

III. Improving our national infrastructure

Our competitive advantage depends on a solid infrastructure throughout the U.S. We support upgrading our Transportation System.

NCGA Position

Title: Transportation Policy

Position Number: III-A-1

Background: Transportation issues are a significant factor in market development for corn and related products. We must aggressively work with the U.S. transportation leaders in the public and private sector to resolve transportation barriers that affect agriculture, both domestically and internationally.

Resolution/Position:

1. User Fees and Taxes TBR 2012
 - a) Support reasonable or equitable barge user and transportation fees and/or rates.
 - b) Support reasonable rail rates and support equitable allocations of rail cars to elevators.
 - c) Support reasonable costs of accessibility to the Surface Transportation Board.

2. Transportation Research TBR 2012
 - a) Support further research and development of a nationwide transportation network that is economically sound and will provide a foundation for our future agricultural transportation needs.
 - b) Encourage the federal government to identify economic consequences of the inefficiencies of our transportation infrastructure.
 - c) Have a long-term transportation strategy to address domestic and foreign markets. This strategy will be developed from a comprehensive study that includes present and future demand of markets and all modes of transportation.

3. Inland Waterways TBR 2014
 - a) Support the immediate modernization of the inland waterway transportation system with trust funds prioritized for replacing Locks 25, 24, 22, 21 and 20 on the Mississippi River and the LaGrange and Peoria Locks on the Illinois River to 1200 ft. structure, and extending guidewalls at Mississippi Lock and Dams 14 through 18; moorings at Locks 12, 14, 18, and 24; switch boats at Locks 11 through 13.
 - b) Oppose using the Inland Waterway Trust Fund for operations and maintenance and major rehabilitation projects of less than \$100 million.
 - c) The federal government and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers should repair, maintain, and upgrade the levee systems in the flood control districts to guarantee the continuation of commerce on the navigable waters of the Mississippi River and Missouri River Basins and the continued protection of personal property by the levee systems.
 - d) We support a federal law to require the Army Corps of Engineers to place a value on wetlands of at least what was paid for the land when calculating cost-benefit ratios for levee repairs. Values of public services should also be included in the calculation.
 - e) Encourage the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Upper Mississippi River Navigation Study group (Navigation and Eco System Sustainability Program) to fully realize the potential of production technology advancements to increase corn yields as well as potential for future foreign demand.
 - f) Support legislation that holds any environmental restoration projects to the same cost/benefit standards as flood control and navigation projects.
 - g) Encourage vigilant watch on the American Heritage Rivers Initiative policy.
 - h) Support management of the Missouri River that places the highest priority on economic uses of the river, i.e., power generation, flood control for agricultural land, navigation and irrigation. NCGA recognizes the recreation and environmental value of the river and will work with others to maintain and enhance recreational and environmental benefits.

- i) Oppose changes in the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers Missouri River Master Manual that have a negative impact on agriculture because of reduced navigation or potential for spring rises.
 - j) Support increased funding for the Corp of Engineers for Streambank Stabilization and Channel Maintenance for the Missouri River.
 - k) All affiliated states will encourage their state legislatures to pass resolutions supporting lock and dam upgrades.
 - l) Support continued funding and operation of the Kaskaskia River Lock.
 - m) When flood control plans require the flooding of specific tracts of land to protect economic development in other areas, the landowners of the proposed sacrificial property should receive an annual flood easement payment and compensation for physical and economic damages in the event of actual flooding.
4. We support accurate Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood mapping. TBR 2014
5. Rural Highways TBR 2014
- a) Encourage state and federal funding for the building and upgrading of rural highways and bridges.
 - b) Encourage and fund heavier weight bearing limits for roads and bridges to accommodate shipping.
 - c) Encourage and support the reauthorization of the Federal Highway Act with the following enhancements: ability to increase gross vehicle weights and additional axle configuration or long vehicle configuration on federally funded primary and secondary roads. Allow the grandfathering in of all state current weights and vehicle combinations.
6. Railroads TBR 2014
- a) Support the retention and upgrading of the rail transportation system.
 - b) Review all rail and transportation mergers and consolidations.
 - c) Encourage the Surface Transportation Board to focus on shipper/receiver needs.
 - d) Support short line and regional rail projects that improve opportunities for efficient and economical movement of corn and corn products and enhance competition.
 - e) Due to the vast number of unlighted rural rail crossings, rail cars should be required to use highly reflectorized tape in the same manner required for trucks.
 - f) Support competitive and nondiscriminatory rate structure for all our nation's railroads.
 - g) Support establishing state and federal matching loans or grants to upgrade short line rails needed to carry heavier weight.
 - h) NCGA opposes any railroad establishing weight rules detrimental to, or singling out, agriculture. NCGA should work with any railroad to investigate and resolve the recent unequal and more expensive weight restrictions placed only upon bulk agricultural commodities.
 - i) Encourage the rail industry to continue the safe transport of anhydrous ammonia.
7. Support continued regulation of the anhydrous ammonia pipeline industry and oppose all efforts to deregulate this industry. TBR 2012
8. Propose repeal of the Jones Act, or an exemption for bulk and containerized agricultural commodities and fuels. TBR 2012
9. Support upgrades for grain export facilities. TBR 2012
10. We support efforts to improve and expand transportation for the movement of agricultural products by all forms of transportation. TBR 2012

