions of dollars, USDA has not opened up all of the available options it has to assist producers. Assistance has been coming too little and too late.

The delays in opening up programs have been costly. The quality of hay and its feeding value has deteriorated while decisions were approached on the wait and see basis. We hope that through Congressional oversight we can minimize these delays in the future.

In addition to dealing with the feed and forage problems arising out of the drought, early action is also needed to alleviate some of the economic concerns of producers.

We need a legislative change requiring that the 0/92 program be reopened in drought-affected counties for failed acres, in addition to prevented plantings. This will allow a producer to lock in the deficiency payment at the 0/92 rate or at whatever rate is the percent of failed acreage. (For example, if the producer wishes to harvest 25 percent of the acreage planted to wheat, then he would be compensated at a 25/92 rate.)

As part of this legislative change, we need to require the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture to pay the deficiency payment as a disaster payment to producers in drought-affected counties.

The primary concern of North Dakota producers is that the rising market prices due to our drought and other conditions could cause them to be liable to repay part or all of the advance deficiency payments they received this spring at sign-up time.

Most farmers used these advance deficiency payments to plant their crops this spring. The money has been used in production expenses. It would be a cruel irony for drought-devastated producers to have to repay the advance deficiency payments that they used to plant the crops they have lost.

Since farmers who have lost part or all of their crop to the drought cannot benefit from rising prices, it would make sense to allow these producers to receive the deficiency payment as a disaster payment. The

deficiency payment would be based on the difference between harvested bushels and assigned yield times the payment rate, minus the advance payment, if any. For example, wheat: (26 bushels assigned yield - 10 bushel harvest yield) x (1.53 - .61).

Using these deficiency payment proposals as a disaster payment mechanism has a number of advantages. First, these funds have already been appropriated and allocated and thus would not require new tax or budget dollars. Secondly, this is an easily understood approach to disaster assistance. Third, it can be readily administered at the county level. Fourth, it is targeted to drought-affected producers to the specific extent of their crop loss. Finally, it would not interfere or detract from the operation of the Federal Crop Insurance programs.

As part of using the deficiency payment system as a disaster payment, we would also call for having the full payments made available to producers in this crop and calendar year.

Another mechanism that would assist producers in income protection would be to allow producers in drought-designated counties to extend their CCC loans at least through this fall. While we have called for allowing all producers to extend CCC wheat and feed grains loans and for grain to enter the farmer-owned reserve, we believe this is especially critical in the drought-affected areas. This would allow producers to gain the benefits of improved markets, help maintain a feed supply in drought areas and have the

reserve program work like it should. Producers in drought-designated counties should not be subject to any penalties when the price reaches the release level.

In considering the drought situation and rising feed prices, we would call upon Congress and the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture to stop the \$.50 per hundredweight reduction scheduled for dairy producers on January 1, 1989.

We would also call upon Congress and the Secretary of Agriculture to oppose and prevent any grain or agricultural products export embargo.

These are issues that need to be considered in the immediate future.

While it seems inevitable that we close the barn door after the horses are out, we do need an overall review and appraisal of our agricultural disaster programs.

We have experienced droughts before. We have also had difficult economic times in agriculture and the combination of drought and bad economic times. Yet, we have to recognize that we have never had drought, bad economic times and the high level of capital intensity that exists in agriculture today.

This combination makes it essential that the economic consequences of this drought be monitored extremely close. We need to be able to move quickly with targeted assistance when the need becomes evident.

There is no doubt in my mind that we will have to develop some innovative approaches for assisting farmers to stay on the land, just as the 1930s spawned some innovative responses to the challenges of that time period.

We know that it will become essential to have the Farmers Home Administration's emergency loan programs made available to producers. We

also know that it is absolutely essential that such FmHA lending is targeted to family farm producers who have sustained drought losses and who demonstrate an actual need for such loans.

The emergency loan programs under FmHA have received an unfavorable reputation in the past because they were not targeted to family farmers nor were they based on actual need. In many cases, these loans were used for speculative purposes by very large producers. This is one of the primary reasons that such a high percentage of bad debt within FmHA is in the emergency and disaster loan portfolios.

