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September 6, 2018

The Honorable Pat Roberts
Chairman
Senate Committee on Agriculture,
Nutrition, and Forestry
109 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable K. Michael Conaway
Chairman
House Committee on Agriculture
2430 Rayburn House Office Building.
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Agriculture,
Nutrition, and Forestry
731 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-2204

The Honorable Collin C. Peterson
Ranking Member
House Committee on Agriculture
2204 Rayburn House Office Building.
Washington, DC 20515


Dear Chairs Roberts and Conway and Ranking Members Stabenow and Peterson:

As you begin to conference the 2018 Farm Bill, the 1.3 million members of the National Association of REALTORS® would like to urge your support for the following provisions:

- **Repeal of Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS)** – Language in section 11613 of the House bill that would repeal the “Clean Water Rule: Definition of ‘Waters of the United States,’” published on June 29, 2015, by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Secretary of the Army. NAR has opposed the rule as jurisdictional overreach and inappropriate expansion of federal authority over bodies of water not previously controlled by the federal government. A recent ruling by the U.S. District Court for the District of South Carolina resulted in the implementation of the WOTUS rule in over half of all U.S. states. NAR believes that congressional action is urgently needed to halt the expansion of federal authority over these waters, which would result in delays in important local public works projects like the maintenance of flood control and water treatment projects. Further disruptions to these projects could ultimately endanger public health and safety.
- **Rural Definition** - Language in section 6504 of the House bill that would retain the definition of “rural.” Rural communities rely on the programs and services of the Rural Housing Service (RHS). Nearly 20 percent of the U.S. population lives in rural areas and nearly all of the counties with the highest poverty rates in America are rural. In FY19, the RHS expects to provide 164,000 low- to moderate-income households the opportunity to own their homes through the single-family housing guaranteed loan program, while offering rental assistance through more than 274,000 affordable rental properties throughout rural America. Congress should not put these communities in jeopardy of losing valuable RHS resources by failing to retain the definition of “rural.”

Each of these provisions is critically important to REALTORS® and to homeowners across this country. NAR urges their inclusion in the final bill. Thank you for your consideration and we stand ready to work with you on this and other important issues.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Mendenhall
2018 President, National Association of REALTORS®

cc: Farm Bill Conferees

