

NATIONAL CORN GROWERS ASSOCIATION

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NCGA Appreciates Bipartisan Passage of H.R. 872 in Senate Ag Committee

WASHINGTON (June 21, 2011) -- The National Corn Growers Association applauds the Senate Agriculture Committee for passing H.R. 872, the Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act of 2011, with a strong bipartisan vote. This legislation clarifies that National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits are not required when applying pesticides according to their EPA approved label. The House of Representatives passed this legislation in April.

"NCGA greatly appreciates the work of Senate Ag Committee Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow and members of the committee to pass this important legislation," NCGA President Bart Schott, a farmer in Kulm, N.D. said. "We are pleased to see both the Senate and House understand the significance of this bill and how farmers could be impacted by NPDES permits for pesticides."

For most of the past four decades, water quality concerns from pesticide applications were addressed within the registration process under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), rather than a Clean Water Act permitting program. H.R. 872 amends both the Clean Water Act and FIFRA in order to restore the previous regulatory framework.

Under a federal court ruling in 2009, pesticide applicators would have to apply for an NPDES permit if the chemical reaches a body of water, which could include ditches and culverts. While NPDES permits will not provide any additional environmental benefits, the complex new requirements will expose farmers to potential citizen action suits for something as simple as paperwork violations.

"The NPDES permitting system jeopardizes the farm economy without providing any real protection to water quality," Schott said. "NCGA supports this common sense legislation and urges the Senate to vote in favor of H.R. 872 when it is considered on the floor."

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Founded in 1957, the National Corn Growers Association represents 35,000 dues-paying corn farmers nationwide and the interests of more than 300,000 growers who contribute through corn checkoff programs in their states. NCGA and its 48 affiliated state associations and checkoff organizations work together to create and increase opportunities for their members and their industry.