11. Support Congressional adoption and funding for the Inland Waterways Capitol Development Plan. TBR 2014
12. Support up to a 20 cent/gallon increase in the barge fuel assessment program, expediting the proposed Capital Development Plan. TBR 2014
13. The NCGA supports anti-trust rail legislation. TBR 2013
14. The NCGA supports ag production having a right of standing in any rail rate case that may be brought forward. TBR 2013
15. The NCGA supports reduction in filing fees for rail rate cases and a concrete deadline for ruling on rate cases. TBR 2013
16. We support federal and state policies to upgrade infrastructure used for liquid petroleum and crop nutrients to satisfy seasonal peak needs. TBR 2013

NCGA Position

Title: Truck Regulations

Position Number: III-A-2

Resolution/Position:

1. Encourage all states, Canada, and Mexico to establish uniform truck standards for safety, liability and cargo insurance for all vehicles operating for hire. Work to ensure trucks and drivers that pass uniform standards are permitted to move freely across borders. TBR 2014
2. Support continuation of farm exemption of Commercial Drivers License (CDL) requirements. Support elimination of travel restrictions for farmers hauling their own farm commodities and equipment. TBR 2012
3. Oppose the application of transportation regulations relating to drivers of commercial vehicles such as the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations for farmers transporting property for their farming operations. TBR 2012
4. Oppose withholding of federal transportation funds from states that do not impose additional regulatory burdens on farmers. TBR 2012
5. Support agreements allowing farmers hauling their farm products into bordering states to utilize farmer licensing and permitting. TBR 2012
6. Support legislation to exempt farmers with farm license plates on their trucks from being required to obtain a U.S. DOT number and a UCR permit. TBR 2013
7. Seek a permanent hours-of-service federal waiver (spring and fall deliveries) for agricultural inputs to help ensure the timely delivery of agricultural supplies. TBR 2014

NCGA Position

Title: Rural Development

Position Number: III-B

Background: NCGA encourages the U.S. Congress to initiate programs that will maximize potential opportunities for farmers and their communities. Engaging farmers in value-added processing, production, and marketing is an important strategy for enhancing farm profitability and fostering the development of their rural communities. This implies creating relationships between producers and their customers with shared risk and reward, enabling the producer to receive a larger share of their customer's dollar by investing management, equipment, processing, time, etc.

Resolution/Position:

Supports:

1. Adding value through local ownership that will maximize farmers profit potential. TBR 2012
2. New sources of capital and lendable funds for start-up and growth businesses. TBR 2012
3. NCGA will actively disseminate information sources on how and where to access debt and equity financing for producer owned/invested opportunities to membership. TBR 2012
4. A secondary market for economic development loans. TBR 2012
5. The Commodity Credit Corporation loan program for farmer investment new construction or expansion of value-added enterprises. TBR 2012
6. Encouraging that the USDA Rural Economic Community Development Funds to be prioritized towards farmer owned value-added systems. TBR 2012
7. An investment tax credit to support farmer owned value-added initiatives. TBR 2012
8. Further development of programs that provide technical assistance, business planning, feasibility studies, market research and development, technology, incorporation for farmer owned facilities. TBR 2012
9. Studies which show what corn processing can do for infrastructures and jobs in rural America. These studies should qualify for USDA value-added grant funding. TBR 2012
10. Actively support full funding (\$40 million) for USDA Rural Development Value Added Producer Grant Program. TBR 2012
11. Strong involvement by USDA – Rural Development State Offices in the development and scoring of applications of USDA Value-Added grants programs. TBR 2012
12. Strategies whereby farm income can be positively impacted by both a focus on productivity and a focus on opportunity. TBR 2012
13. Support implementation of the “rural development component” within the Farm Bill that would help create new corn utilization. TBR 2012

14. Support rural development grants language that encourages innovative value added efforts that do not depend on construction of facilities and supports market systems between producers and end users. TBR 2012
15. Value added opportunities for producers to invest up and down the value chain. TBR 2012
16. Support amending IRS Code Section 521, the certification criteria for producer cooperatives, to certify cooperatives in which more than 50% of the ownership and control is held by producers. TBR 2012
17. Support review and evaluation of co-op law to facilitate development of rural value-added projects. TBR 2012
18. Support amending federal law to define a producer owned or controlled business as more than 50% producer-owned or controlled for purposes of producer entities under federal tax, securities, and antitrust laws. Provide exemption for antitrust purposes similar to Capper Volstead exemption but without entity restrictions. TBR 2012
19. Support amending IRS Code to allow a cooperative or other producer business entity to convert to a newly eligible business structure without a liquidation tax being imposed if, after the reorganization, a majority of the governance and financial rights are held by producers of agricultural products. TBR 2012
20. Support allowing cooperatives and producers entities with proper disclosure to raise money from patrons and certain qualified investors as certified by the securities division of any state without federal registration. Exempt producer owned or controlled businesses from federal SEC reporting requirements unless securities are traded on a national public exchange. TBR 2012
21. Support amending SEC authority to grant a permit for an exchange for producers to trade or transfer their interests in producer owned or controlled businesses. Support grant from corn growers to develop model. TBR 2012
22. Support legislation that would prohibit the taking of property by eminent domain for private economic development. TBR 2012
23. Support the important work of USDA Rural Development to improve the quality of life and increase economic opportunity in rural America. Be it further resolved that NCGA encourages the long-term funding of the grant, loan and loan guarantee programs administered by USDA Rural Development. TBR 2012