



**EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503**

May 20, 2013
(Senate)

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY

S. 954 – Agriculture Reform, Food, and Jobs Act of 2013

(Sen. Stabenow, D-MI)

The Administration supports Senate passage of S. 954, the Agriculture Reform, Food, and Jobs Act of 2013, and looks forward to working with the Congress to address the important concerns described below prior to final passage.

The Administration greatly appreciates the Senate's bipartisan efforts to enact a food, farm and jobs bill. With authorization for farm and food related programs set to expire this year, it is critical that the Congress pass legislation that provides certainty for rural America and includes needed reforms and savings. The new farm bill should promote rural development, preserve a farm safety net, maintain strong nutrition programs, encourage the development of local and regional markets, enhance conservation, honor our international trade commitments, including under the World Trade Organization, and advance agricultural research. In light of the Nation's long-term fiscal challenge, the legislation should also contribute significantly to deficit reduction.

The President's Budget provides a strong safety net for farmers that protect agriculture from losses, while instituting needed risk-based reforms to reduce spending for some agricultural programs. The Agriculture Reform, Food, and Jobs Act of 2013 makes meaningful progress toward supporting the Administration's goals. Notable reforms include eliminating the direct payment system and tightening payment and eligibility requirements. The Administration supports the Senate's efforts to consolidate and streamline conservation assistance, which will reduce administrative burdens on farmers and ranchers and improve environmental outcomes, and believes that crop insurance payments should be tied to the Nation's soil conservation and wetland protection goals. The bill's funding for bioenergy programs will enhance our energy security while supporting innovation and growth in rural economies.

Consistent with the President's Budget, the Administration looks forward to working with the Congress to achieve crop insurance and commodity program savings that are not contained in S. 954, while at the same time strengthening the farm safety net in times of need and supporting the next generation of farmers. The Administration also strongly supports the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), a cornerstone of our Nation's food assistance safety net, which is why it was not subject to cuts in the President's Budget. SNAP helps families put food on the table, while also benefitting farm and rural economies.

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