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MGA Releases Midwestern Recommendations for Farm Bill Reauthorization

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Midwestern Governors Association (MGA) released a set of regional recommendations today on agriculture and conservation policy in preparation for Congress to reauthorize the farm bill. These regional recommendations, coupled with individual states' priorities, serve as a foundation in the formation of our nation's next farm bill.

States play a critical role in supporting federal agriculture and conservation policy. Agriculture is a thriving industry in the Midwest and the farm bill affects every person by ensuring the food on a person's plate is safe, affordable and sustainable. As Congress faces tough budget decisions, state and regional recommendations, especially the Midwest's, need to be a priority in legislative decisions.

In a letter accompanying the recommendations, Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn, MGA 2011 Chair, and Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad, MGA 2012 Chair, wrote, "This next farm bill provides significant opportunity to continue to improve upon many agriculture and conservation policies and programs to better adapt to the needs of farmers, ranchers and consumers...The provided Midwestern recommendations are aimed to help develop and inform the debate as our nation shapes the future of U.S. agriculture policy for the next five years and beyond."

Gov. Quinn, who initiated the recommendation process during his time as Chair, said, "Midwestern farmers and ranchers are stewards of the region, producing food for families around the world and protecting America's bounty for the next generation. The farm bill provides rural America with the necessary tools and resources to ensure safe food, homegrown energy, clean air and water, protection for critical wildlife habitats and recreational opportunities."

MGA Executive Director Jesse Heier said, "The Midwest, often referred to as the nation's breadbasket, must take a leadership role to ensure that our nation's farmers and ranchers are able to feed, fuel and provide the fiber for the entire world. The farm bill provides an enormous opportunity to ensure agriculture remains strong for future generations."

These recommendations cover the vast array of issues and titles addressed within this critical piece of legislation including: commodities, livestock, forestry, invasive species, energy, conservation, rural development, research, nutrition, credit and insurance. The complete document is available at www.midwesterngovernors.org/publications/farbill2012.pdf.

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The MGA is a nonprofit, bipartisan organization that brings together the governors of Midwestern states to work cooperatively on issues of importance to the region. Current members of the MGA are Gov. Pat Quinn (Ill.), Gov. Mitch Daniels (Ind.), Gov. Terry Branstad (Iowa), Gov. Sam Brownback (Kansas), Gov. Rick Snyder (Mich.), Gov. Mark Dayton (Minn.), Gov. Jay Nixon (Mo.), Gov. John Kasich (Ohio) and Gov. Scott Walker (Wis.).