United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 30, 2007

The Honorable Herb Kohl
Chairman, Senate Appropriations
Subcommittee on Agriculture
123 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert Bennett
Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations
Subcommittee on Agriculture
188 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Bennett and Kohl:

As your subcommittee begins to draft its spending bill for fiscal year 2007, we respectfully request the following appropriations for the Department of Agriculture:

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)

Cormorant Control - $450,000

The double-crested cormorant is a fish eating bird whose population is mainly located in the Great Lakes area. The increasing cormorant population has greatly depleted the fish supply and island vegetation in Northern Michigan. Cormorants are capable of catching fish both in and out of water; adults can live to be 20 years old. The birds' acidic feces destroys trees where they nest along with any vegetation below; since they nest in dense colonies they can destroy the vegetation on an entire island. Funding at $450,000 is requested to lawfully regulate cormorants and protect public resources for Delta County Michigan and its waters, including but not limited to Garden, Washington Island, Cedar River, North to Rapid River, Thunder Bay, Nahma, Little and Big Bays de Noc, and the islands therein.

Emerald Ash Borer Monitoring, Containment and Eradication - $30,000,000

Unless contained, the emerald ash borer could completely devastate North America's 7.5 billion ash trees. Ash trees are popular landscape trees and their wood is used in products from baseball bats to tool handles and flooring. The U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Services estimates the Nations ash tree economic value at nearly $300 billion. It is essential that APHIS receive full funding for their efforts to combat the emerald ash borer.

VHS Surveillance Program - $600,000

Recently, the Great Lakes have been invaded by Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS), an OIE reportable disease, and this pathogen has caused widespread fish mortalities. As part of the bi-national effort to document the locations of VHS for surveillance and management purposes, a substantial amount of fish sampling and laboratory analyses are required. In addition, outreach and education efforts to enlist help from the public in preventing the spread of VHS are necessary. These efforts will require funds and resources far beyond what is currently available to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

Agricultural Research Service (ARS)

Northwest Horticultural Research Station - $100,000

Fund Research to investigate alternative insecticides to Azinphos Methyl (AM). AM is scheduled by the EPA to be phased out for cherries and apples by 2012. Currently AM is the only insecticide known to combat Plum Curculio and other insects in cherries and apples. The FDA has a zero tolerance for Plum Curculio and its larvae in cherries and apples. An alternative to AM must be found prior to 2012 to keep cherries and apples, important Michigan crops, marketable. Michigan growers built the facility in 1979 and continue to fund its operations. Recent state budgetary crises have sharply reduced state funds. MSU is in partnership with the facility and MSU researchers conduct the research.

Cooperating States Research Education and Extension Service (CSREES):

Center for Exotic Species at Michigan Technological University - $1,500,000

The goals of the Center include education and outreach, encouragement of the participation of multiple user groups in the detection, mapping and management of exotic species, and the rapid response to research needs in the area of exotic species including their impact on aquatic systems. The agriculture and timber industries are severely impacted by exotic species, and this Center will be an important component in protecting the native environment while undertaking additional efforts to map and manage invasive species, and assisting in developing strong communities working toward common goals of sound environment management.

Michigan State University - Apple Fire Blight - $500,000

This request is for funding to support research directed at controlling fire blight, a devastating plant disease impacting apple and pear growers throughout the United States. This disease requires considerable chemical control inputs but can still strike because of the virulent nature of the pathogen. The research to be conducted is aimed at developing and delivering

optimal control practices to apple and pear growers and has a long-term goal of developing fire blight-resistant apple and pear trees.

Michigan State University - Armillaria Root Rot - $150,000

Funding is needed to continue study into Armillaria Root Rot. Proposed activities include launching a field test site dedicated to Armillaria Root Rot; improving the understanding of Armillaria biology; applying tools from modern molecular biology and genetics to speed detection of the fungus; and, evaluating new biological and chemical controls.

Michigan State University - Bovine Tuberculosis - $356,000

Funding is needed for continued bovine TB research. This will include perfecting a laboratory technique for isolating the TB-causing bacteria from farm and environmental samples such as hay, corn, and soil; developing a risk assessment model which looks at individual farms to assess the risk of acquiring or reacquiring bovine TB and the associated economic consequences; improving the understanding of the cause of false-positive results in the cattle skin tests to diagnose bovine TB in order to limit the veterinary bills associated with the skin tests.

