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To: NAWG Executive Board, State Executives and Membership

From: National Association of Wheat Growers

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Overview:

On Saturday, August 1st , Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman John Boozman (R-Ark.) released the committee print of the **Agricultural Act of 2026** ahead of the committee's scheduled markup at 9:30 a.m. EDT on Thursday, August 6. The Senate Agriculture Committee is evenly divided, 11-11, and with Senator Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) absent while recovering from illness, Chairman Boozman will need at least one Democratic vote to report the bill out of committee and seven Democratic votes to secure its passage on the Senate floor.

The release of the committee print and the scheduling of the markup represent significant milestones in the effort to enact a new farm bill. Following reported negotiations last week, it appears lawmakers reached an agreement on revisions related to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the inclusion of year-round E15 provisions in "Farm Bill 2.0." Aside from these notable additions, the committee print largely preserves the framework of the discussion draft released in June.

NAWG will continue to review the committee print, monitor proposed amendments, and provide updates as the committee markup approaches.

Key Changes:

SNAP Cost-share

The major change from the June 23 discussion draft is a new section which directly addresses the SNAP state cost-sharing situation created by last year's reconciliation law (OBBBA). Under current law, states must begin paying a share of SNAP benefit costs in fiscal 2028 if their payment error rate is 6% or higher, on a tiered scale (5% for rates of 6-8%, 10% for 8-10%, and 15% for 10% and above) with some high-error states already allowed to delay their start to FY2029 or FY2030 depending on when they hit the threshold. The revised Farm Bill draft pushes the start date back one year to FY2029, and tightens the delayed-start option so a state only qualifies for the FY2030 delay if it meets the high-error test in both fiscal 2025 and fiscal 2026.

The bill also adds a tougher long-term backstop. Beginning in FY2031, any state whose error rate remains at or above 10% must pay 20% of benefit costs, up from 15% under current law. Politically, the one-year delay is only partial compromise. Democrats had sought a two-year delay, and it remains unclear whether it's enough to secure the single Democratic vote Chairman Boozman needs to move the bill out of committee on August 6. This matters for NAWG because the committee is deadlocked. A compromise on SNAP is necessary to pass the full bill, which includes many important provisions for wheat growers.

Year-round E-15 and SRE changes

The most significant addition to the committee print is a new provision that was not included in the June 23 discussion draft: permanent, nationwide authorization for year-round sales of E15 gasoline. If enacted, this would eliminate the need for EPA to issue annual emergency waivers allowing summer sales of E15 and would provide long-term certainty for ethanol producers, fuel retailers, and consumers. Although Chairman Boozman had previously indicated that E15 legislation was unlikely to be included in the farm bill because it falls under the jurisdiction of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, negotiations led by Senators Deb Fischer (R-Neb.) and Steve Daines (R-Mont.) ultimately resulted in its inclusion.

The committee print also includes significant changes to the Small Refinery Exemption (SRE) program under the Renewable Fuel Standard. Beginning in 2028, EPA would phase out new refinery hardship exemptions and replace them with a more limited form of relief for qualifying small refineries. Importantly, any renewable fuel blending requirements reduced for those refineries would generally be redistributed to other obligated parties, helping preserve overall demand for ethanol and other renewable fuels.

While these renewable fuel provisions are primarily important to corn and ethanol stakeholders, they also have broader implications for agriculture. Permanent authorization of year-round E15 sales provides greater certainty for renewable fuel markets and rural economies, while its inclusion in the farm bill may help build the coalition needed to advance legislation containing NAWG's top priorities, including a stronger farm safety net, enhanced crop insurance, expanded export promotion, and agricultural research funding.

Provisions Not Included in the Senate Draft:

Several provisions included in the House bill or considered during the House process are absent from the most recent version of the Senate draft :

- Codification of the Food for Peace transfer to USDA;
- Pesticide-labeling uniformity and FIFRA preemption language;
- A federal response to California Proposition 12;
- A Federal Communications Commission review of satellite policies affecting precision agriculture; and
- Creation of an Office of Seafood within USDA.

The Senate bill also does not provide new producer economic assistance, although Chairman Boozman has stated that he intends to pursue assistance through a separate legislative effort.

NAWG Priorities and Engagement

NAWG is reviewing the full discussion draft and will engage Chairman Boozman, Ranking Member Klobuchar, committee members and wheat-state senators as negotiations continue.

Our immediate priorities include:

- Securing the strongest possible enterprise-unit flexibility for fallow and continuous wheat acreage;
- Codifying the transfer of Food for Peace to USDA;
- Protecting the requirement that food-aid programs purchase U.S.-grown commodities;
- Preserving the Market Access Program and Foreign Market Development Program investments enacted last year;
- Supporting modernized FSA loan limits and improved access to agricultural credit;
- Maintaining voluntary, locally led conservation programs;
- Supporting wheat research, USDA-ARS facilities and the land-grant university system;
- Addressing fertilizer prices, availability and market transparency;
- Protecting crop insurance and the farm-safety-net improvements already enacted; and
- Continuing to press Congress and USDA for near-term economic assistance for wheat producers facing low commodity prices and high input costs.

Timing and Next Steps

Chairman Boozman has scheduled a markup of the proposed legislation at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, Aug. 6th.

Even if the committee advances a bill this summer, several additional steps would remain:

1. Senate floor consideration;
2. Resolution of differences between the Senate-passed bill and the House-passed bill;
3. Final passage by both chambers; and
4. The president’s signature.