

Legislative Alert – May 10, 2007

NARC&DC Farm bill Recommendations introduced in US House of Representatives

The NARC&DC is pleased to announce that Rep. Zack Space (D-OH) has introduced HR 2235, the Resource Conservation and Community Development Enhancement Act. The NARC&DC worked with Rep Space to draft a bill which incorporates our recommendations for changes to the RC&D program in the Farm bill.

Specifically, the bill:

- 1) Calls for a planning process, for the RC&D program, which is locally led;
- 2) Provides mandatory funding for RC&D at a level of \$82.2 million annually for five years;
- 3) Calls on the Secretary of Agriculture to designate a Coordinator and Program Assistant for each Council to provide and assist in providing technical assistance;
- 4) Adds to the technical assistance definition - providing assistance for the implementation of area plans and projects; and
- 5) Adds to the technical assistance definition – providing services which bring to bear the resources of Department of Agriculture programs in a local community as defined in the locally led planning process.

Rep. Space serves on the Conservation Subcommittee of the House Agriculture Committee and is working with the Chairman of the Agriculture Committee to incorporate this legislation in the 2007 Farm bill as it moves through the legislative process.

Please call your Member of Congress and ask them to cosponsor HR 2235 and to support inclusion of its provisions in the Farm Bill.

The Agriculture Committees of the House and Senate are drafting legislation with the goal of having a new Farm bill in place by the end of September. The Chairman's bill is expected to be introduced before Memorial Day and will be amended in Subcommittee and Full Committee in June.

The NARC&DC is meeting with all committee members or their staff and it is critically important that contacts are made locally. We are getting very positive support for our recommendations but mandatory spending in this budget environment will be difficult without strong local contacts. Please let us know if you have any questions or need help – call Bobbi Jeanquart at 202 434-4780 or e-mail at narcdc@rcdnet.org

FY08 Funding for RC&D

The House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee is expected to markup their bill for funding FY08 agriculture programs prior to Memorial Day. Their bill will include funding for RC&D. Our target is \$56 million to move the existing councils toward full funding. We are making tremendous progress in our efforts to restore funding to the RC&D program with many Members of Congress supporting RC&D. Please continue to follow-up with your Members of Congress and ask them to make sure that \$56 million is included in the House Agriculture Appropriations Bill for RC&D. NARDCDC follows up on your contacts here in DC and keeps key committee staff and Members of Congress informed on our RC&D funding request. An important item to note is that staff turnover in the early months of 2007 was quite heavy in Washington DC congressional offices. If you haven't checked in with DC congressional staff lately you may want to do so to make sure your contacts are still there and following up on your request for support of RC&D.

SAVE THE DATE: NARDCDC is sponsoring the Energy Conservation Opportunities on the Farm Conference, June 11-12, 2007 at the Hilton Savannah DeSoto, in Savannah Georgia. This conference will help you better understand how energy (specifically electricity) is used on farms, and how to identify efficiency improvements. The conference will show you practical examples of energy savings on farms and guide you through an on farm energy savings audit. Participants will learn through hands on training what is involved in being an energy savings audit data collector. **Stipends are available.** See our website for more details. www.rcdnet.org/energy.php