Michigan State University - Improved Fruit Practices - $212,000

Funding is needed for continued research into improved fruit practices. This funding would assist growers in producing high quality fruit, dry beans, and sugar beets with environmentally sound, safe and effective pest control methods and management approaches.

Michigan State University - Phytophthora Research (MI) - $500,000

The project seeks to reduce the loss of Michigan vegetable growers/production by researching integrated management strategies, including contaminated water monitoring, cultural techniques, resistant vegetable varieties, and effective fungicides, biopesticides and new chemistries.

Michigan State University - Sustainable Agriculture - $387,000

Fundign is requested to measure the value of alternative agriculture production systems to local communities and the environment; identify how soil differences affect the carbon sequestration potential of diverse land management practices; demonstrate how using native

grasses in a cool-season grazing system can improve seasonal grass growth and boost livestock production and evaluate 46 species of Michigan native plants with potential to enhance biological control by beneficial insects, identifying 10 species of exceptional promise.

Michigan State University - Wood Utilization - $716,952

Michigan agricultural research station researchers are developing environmentally benign substitutes for chemicals used in creating pressure-treated lumber; demonstrating how ash wood from trees infected with the emerald ash borer (EAB) can be used to make wood products instead of being destroyed; identifying tree genes that may ultimately enable the development of more valuable tree species.

Michigan State University - Wood Utilization (OR, MS, NC, MN, ME, MI, ID, TN, AK, WV) - $6,840,000

This is a $6.85 million dollar project involving 10 states. Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station researchers are developing environmentally benign substitutes for chemicals used in creating pressure-treated lumber; demonstrating how ash wood from trees infected with the emerald ash borer (EAB) can be used to make wood products instead of being destroyed; identifying tree genes that may ultimately enable the development of more valuable tree species.

Food and Nutrition Service (FNS):

Eastern Michigan Division Salvation Army Bed and Bread Program - $1,000,000

The Salvation Army Bed and Bread Program provides 8,972 meals daily (3.275 annually) in our institutions, from our community centers in food parcels and in community meals, and directly on the streets of Detroit and Highland Park through the Bed and Bread Program trucks. The three trucks currently in service provide an average of 1,000 meals daily, and could do more if there were more trucks. We already are looking to place a truck in Pontiac, where the demand is great. In addition, the Bed and Bread Program allows us to directly house 1,052 people nightly (384,030 annually), and enables partners to house an additional 1,184 nightly. $1 million is requested to meet the increased need in the nation's poorest major city.

Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency Commodity Foods Distribution Center - $100,000

OLHSA would like to start preparations now for purchase/rehabilitation of a permanent site for consolidating nutrition services. In order to successfully secure grants from USDA, foundations, HUD, or others, a cash match is needed. A $100,000 appropriation to OLHSA

towards the purchase of a permanent distribution center for the purpose of centralizing nutrition services for Livingston and Oakland Counties.

Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS)

Michigan Department of Agriculture's Food and Agriculture Gateway Security Early Detection Pilot - $500,000

This pilot program would improve the state's capabilities to quickly detect incoming problems across the food and agriculture system by looking more thoroughly and effectively at the known vulnerable points in the supply and distribution chain across state and national borders. By coordinating with law enforcement, transportation, food regulators, and public health, MDA would systematically look at transportation and distribution of food, animals, and plant material coming into Michigan from other states and counties. This effort, in collaboration with federal inspection programs, would supplement and complement federal efforts adn identify weaknesses that threaten food safety, food security, public health, the environment and our economy

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Great Lakes Basin Program for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control - $2,500,000

The Great Lakes Basin Program was authorized in the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002. The Basin Program is a voluntary, pollution prevention initiative that aids restoration efforts. Moreover, it is a unique, federal-state partnership that addresses the economic and environmental impacts associated with soil erosion and sedimentation, a major source of pollution for the Great Lakes. The goal of the Basin Program is to protect and improve Great Lakes water quality by controlling erosion and sedimentation; limiting the input of associated nutrients and toxic contaminants; and minimizing off-site sources of damages to harbors, streams, fish and wildlife habitat, recreational facilities and the Basin's system of public works. Program elements include program grants and technical assistance, demonstration grants, and information/education activities.

