

February 12, 2010

The Hon. Rosa DeLauro, Chair
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture,
Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration,
and Related Agencies
2362-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6016

The Hon. Jack Kingston, Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug
Administration, and Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair and Ranking Member:

On Behalf of Goodwill Industries International (Goodwill) and its 159 local Goodwill agencies in the United States, I am writing to urge you to provide adequate funding in FY 2011 for a critical program, AgrAbility, that supports local Goodwill agencies' efforts to help your constituents through the dignity of work.

While our agencies utilize a variety of federal funding streams, AgrAbility is one of our highest priority programs. Goodwill has a long history in meeting the employment and training needs of people with disabilities who live and work in rural communities, including agriculture workers who have suffered disabling injuries. Agriculture consistently ranks as one of the nation's most dangerous occupations. Each year, 90,000 agricultural workers sustain disabling injuries in work-related accidents.

Especially during such trying economic times, Goodwill understands the difficult challenge that appropriators face as they struggle to stretch limited resources to support an ever-increasing list of national priorities. AgrAbility, the cornerstone of Goodwill's efforts with rural communities, is a small \$5 million program that consists of one National AgrAbility Project and the 22 State/Regional AgrAbility Projects. These projects must involve a collaborative partnership between a land-grant university and one or more nonprofit organizations. State AgrAbility projects provide free on-farm consultations during which they assess abilities and needs, make recommendations for farm site or task modifications and assistive technology, then develop an action plan that allows program participants to continue to lead successful careers in production agriculture and farming or in another chosen field. In addition, the National AgrAbility Project (lead by Purdue University in partnership with Goodwill Industries International) provides technical assistance and professional training for State AgrAbility Projects, produces resource materials, and disseminates information related to the project.

We stand committed to working with you toward implementing solutions that will restore economic stability by empowering disadvantaged populations. ***Goodwill urges you to provide \$6 million, the full authorized amount, for the AgrAbility Program in FY 2011, thereby ensuring that assistance is available to farmers, ranchers, other agricultural workers, and family members impacted by disability.***

Thanks for considering this request. Please feel free to contact me at (240) 333-5202 or Seth Turner, Director of Government Affairs and Public Policy, at seth.turner@goodwill.org or (240) 333-5508.

Sincerely,



Jim Gibbons
President and CEO

cc:

House Agriculture Subcommittee Members