

September 20, 2017

The Honorable Michael Conaway  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Agriculture  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Collin Peterson  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Agriculture  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Conaway and Ranking Member Peterson:

As representatives of agricultural producers, processors, manufacturers, plant science companies, trade associations, and related industries, we urge you to extend the authorization for the U.S. contribution to the Global Crop Diversity Trust in upcoming Farm Bill and reset the U.S. contribution limit at 33 percent of the total amount of funds contributed to the Trust from all sources.

Section 3202 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-246) authorized a U.S. contribution of \$60 million over five years (2008-2012) to the endowment of the Global Crop Diversity Trust. Congress extended that authority through fiscal year 2018 in the Agriculture Act of 2014.

As you know, with your help over the past ten years (FY 2008- FY 2017), a total of \$48 million have been provided to the Trust through annual appropriations. Clearly Congress has demonstrated that the work of the Trust is vital, and that it has enjoyed widespread bipartisan support.

Early U.S. support for the Trust has spurred other governments to contribute to the conservation and availability of crop diversity for food security worldwide. Since the early U.S. involvement, the Trust has garnered pledges of more than \$450 million from developing as well as developed countries, the private sector, and charitable foundations. Rather than donate to the endowment, some countries have extended loans, financial support for particular projects, genebank partnerships and rescue operations and still others have paid for operational activities. To date, those resources outside strict endowment contributions have not been considered eligible for inclusion in the total amount of funds contributed to the Trust from all sources for purposes of calculating the U.S. contribution limit. This discredits legitimate, creative funding sources. While the Trust has made great strides in raising funds from other donors for its endowment, further assistance is needed.

There is further justification for resetting the U.S. contribution limit to the Trust at 33 percent. The Trust has taken on a significant share of new responsibilities since the 2008 authorization and the higher level would reflect the U.S. contribution to other international organizations. Some of the notable projects consuming Trust resources include supporting the international genebanks and providing assistance to others which are unfortunately located in geographic areas ravaged by war, natural disaster, and competing national priorities. Among its other initiatives, the Trust has facilitated collection of crop wild relatives to improve diversity and spearheaded an information system network to improve availability of gene accession data for researchers globally. The U.S. contribution limit to the Global Fund to other international organizations operates under a 33 percent limit.

As U.S. farmers, input suppliers, and related industries, we agree that agriculture and food security are critical to the global agenda. By furthering its support of the Trust, the U.S. can demonstrate its commitment to long term investments that will ensure that farmers here and across the developing world will benefit from a full array of genetic diversity. The Trust plays a complementary role to our own genetic resources, the National Plant Germplasm System, housed at the USDA Agricultural Research Service. These resources support the economic viability of U.S. agriculture and new energy initiatives, and provide important benefits to efforts to alleviate global poverty and respond to climate change.

Thank you for your attention to our request.

Sincerely,

American Farm Bureau Federation  
American Seed Trade Association  
American Soybean Association  
National Association of Wheat Growers  
National Corn Growers Association  
National Sorghum Producers  
Monsanto  
Produce Marketing Association  
Syngenta  
US Rice Producers Association