



Utah Association of Conservation Districts

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January 26, 2009

Conservation Technical Assistance Programs Division FAXED 202-720-2998
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Room 6015-S
Washington, DC 20250-2890

RE: Federal Register Notice- November 25, 2009
7 CFR Part 610, RIN 0578-AA51, State Technical Committees

Dear Sirs/Madams,

The Utah Association of Conservation Districts represents Utah's 38 conservation districts that have assisted the federal NRCS with delivery of Farm Bill Programs to address agriculture and natural resource concerns. We support the National Association of Conservation Districts' recommendations in their letter dated December 16, 2008 regarding the referenced Federal Register Notice.

In addition, as we have participated in initial discussions with the Utah NRCS State Conservationist, regarding proposed changes in the organization of the State Technical Advisory Committee (STAC), we are concerned the process to obtain, evaluate, and implement recommendations of local workgroups may be overly complicated and burdensome to accomplish in a timely manner. We encourage simplification in the process and that significant weigh be given to local and state priorities in determining the allocation of NRCS Program funds.

We encourage that state conservation districts be supported with additional resources, both staff and funding, so that they have the capacity to fulfill their mandated responsibilities. The STAC process should encourage the participation of conservation district leaders and stakeholder involvement. When the local input is given consideration in a fair process and local resource concerns are given weigh in the evaluation criteria for awarding project funding the local conservation leaders and stakeholders are further encouraged to participate in the process and know then that their input is needed and helpful.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Cordially

Bill Rasmussen
President

cc: UACD Presidency and Board of Directors
Leonard Blackham, Commissioner of Agriculture
Sylvia Gillen, State Conservationist