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SEP 20 2004

CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Diocese of Sioux City

"Offering Hope, Healing & Understanding"

September 14, 2004

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Financial Assistance Programs Division
Natural Resources Conservation Service
P. O. Box 2890
Washington, D.C. 20013-2890

To Whom It May Concern:

We are writing in reference to the Interim Final Rule which will govern the Conservation Security Program (CSP).

As long time supporters of conservation in our rural diocese (24 counties in northwest Iowa – all rural) we write to express our concerns regarding the Interim Final Rule. It is a disappointment. It puts the purpose and goals of the CSP at risk.

We suggest the following improvements in the Rule:

1. Remove restrictions that limit enrollment. CSP should be nationwide and accessible to all farmers and ranchers.
2. Expand eligible resource concerns to all types of conservation objectives.
3. Eliminate the new "per acre" cap on contract payments which favors large farms over small family farms. It also favors high land rents over lower rates.
4. Expand enhancement payments to include the full range of options in the law.



A United Way
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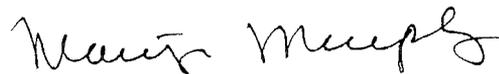
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Financial Assistance Programs Division
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5. Increase the cost-share rate for new practices.
6. Remove requirements for a prior history of meeting high environmental standards.

We urge acceptance of these suggestions and amendments to the proposed rule.

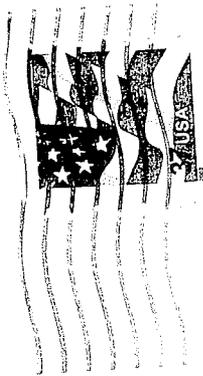
Respectfully,



Marilyn Murphy
Social Concerns Facilitator/
Rural Life Contact

CATHOLIC CHARITIES

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Sioux City, IA 51103



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Material Resources Conservation Service
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