We also know that FmHA emergency loans will not necessarily be enough to keep farm families on the land. Perhaps we can take a lesson from the Farm Security Administration of the 1930's drought years, in which FSA purchased land from producers and then leased these lands back to the families, providing them some security of tenure through grazing associations. We are not prepared to outline specifics for such proposals, but we believe it is appropriate for Congress to begin studying alternatives and to begin framing some pilot projects that could address the problems that will be increasingly faced by producers.

We would also suggest further Congressional review and study into ongoing programs such as Federal Crop Insurance.

We agree with the basic concept that in order to be eligible for USDA disaster programs and loans, farmers have an individual responsibility to first have Federal Crop Insurance protection. Yet, we are also deeply concerned that we are still in the range of only 40 to 50 percent of participation in Federal Crop Insurance.

To make the program successful, Federal Crop Insurance needs more producer participation. In order to receive greater producer participation, Federal Crop Insurance needs improved coverages at more reasonable rates. We believe that the goal of Federal Crop Insurance must be to have almost complete participation and coverage among our nation's producers.

There has been some discussion as to the possibility of reopening sign-up for this crop year for Federal Crop Insurance programs. We are extremely hesitant to jump onto this bandwagon, because producers knowingly made decisions whether or not to participate prior to the federal crop deadline.

However, we have to again acknowledge that less than half of producers in our state carry Federal Crop Insurance. We also have to recognize that many producers made the decision on federal crop in relationship to the premium dollar and the level of coverages, and not on the basis of federal crop being a prerequisite for other disaster assistance.

There needs to be clarification if a producer has to have federal crop coverage on all crops, program crops or just a single crop in order to be eligible for disaster assistance. This needs to be decided before there is a reopening for federal crop so that producers can make appropriate decisions on federal crop based on the clarification.

In addition, if we make mistakes in managing these programs, we should make them on the side of compassion and understanding. Frankly, we feel it may be easier to reopen enrollment into the Federal Crop Insurance program than it would be to determine the criteria and the mechanism by which an otherwise deserving producer could get FmHA disaster loan or other needed federal assistance.

Therefore, we will give our support to reopening the Federal Crop Insurance program with the understanding that this is a one-time exception, and that participants who enroll now would be required to contract for Federal Crop Insurance for a minimum of the next five years. We would also underscore that a reopening of Federal Crop Insurance should not be a substitute for the guarantees for deficiency payments that we have outlined earlier.

We have to be extremely careful in our approach in providing disaster assistance that we do not undercut the Federal Crop Insurance programs. In the past there have been instances in which Federal Crop Insurance policyholders were penalized for having purchased this insurance protection for their farm operations. A producer who has federal crop coverage should receive the same disaster assistance as any other producer, so that any other disaster assistance is in addition to federal crop benefits.

We are just beginning to understand the full dimensions of the drought and its economic consequences for rural and urban America.

We would ask your assistance in counteracting the false notion that this drought is going to be the cause of increased food prices. Food processors and distributors who use the drought as an excuse for increased profit-taking will be the cause of any increased food prices.

We also ask your assistance as we monitor this drought and its economic consequences in framing the appropriate changes for the 1990 farm bill. That legislation needs to provide greater stability to the nation's grain reserves and our farm prices. The bill will need to include the use of deficiency payments as disaster assistance and some of the other changes that we have outlined as temporary measures.

We sincerely appreciate the attention you are providing to our drought and the extra efforts that are being made by members of Congress in this crisis.

While some in the news media are suggesting that these Congressional activities are "dog and pony shows" related to this election year, we as producers know that these activities are a meaningful way to build broader public understanding of the problem and the issues that we face.

We thank you for your efforts, and apologize for those whose cynicism has overtaken their sense of compassion and their understanding of the reality and the devastation of this drought on farmers and rural America.

