



News from

Congressman Ron Kind

REPRESENTING WISCONSIN'S THIRD
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, March 15, 2007

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Reps. Kind and Gerlach, Senator Menendez Introduce Major Farm Bill Reform Legislation

*Healthy Farms, Foods, and Fuels Act of 2007 Provides
Major New Investments in Biofuels, Conservation*

Washington, D.C. – Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI), Rep. Jim Gerlach (R-PA), and Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ) today unveiled the first major bill in Congress dealing with the reauthorization of the 2007 Farm Bill, *The Healthy Farms, Foods, and Fuels Act of 2007*. This bipartisan bill, which enjoys support from 64 representatives in 23 states, would double conservation spending to provide cleaner air, water and wildlife habitat, help stabilize global warming, and provide consumers with greater access to healthy foods over the life of the next farm bill.

“The Farm Bill represents a unique opportunity for Congress to achieve real agriculture reform, and to invest in our rural communities,” said Rep. Ron Kind, the bill’s lead sponsor and a member of the House Committee on Ways and Means. “*The Healthy Farms, Foods, and Fuels Act* lays out a plan to restructure our farm and food policies to help many more farmers and regions of this country, and also help us meet some of America’s biggest energy, health and environmental challenges.”

The bill makes a major new investment in the development of renewable energy on American farms, promotes resource conservation, provides consumers with healthier food choices, and boosts farm profitability. *The Healthy Farms, Foods, and Fuels Act of 2007* also includes a provision to assist farmers in transitioning to organic production, and expands programs to bring healthier foods to school cafeterias.

“Like all legislation, the Farm Bill is a statement of priorities and *The Healthy Farms, Foods, and Fuels Act* embodies many of the priorities that I believe we as a nation should be focused on,” Senator Menendez said. “I was proud to work alongside Representatives Kind and Gerlach in creating new opportunities for our small farmers and in increasing access to healthier foods for Americans most in need, including children and seniors.”

“This is an exceptional piece of legislation that would be particularly beneficial to my constituents as it would drastically increase the federal government’s commitment to preserving farm land and open space. Additionally, we’d see a renewed effort to protect and restore vital wetlands and a further commitment to funding alternative, renewable sources of energy,” said Rep. Gerlach, the bill’s lead republican cosponsor.

(more)

The Healthy Farms, Foods and Fuels Act, will:

- Increase from \$200 million to \$2 billion annual loan guarantees for renewable energy development on farms.
- Expand programs that provide local, healthy food choices to our school children and dramatically expand coupon programs that allow elderly and low income Americans to shop at farmer's markets.
- Increase incentives by \$3 billion a year for farmers and ranchers to protect drinking water supplies and make other environmental improvements.
- Provide funding to restore nearly 3 million acres of wetlands.
- Provide funding to protect 6 million acres of farm and ranch land from sprawl.

“Right now, USDA spends too much subsidizing million-dollar farm operations, and too little helping farmers be better stewards of our land,” Rep. Kind said. “Three out of four farmers are rejected when they seek USDA conservation assistance because of our misplaced spending priorities. We can't hope to clean up the Mississippi, the Chesapeake, or other environmental priorities if we don't give our farmers the right tools and incentives.”

According to the Natural Resource Conservation Service, in 2004, there was a \$2.93 million backlog in conservation spending, with only 26 percent of the total project applications being funded. In Wisconsin, the percentage of projects that went unfunded was even higher, at 37 percent, giving the state a \$31.5 million backlog in conservation spending alone. *The Healthy Farms, Fuels, and Foods Act of 2007* would infuse an extra \$3 billion a year into conservation spending to eliminate this backlog.

Joining Reps. Kind and Gerlach, and Senator Menendez at the press conference was Bartlett Durand of Otter Creek Organic Farm in Clyde, Wisconsin. Otter Creek Organic Farm, where mineralized balanced agriculture was pioneered, is a 1,200 acre operation that focuses on dairy while also producing livestock and food crops. Mr. Durand is one of thousands of farmers that participate in voluntary USDA conservation programs. *The Healthy Farms, Foods, and Fuels Act of 2007* would dramatically increase these opportunities.

During the last Farm Bill reauthorization in 2002, Rep. Kind led the effort to shift some commodity payments to conservation and came up just 18 votes short of passing a bipartisan-supported amendment on the House floor. Kind's Healthy Farms bill, which is intended to outline desired reforms and build support for changes before consideration of the next Farm Bill, also includes an energy title and a healthy food choice title in addition to a focus on conservation.

Kind and the bill's cosponsors will continue building support for the Healthy Farms legislation with hopes of including these reforms in the 2007 reauthorization of the federal Farm Bill.

The Healthy Farms, Foods and Fuels Act of 2007, is sponsored by U.S. Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI) and has 64 cosponsors (list attached).

Healthy Farms, Foods, and Fuels Act of 2007 Cosponsors

Gary Ackerman (D-NY 5th)
Tom Allen (D-ME 1st)
Robert Andrews (D-NJ 1st)
Brian Baird (D-WA 3rd)
Tim Bishop (D-NY 1st)
Earl Blumenauer (D-OR 3rd)
Bruce Braley (D-IA 1st)
Lois Capps (D-CA)
Michael Capuano (D-MA 8th)
Ben Chandler (D-KY 6th)
Yvette Clarke (D-NY 11th)
Joseph Crowley (D-NY 7th)
Peter DeFazio (D, OR 4th)
Diana DeGette (D- CO 1st)
William Delahunt (D-MA 10th)
Norman Dicks (D-WA 6th)
John Dingell (D-MI 15th)
Keith Ellison (D-MN 5th)
Eliot Engel (D-NY 17th)
Sam Farr (D-CA 17th)
Bob Filner (D-CA 51st)
Jim Gerlach (R-PA 6th)
Wayne Gilchrest (R-MD 1st)
Brian Higgins (D-NY 27th)
Mazie Hirono (D-HI 2nd)
Maurice Hinchey (D- NY 22nd)
Darlene Hooley (D-OR 5th)
Rush Holt (D-NJ 12th)
Michael Honda (D-CA 15th)
Jay Inslee (D-WA 1st)
Marcy Kaptur (D-OH 9th)
Dale Kildee (D-MI 5th)
Jim Langevin (D-RI)
Frank LoBiondo (R-NJ 2nd)
Stephen Lynch (D-MA 9th)
Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY 4th)
Jim McDermott (D-WA 7th)
James McGovern (D-MA 3rd)
Greg Meeks (D-NY 6th)
Marty Meehan (D-MA 5th)
Michael Michaud (D-ME 2nd)
George Miller (D-CA 7th)
Gwen Moore (D-WI 4th)
James Moran (D-VA 8th)
Grace Napolitano (D-CA 38th)
Richard Neal (D-MA 2nd)
John Olver (D-MA 1st)
Frank Pallone (D-NJ 6th)
Donald Payne (D-NJ 10th)
William Pascrell (D-NJ 8th)
Thomas Petri (R-WI 6th)
Nick Rahall (D-WV 3rd)
Jim Ramstad (R-MN 3rd)
David Reichert (R-WA 8th)
Jim Saxton (R-NJ 3rd)
Albio Sires (D-NJ 13th)
Chris Shays (R-CT 4th)
Adam Smith (D-WA 9th)
Bart Stupak (D-MI 1st)
Ellen Tauscher (D-CA 10th)
John Tierney (D-MA 6th)
Mark Udall (D-CO 2nd)
Tom Udall (D-NM 3rd)
James Walsh (R-NY 25th)