



LETTER TO HOUSE RULES COMMITTEE: ALLOW OPEN DEBATE ON FARM BILL

June 18, 2013

Dear Chairman Sessions and Ranking Member Slaughter,

As you meet today for amendment consideration on H.R. 1947, the Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management Act of 2013, Taxpayers for Common Sense urges you to implement Speaker Boehner's call for a "fair process that will allow for a vigorous and open debate" on this legislation. The programs and policies governed by the 629 page, nearly \$1 trillion "Farm Bill" impact all Americans. Many common sense reforms have been proposed in the 227 amendments already filed to the bill, and these deserve the full House's consideration. Only extraneous or unrelated measures like delaying flood insurance reforms or requiring reports from the Secretary on the market for dogfish should be left out.

Despite his well known and long held concerns with the nation's farm policy, the Speaker made his intentions clear in a [June 10th statement](#): "But as I said on the day I became speaker, my job isn't to impose my personal will on this institution or its members. Rather, it's to ensure we have a fair process and an open debate, leading to a product that reflects the will of our majority, the will of our members, and the will of those we represent. That's the commitment I intend to keep as this process proceeds."

However, media reports over the past week have quoted House Agriculture Committee Chairman Frank Lucas (R-OK) saying that the intention may be to adopt a rule that limits amendments to one to two per subject, or only 30 to 40 overall. Since the farm bill is so wide-reaching and touches on so many facets of not only federal agriculture policy, but also nutrition, rural development, forestry, and other topics, more amendments must be allowed to be debated and voted on. After the Senate passed its \$955 billion farm bill by only considering 15, or six percent, of the 259 amendments filed, we urged the House to do better. Now the Rules Committee must act to provide members with the opportunity to fully amend this expensive, status quo legislation.

Taxpayers deserve nothing less than a full and open debate on the House's \$940 billion farm bill that will dictate farm policy for the next five years. As the Speaker told lawmakers: "If you have ideas on how to make the bill better, bring them forward. Let's have the debate, and let's vote on them."

For more information, please contact me or Josh Sewell at 202-546-8500 or [josh\[at\]taxpayer.net](mailto:josh[at]taxpayer.net).

Sincerely,

Ryan Alexander
President

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