Improved Natural Resources Conservation Services at Michigan Technological University - $1,800,000

Funding is need to design, develop and deploy a new set of program management tools for achieving conservation goals integrating a wide array of newly available data and information technologies into day-to-day program management needs. The tools to be developed under this project will allow managers to fully exploit digital datasets now becoming available through several programs, including the current project activities across USDA. Better management decisions on program investments will follow from this improved management decision capability.

Office for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers (OSDF)

National Hispanic Rural Communications Initiative - $2,000,000

Through the National Hispanic Rural Communications Initiative, Self Reliance Foundation (SRF) will conduct a national, Spanish-language educational outreach initiative to advance USDA's goal to reach socially disadvantaged and traditionally underserved Latino communities in rural areas nationwide. Together with USDA, SRF, in association with Hispanic Communications Network, will implement culturally relevant media outreach and strategic grassroots outreach efforts to provide essential educational information and resources to traditionally overlooked rural Hispanic communities. Topics include such USDA – Rural Development programs as new and minority farmer programs, housing, financial, and utilities assistance, development opportunities, and community development services, including English language learning programs. As added value, all media programs will also be accessible in urban markets, where many rural-residing Hispanics have relatives who can also spread the information via word-of-mouth and viral marketing efforts. SRF also operates a bilingual, toll-free National Information & Referral Service that Spanish-speaking families in rural areas nationwide are encouraged to call to be connected with relevant farm owner programs, health services and financial assistance and ESL programs in their local Michigan communities and 47 states, including Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico.

Rural Development - Housing & Community Facilities (RHS)

Michigan Department of Agriculture's Bio-Based Energy- BioFuture Project - $500,000

Funding is request to enhance MDA's ability to promote and facilitate Michigan's transition to a bioeconomy by developing a federal-state partnership to promote the research and expansion of bio-based products. This effort would establish a strategy for outreach and knowledge sharing between the agricultural, automotive, and military industries. The partnership would liaison with emerging bio-industries to assist in the research, development, and financing of new technologies; identify federal funding opportunities, facilitate job growth, and build the supporting structure to drive Michigan's bioeconomy. In addition the partnership woudl advise on technical issues affecting bio-based policies.

Central Michigan University Center for Children with Low-Incidence Disabilities - $915,000

Funding will support the development of a multidisciplinary Center at Central Michigan University for Children with Low-Incidence Disabilities. The Center will provide a lending library and consultation for rural Michigan school districts for tests and instructional materials specifically designed for these children. For the most difficult cases the Center will provide

assessment, instructional planning, and follow-up. Also, training will be provided for graduate students across several disciplines.

City of Traverse City Universal Accessible Hickory Hills Ski Lodge Project - $4,000,000

The Hickory Hills ski area has for years been an underutilized gem primarily for youth skiing. The City of Traverse City wishes to relocate and replace the Hickory Hills Ski lodge as a multi-use structure to service the 125 acre Hickory Hills Recreation Area and adjacent 107 acre Traverse City/Garfield Township Recreation Authority property. The new lodge will be located at the center of varied passive and active recreation venues and will facilitate expansion of the existing programs and development of an all-season recreation facility at Hickory Hills. This new lodge will expand the amenities that attract young families looking to relocate to the area and provide increased year-around recreation for tourists and residents.

Franklin Township Quincy Smelter Site Asbestos Hazard Abatement - $125,000

From 1898 to 1967 the Quincy Mining Company operated a copper smelter at Ripley Location. Among the 27 buildings remaining on the site are the three-story cupola blast furnace, the 1898 furnace and, an automatic casting machine. The sandstone, mineral warehouse and 460-foot trestle was built in 1904. The Quincy Smelter is the only copper smelter remaining in the Lake Superior Region. This significant historical site is not currently open to students and community groups who historically toured the facility. Degradation of asbestos materials has rendered this cultural icon inaccessible. The Quincy Smelter site is owned by Franklin Township who is requesting funding to complete asbestos hazard abatement and return this resource to the public.

