

**November 3, 2011**

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Co-Chair, Joint Select Committee on Deficit  
Reduction  
448 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jeb Hensarling  
Co-Chair, Joint Select Committee on Deficit  
Reduction  
129 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairwoman Murray and Chairman Hensarling:

We are writing to express our concern with reports that the House and Senate Agriculture Committees intend to use the expedited legislative process of the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction to authorize new Farm Bill programs and entitlements outside of regular order. As part of the Deficit Reduction process, the Agriculture Committees are responsible for reviewing existing programs and identifying where the Congress can find savings. However, we are greatly troubled by any attempt to use the Joint Select Committee to authorize costly new mandatory programs without adequate Congressional review.

As you know, Congress charged the Joint Select Committee with the task of reducing the deficit by \$1.5 trillion between 2012 and 2021 and provided for its legislative recommendations to be brought to the floor of both the House and the Senate for expedited consideration. Furthermore, its recommendations are not subject to amendment or filibuster. Congress implemented these rules to dull the pain of politically contentious but fiscally responsible measures. Yet, it has become apparent that some believe they can create new programs and entitlements with limited Congressional scrutiny and input.

We urge the Joint Select Committee to resist proposals that would go beyond its mandate of deficit reduction and authorize new, complicated agriculture programs that have not been the subject of Congressional review. The Joint Select Committee should instead act to find efficiencies within existing programs. If the Agricultural Committees believe that these cuts will require a fundamental redesign of agricultural programs, those Committees can and should move legislation through regular order.

Sincerely,

Ron Kind  
Earl Blumenauer  
John Campbell  
Donna Christensen (Virgin  
Islands)  
Steve Cohen  
Peter DeFazio  
Keith Ellison  
Jeff Flake  
Raul Grijalva

Rush Holt  
Hank Johnson  
Barbara Lee  
John Lewis  
Tom McClintock  
Gwen Moore  
Jim Moran  
Mick Mulvaney  
John Olver  
Ron Paul

Tom Petri  
Joe Pitts  
Adam Smith  
Jackie Speier  
Pete Stark  
Bennie Thompson  
Ed Towns  
Henry Waxman