The original subject matter for this hearing was to review the implementation of the sodbuster and swampbuster provisions of the 1985 farm law.

To understand our perspective and our frustration with these regulations, you should know that historically, the North Dakota Farmers Union has been an advocate of closer coordination between conservation measures, federal price support and production programs. In fact, in the past we have advocated a level of cross-compliance between conservation and farm program participation.

We have supported the concept that federal farm programs should be consistent with soil and water conservation objectives, and that conservation programs must be consistent with farm program objectives.

We did not believe it to be in our national interest to encourage the massive conversion of swamplands or highly erodible pasture lands into cropland. It did not make environmental sense. It was at cross-purposes

regulations, the die had been cast before farmers and their organizations could fully respond to them. We objected to the fact that they were interim regulations. In our formal response to the interim regulations, we emphasized that these regulations must allow normal, accepted farming practices which were consistent with sound conservation plans.

Unfortunately, the final regulations were not consistent with normal, accepted farming practices, especially as they related to the swampbuster provisions. We were especially chagrined to discover that wildlife interests had a much larger voice in the shaping of these final regulations than did farmers and their organizations. As a result, we believe the regulations move beyond our understanding of the intent of Congress.

The regulations and the manner in which they are being implemented leave farmers in a very precarious situation. As a result, we have no choice but to oppose the rules and the process. There are a number of changes that we believe are essential minimums in order to gain farm support and understanding of these provisions.

First, we believe that nuisance wet spots in the field (that is, wet areas that are normally farmed two out of five years) should not be classified as a wetland for the purposes of this act. This would be consistent with farming practices and with the minimal effects provisions. It would make both compliance and enforcement easier, and more objective.

Secondly, farmers should have full information as to what is considered to be wetlands and highly erodible lands on their farm unit prior to the cropping season. These wetlands and soils should be determined and designated in their soil and water conservation plan. A producer shouldn't have to play a guessing game and risk farm program benefits. Nor should a producer have to declare himself potentially guilty in order to get a determination as is now required within Form 1026.

Congress must recognize that the staffing of the Soil Conservation Service has not been sufficient to do the job that they have been assigned. Even in areas where determinations were supposed to be on a fast track, we found that our members were not getting information on a timely basis.

Third, Congress must consider due process rights in the enforcement of this provision. This means being fully informed and appraised in each step of the process. It means that penalties are assessed after guilt is proven and not before.

It means that penalties are appropriate to the degree of the infraction. An inadvertent conversion should not be penalized in the same way as a willful and intentional destruction of a wetland or a highly erodible field. In fact, producers should have the opportunity to correct an inadvertent compliance error without penalty. There has not been consistency among counties and regions in allowing such corrections.

Finally, we believe that Congress should give greater attention to coordinating the swampbuster provisions with both the federal waterbank program and the Conservation Reserve Program. Producers with highly erodible soils were generally able to place these lands into CRP. The same opportunity should be provided to producers with wetlands. This would require increased funding for the waterbank program and may require some modifications of CRP.

I believe that the vast majority of farmers take their soil and water stewardship responsibilities seriously, despite the fact that they do not receive full compensation for that stewardship.

The intent of Congress in adopting the sodbuster and swampbuster provisions was to stop the massive exploitation of land resources, federal farm programs and FmHA loan programs by speculators.

We all hear the horror stories from various regions of this nation in which these speculators would knowingly convert thousands upon thousands of acres of range or swampland to crop production. They would then proceed to use every available federal program, including disaster programs, to reap an unjustifiable bonanza for themselves.

The intent of Congress was to prevent such exploitation. It was not to create antagonistic regulations that presumed farmers didn't give a hoot about their environment. Nor was it the intent of Congress to give wildlife interests the right to predetermine the land use plans of producers.

We are requesting the assistance of this committee in carrying out the intent of Congress by helping to change the regulations and implementation of

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the swampbuster and sodbuster provisions so that they return to the original objectives which we had supported.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karl Linvere', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Karl Linvere, Assistant State Secretary

North Dakota Farmers Union

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