Germfask Township Community/Senior Center Renovations - $1,000,000

Funding is needed for replacement of a flat roof with construction of a pitched roof, in addition to renovating the rest of the interior of the center. The Germfask Community Center is open to and accommodates the neighboring townships of Seney, Lakefield, Portage, and Mueller. Activities include but are not limited to regular town meetings, senior meals and recreation, special event dinners, distribution of monthly and quarterly commodities, free-of-charge medical clinic, mental health services, High School accreditation classes, fire department classes, youth sports teams, and a community recycling collection program.

National Center for Manufacturing Sciences Bio-Based Feedstock for Polyurethane Foam Project - $4,000,000

The program would develop the use of soy polyols for the manufacture of polyurethane foam for cushioning materials. This would reduce the dependence on imported oil and gas for this application and would also create a use for soy by-product which is current in surplus in the US. Federal funding is warranted in this program because it is an effort to convert a new material source into large scale production, something that an individual company could not undertake alone.

State of Michigan Upper Peninsula State Fair for the Growing UP Foresters Exhibit - $3,500,000

Industry, educators, and the community have all made requests for the "Growing UP Foresters Exhibit" to be available throughout the year. To achieve this goal, the Upper Peninsula State Fair would need to erect a building to house this exhibit, including heating and cooling for year round use. Plans for a 20,000 square foot steel facility (to include permanent exhibit space for Growing UP Foresters; classrooms; conference room; and restrooms) have been proposed for a cost of $3,500,000.

The New Mackinac Straits Virtual Hospital Project - $400,000

A capital planning grant to link the proposed new hospital to built in St. Ignace with 3 existing free-standing outpatient clinics, with Tribal clinics, and remote health services units in a remote 24-hour accessible diagnosis IT emergency room. This is part of a new non-profit hospital to be built on fee simple property to serve the agricultural significant parts of the Eastern Upper peninsula and the Northern Lower Peninsula.

Village of Calumet Theatre Building Renovation Project - $1,135,000

The Calumet Theatre is an historic opera house owned by the Village of Calumet. On the National Register of Historic Places, it has operated continuously since its opening in 1900. It requires extensive maintenance to prevent damage from roof leaks, replace the heating system, add insulation and add an elevator. This project will eliminate persistent problems with roof leakage; reduce heating costs by improving insulation in the building and make the building more comfortable, thus increasing its appeal to patrons; and permit handicapped patron access to the second floor, increasing the Theatre's usability by that underserved portion of the community.

City of Munising Fire and Police Building - $600,000

Funds would be used to replace a totally deteriorated fire hall and provide an inside facility for police vehicles. Currently, the Munising Police Department has no inside vehicle storage. The City receives over 200 inches of snow each winter. The existing fire station is non-repairable. The roof and walls are structurally unsound. Munising has a fully-trained fire staff and good equipment, with a building that is unsafe.

Rural Utility Service (RUS)

Northern Michigan University Combined Heat and Power Cogeneration - $15,000,000

Funding is requested to build a Combined Heat and Power (CHP) Cogeneration $60 million addition to Northern Michigan University's heating plant that utilizes a solid fuel boiler capable of burning wood chips, coal, and natural gas integrated with a 7-10 megawatt extraction steam turbine capable of producing the required thermal and electrical needs of the NMU and steam to Marquette General Hospital (MGH). The primary fuel would be wood byproducts of the UP wood products industry. The project also includes a small scale gasification facility to be used by NMU's faculty and students for research related to biomass gasification. It creates 90-120 new jobs, a research facility to study the optimization and use of alternative energy, and produces operational savings for NMU and MGH.

USDA Rural Water Circuit Riders - $14,700,000

Over 90% of the U.S. community water systems serve less than 10,000 homes. These communities have the greatest difficulty providing safe and affordable public drinking water and sewer services because of their limited economies of scale and lack of technical expertise. Next year the burden placed on rural and small communities will increase with the expansion of water regulations (including arsenic, radon, disinfection byproducts, the ground water treatment rule, total maximum daily load rules, and stringent re-permitting of wastewater permits – in addition to the over 80 EPA rules that are currently on the books). The initiatives that are achieving results within the USDA for rural and small community development, compliance, public he

Sincerely,

Senator Debbie Stabenow

Senator Carl Levin