

July 15, 2010

The Hon. Daniel K. Inouye, Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
722 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-1102

The Hon. Thad Cochran, Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
113 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-2402

Dear Chairman Inouye and Ranking Member Cochran:

As you work to complete work on the FY 2011 Agriculture appropriations bill, I am writing on Behalf of Goodwill Industries International (Goodwill) and its 159 local Goodwill agencies in the United States to urge you to include funding for AgrAbility (USDA). This critical program supports local and rural community-based efforts to help agricultural workers with disabilities overcome their employment challenges.

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.

As you may know, 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. AgrAbility is a small \$5 million program that consists of one National AgrAbility Project and more than 20 State/Regional AgrAbility Projects. These projects must involve a collaborative partnership between a land-grant university and one or more nonprofit organizations like Goodwill.

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. This project is the cornerstone of Goodwill's efforts with rural communities.

Goodwill, therefore, urges the Senate Appropriations Committee to provide \$6 million, the full authorized amount for the AgrAbility Program in FY 2011.

We stand committed to working with you toward implementing solutions that will restore economic stability by empowering disadvantaged populations. Thanks for considering this request. Should you have questions, please feel free to contact 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:

Hon. Herb Kohl, Chair Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Subcommittee

Hon. Sam Brownback, Ranking Member Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies