

December 16, 2009

The Honorable Christine Gregoire
Office of the Governor
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

**A message from 37 associations
on behalf of the Washington
agricultural community**

Dear Governor Gregoire,

Agriculture is a major economic driver in Washington and as such is well positioned to lead us out of the recession. Our \$32 billion food and agriculture industry is 13% of the state's economy and employs 160,000 people. The agricultural community worked together to identify the following as key issues for the 2010 legislative session.

Agriculture is a critical component in the recovery of our statewide economy. Even though the global recession has contributed to difficulty in accessing financing, rising input costs, and fluctuating prices, Washington's agricultural sector has remained steady in both employment and exports. As local and foreign economies recover, agriculture will help lead Washington out of these tough economic times.

We ask for your support for this industry generated Ag Package. These principles reaffirm the Office of Farmland Preservation's report to the legislature.

We would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss the priorities identified in this Package. More explanation of each point is included in the second document.

Key issues for agriculture in the 2010 legislative session.

- 1) Promote agriculture's role in the economic recovery by not increasing taxes, fees, or regulations, which would hinder the ability of Washington's farmers and ranchers to remain sustainable.**
- 2) Ensure an adequate supply of water for agriculture by eliminating impediments to efficient water usage, continuing to develop new supplies, and removing legal uncertainties related to current and future water use.**
- 3) End excessive state regulations that result in higher labor costs, reform the workers' comp system to make it more effective, and enhance programs for seasonal and full-time workers in order to promote a legal and stable workforce.**
- 4) Foster sound environmental outcomes by recognizing the benefits derived from retaining agricultural operations on the landscape and encouraging producers to voluntarily employ additional stewardship measures.**
- 5) Ensure that our transportation system provides an efficient farm-to-market product distribution network.**
- 6) Require state agencies to complete an Agricultural Impact Statement in advance of any action, so that impacts to farmland are properly identified, and avoided or minimized.**
- 7) Promote and support agricultural research, extension, and commodity specific programs funded through the state universities and Department of Agriculture.**

Thank you for your leadership and your interest in assisting agriculture.

Sincerely,

Cattle Producers of Washington
Columbia-Snake River Irrigators Association
Hop Growers of Washington
Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers
Washington Asparagus Commission
Washington Association of Landscape Professionals
Washington Association of Wheat Growers
Washington Blueberry Commission
Washington Cattlemen's Association
Washington Farm Bureau
Washington Friends of Farms and Forests
Washington Growers Clearing House Association
Washington Potato and Onion Association
Washington State Dairy Federation
Washington State Horticultural Association
Washington State Potato Commission
Washington State Turfgrass Seed Commission
Wenatchee Valley Traffic Association
Yakima Valley Growers-Shippers Association

Columbia Basin Development League
Far West Agribusiness Association
Northwest Food Processors Association
Washington Asparagus Council
Washington Association of Conservation Districts
Washington Association of Wine Grape Growers
Washington Association of Landscape Professionals
Washington Cattle Feeders Association
Washington Christmas Tree Growers
Washington Fish Growers Association
Washington Fryer Commission
Washington North-Idaho Seed Association
Washington State Council of Farmer Cooperatives
Washington State Grange
Washington State Nursery and Landscape Assoc.
Washington State Sheep Producers
Washington State Water Resources Association
Western Washington Agricultural Association

cc: Governor Christine Gregoire
WSDA Director Dan Newhouse
Senate Members
House of Representatives Members