

May 22, 2010

Dear Senator Baucus, Senator Tester, and Congressman Rehberg,

As Montana farmers and ranchers we are used to unpredictable weather. We have learned from generations of experience how to track precipitation and temperature closely to optimize yields and to avoid crop damage or livestock loss. But the day-to-day, season-to-season fluctuations we are used to are nothing compared to changes in the global climate we are starting to see around the world and right here in Montana.

As agricultural producers and supporters of sustainable agriculture, we are well aware that global climate change presents a serious threat to our state's economy, our livelihoods in agriculture, and the world we leave for our children. The climate in our region is clearly trending toward declining winter snowfall and extreme fluctuations in temperature, which will jeopardize our livelihoods and compromise the ecosystems that support us.

There is strong evidence that global climate change will make Montana's weather more intense and unpredictable. Warmer winters will increase the spread of insects, annual weeds, and fire danger. Wetter springs, with more rain and less snow, will delay planting, and hot, dry summers will reduce yields by stressing crops and livestock.

Human activity is largely responsible for these dangerous climate trends, and we believe it is our responsibility to help stop climate change. We are asking you to do your part by passing an aggressive cap on greenhouse gas emissions, which will aid our transition to an energy efficient economy, powered in part, by Montana's abundant renewable energy resources.

Each planting season, we actively pursue sustainable agriculture practices. We make efforts to cut our carbon footprint by reducing off-farm inputs like petroleum based fertilizer and pesticides, and when possible, by selling to local markets. Ultimately, our sustainable practices alone cannot solve climate change. Federal legislation and a global treaty to address climate change represent not only our best hope for a solution, but promise to create new opportunities for farmers and ranchers.

Provisions in legislation which offer incentives for hosting renewable energy projects or for sequestering carbon in the soil through good farming practices would of course be welcome. Renewable energy and conservation are closely linked to agriculture, and we support these incentives. These, however, are less important to us than the overarching necessity of protecting the natural systems on which agriculture depends.

Ultimately, we see federal climate change legislation as a step forward in the work we do every day: ensuring a sustainable livelihood for humans on this planet. We believe the long-term benefits, especially when compared to the potentially catastrophic effects of inaction, far outweigh the costs. Please do your part. We need you to bolster our nation's energy security,

protect our agricultural economy, and bring new prosperity to our state by aggressively capping greenhouse gas emissions.

Thank you for your efforts.

Sincerely,

Vic Andersen and Jane Heath, Simms
Tim Ballard, Missoula
Jim Barngrover, Helena
Bud Barta, *Barta Farm*, Lewistown
Douglas Baty, *Wild Plum Farm*, Dixon
Eric and Audra Bergman, *Groundworks Farm*, Great Falls
Robert Boettcher, Big Sandy
Shelbi Bowersox, *The Garden Wall*, Kalispell
Luci Brieger and Steve Elliot, *Lifeline Produce*, Victor
Bonnie Buckingham, *Community Food and Agricultural Coalition (CFAC)*, Missoula
Bryce Christiaens, *Native Ideals Seed Company, LLC*, Arlee
Amy Cilimburg, Director of Bird Conservation, *Montana Audubon*
Pam Clevenger, *Home Acres Orchard*, Stevensville
Jonda Crosby, Executive Director, and Ben Brouwer, Energy Program Manager, *Alternative Energy Resources Organization (AERO)*
Mike Davidson, Missoula
Jill Davies, Director, *Sustainable Living Systems* and *Jill's Farm*, Victor
Patti Fialcowitz, *Fialky Farm*, Dixon
Barry Flamm, Polson
Judith Fraser, Hamilton
Laura Garber, *Homestead Organics*, Hamilton
Pam Gerwe, *Purple Frog Garden*, Whitefish
Billie Gray, *Gracenote Garden*, Missoula
Linda Haris, Missoula
Ernie Harvey, *Lifeline Dairy Farm*, Victor
Kathlyn Hess and Brian Wirak, *Pommes de Terre Acres*, Dixon
Bentia Jacobsen, Lolo
Erin Janoso, *Badger Rock Farm*, Roundup
Kristi Johnson and Jay Perret, *Lowdown Farm*, Moise
Lee Johnson, *3 Little Birds*, Absorkee
Doug & Anna Jones-Crabtree, *Vilicus Farms*, Havre
Leslie Kline, *Good Egg Farm*, Ronan
Lt. Col Richard Liebert (Retired Army), *Windwalker Ranch*, Great Falls
Nancy Matheson, *Big Sky Organics*, Helena
Suzanna McDougal, *Sough Farm*, Hamilton
Bill, Dana and Maxwell Milton, *Milton Ranch*, Roundup

Lisa Mona, Missoula
Tubbee Mona, Missoula
Kim Murchison, *Clark Fork Organics*, Missoula
Cale Nittinger and Nicole Jarvis, *Ploughshare Farm*, Moise
David Oien, *Timeless Seeds*, Conrad
Tanya Olsen, Karl Sutton, Kristin Kallemeyn and Darci Jones, *Blue Barn Farm*, Moiese
Lori Parr, President, *Montana Sustainable Growers Union—Homegrown*. *Rosalie Ranch*, Mission Valley
Marlin Payne, *Bloomin Country Garden*, Missoula
Greg Price, *Garden City Harvest - River Road*, Missoula
Barb Reiter, *Boulder Hot Springs Farm*, Boulder Valley
John Schneeberger, *Garden City Nursery*, Hamilton
Paula Scoggins, *Paula's Garden & Paradise Garden*, Paradise
Joellen Shannon, *Farm to Family*, Missoula
Wade Sikorski, Rancher, Baker
Arlo Skari, Farmer, Chester
Judy Turek, Rancher, Coffee Creek
Jan Tusick, *Glenwood Farm*, Ronan
Elsie Tuss and Russell Salisbury, *Russ-n-Tuss*, Floweree
Mark Wehri, *Western Montana Growers Cooperative*, Arlee
Wendy Whitehorn, *Prairie Garden Herbs of Montana*, Dutton
Keven Yorke, *Blue Willow Farm*, Missoula
John Yovetich, *John's Backyard Garden*, Missoula
Amy Zaivzib, Missoula