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# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON  
AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY

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**---ATTENTION AG OR ENVIRONMENT LA.**

September 10, 2003

Dear Colleague,

We are writing to encourage you and your staff to attend a timely and important Congressional briefing entitled "The Potential Impacts of Climate Change on U.S. Agriculture and What Can Farmers Do About It?" organized by the Center for Health and the Global Environment at Harvard Medical School. The briefing will take place on Monday, September 29, 2003, 1:00-3:00 in Russell 328A. Light refreshments will be served.

This briefing will examine some of the impacts that climate change, with warmer and more variable weather, has had, and is projected to have, on U.S. agriculture. It will also cover what farmers can do to mitigate climate change--through such practices as carbon sequestration in soils, the production of biofuels, and the use of wind energy on their farms.

Since the 1970's, U.S. agriculture has achieved enhanced productivity, but it has also experienced greater variability that has been, in part, climate-related. Extreme weather events (very high temperatures, torrential rains and flooding, and droughts) and crop diseases and pests have taken a heavy toll.

Greenhouse warming is expected to lead in future years to even more intense and frequent extreme weather events, and to greater losses from diseases and pests that may expand their ranges. While some farmers in the U.S. growing some crops in some years may prosper because of warmer temperatures, more precipitation, and CO2 fertilization, U.S. agriculture in general is likely to become increasingly unstable, and farmers may find it hard to plan what crops to plant and when.

U.S. farmers can play major roles in helping to mitigate climate change, and they can do so profitably. They can adopt strategies that sequester large amounts of carbon in the soil through various tilling practices and the growing of certain crops. They can produce crops that become biofuels for transportation and heating. And they can install wind turbines on their farms to supplement their incomes.

These topics will be covered by the following speakers:

Welcome and Introductions--Eric Chivian, Director, Center for Health and the Global Environment, Harvard Medical School

An Overview of Climate Change Impacts on U.S. Agriculture—Dr. William Easterling,  
Professor of Agronomy and Director of the Institutes of the Environment, Penn State University  
Climate Change Effects on Crop Diseases and Pests—Dr. X.B. Yang, Assoc. Professor  
of Plant Pathology, Iowa State University  
Carbon Sequestration on Farms—Dr. Charles W. Rice, Professor of Soil Microbiology,  
Kansas State University  
Wind Energy and the Production of Biofuels—Dan McGuire, Chief Executive Officer,  
American Corn Growers Foundation

hope that you or your staff will be able to attend this important briefing.

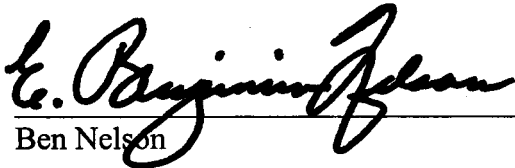
Sincerely,



Tom Harkin



Richard Lugar



Ben Nelson



Sam Brownback