

Q: WHAT DO *DIRECT PAYMENTS* AND *DISCO* HAVE IN COMMON?
A: THEY BOTH SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO FADE INTO THE PAST!
Vote “No” on Farm Bill Extension & Continued Direct Payments



Dear Colleague,

As the House prepares to take up a one-year extension of the 2008 Farm Bill, I urge you to oppose any extension of wasteful and out-dated direct payments.

A roughly \$5 billion annual taxpayer giveaway, direct payments go to land owners with so-called “base acres,” or land that historically produced select commodities. These fixed direct payments are not tied to current production or prices and do not require any current commodity production. *This means individuals receiving billions in taxpayer subsidies whether they farm or not, whether prices were high or low, or whether yields were great or poor.*

The Government Accountability Office released a report this month entitled “[Direct Payments Should Be Reconsidered](#)” that came to a number of relevant conclusions regarding the relevance, targeting, affordability, effectiveness, and oversight of direct payments. Particularly interesting was the fact that “cumulatively, USDA paid \$10.6 billion—almost one-fourth of total direct payments from 2003 through 2011—to producers who did not, in a given year, plant any of the crop for which they had base acres.” *Startlingly, taxpayers shelled out nearly \$3 million in 2011 to about 2,300 farms that “reported all their land as “fallow.” These farms didn’t plant any crops whatsoever in their base acres and taxpayers were still on the hook for direct payments to them. Taxpayers, quite literally, paid these land owners to not farm.*

It is for reasons like these I am sure that neither the Senate-approved nor the House Agriculture Committee’s reported 2012 Farm Bill proposals advocated extending direct payments. I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing a one-year farm bill extension that allows billions of taxpayer dollars to be spent on \$5 billion for yet another year of wasteful direct payments that few support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Flake". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

JEFF FLAKE
Member of Congress