

# CALL FOR INVESTIGATION OF AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

## Background

Thirty years ago a Farm Bureau-dominated agricultural subcommittee “distanced” itself from an investigation into the Farm Bureau led by Congressman Joseph Resnick (D-NY). Following this incident Resnick’s chief of staff Samuel “Sandy” Berger, the current Chief of the National Security Council wrote, “the Farm Bureau is far more than simply an organization of farmers, as it so often claims. The nation’s biggest farm organization has been quietly but systematically amassing one of the largest business networks in America, while turning its back on the deepening crisis of the farmers whom it supposedly represents.”

Today, the Farm Bureau is more powerful than ever. The policies it advances and its myriad business operations are crippling the farmer, rural America and the environment. We believe it is time for another investigation. Moreover, we believe Farm Bureau leaders should welcome any and all opportunities to erase allegations they do not serve their membership or uphold their non-profit charter.

## Our Position

**WHEREAS**, We the undersigned individuals and organizations represent millions of Americans whose homes, livelihoods, environments, freedoms, and well-being are jeopardized by current ill-advised farm policy,

**WHEREAS**, we are family and independent farmers and ranchers, environmentalists, consumers, laborers, religious & minority leaders, taxpayers, hunters, fisherman and residents of America’s heartlands,

**WHEREAS**, we believe many agricultural trade and commodity groups misrepresent their interests to Congress and policy makers by posing as the family farmer while advancing agribusiness policy harmful to family farmers and the environment,

**WHEREAS**, we believe the farm policy advanced by these agribusiness groups promotes corporate consolidation, eliminates fair markets, and creates an un-level economic playing field for small, minority and independent family producers,

**WHEREAS**, we believe this model of industrialized agricultural threatens rural families and cultures, public health and farm workers, watersheds and wildlife, top-soils, and wilderness,

**WHEREAS**, we believe these groups advance policy that is fiscally irresponsible favoring agribusiness while costing taxpayers billions of dollars a year in continued farm aid bailouts,

**WHEREAS**, we believe that a socially just, environmentally and fiscally responsible farm policy will

never be created as long as these groups control the agricultural agenda,

**WHEREAS**, we believe such groups, who receive substantial monetary benefits from the public sector should encourage and welcome scrutiny into their business operations,

**WHEREAS**, the American Farm Bureau Federation leadership is the most outspoken and powerful of these groups claiming to represent Rural America,

**WHEREAS**, American Farm Bureau Federation businesses have profited greatly from self-generated policies that afford them special tax privileges and advance national farm policies favoring agribusiness;

**WHEREAS**, Farm Bureau claims 4.9 million “family” members and the USDA shows fewer than 1.9 million farmers remain--and not all of them are Farm Bureau members;

**WE THEREFORE**, call for a congressional investigation into charges that American Farm Bureau Federation national leadership has harmed the American farmer and their own members by posing as an organization representing farmer interests when, in fact, Farm Bureau’s widespread commercial activities – which include the operation of businesses that sell to the farmer and buy from the farmer – puts them in a position of representing a point of view antagonistic to the interests of the farmer. We further call for investigation into charges that Farm Bureau leadership also misrepresents its motivations to Congress and the American taxpayer - exploiting the farmer image to win, from Congress, non-profit “privileges” that shield them from an estimated \$61.75 million annually in federal income tax. We urge Congress to complete the process started a generation ago and protect rural American and its heritage.

Signed,

Active Students for a Healthy Environment (ASHE)  
Admiralty Audubon Society  
Aeolia Organics and Organic Ag Advisors  
Alabama Rivers Alliance  
Alabama Environmental Council  
Albany Citizens Against Sludge  
Alliance for Democracy - Massachusetts  
Alliance for a Sustainable Future  
Alliance for Democracy - Minnesota  
Alliance for Sustainable Communities  
Alliance for Democracy - National Council  
Alliance for Democracy - Massachusetts  
American Wildlands  
American Agricultural Movement  
Amigos de los Animales  
Animal Defense League of Pennsylvania  
Animal Defense League of Arizona  
Animal Welfare Institute  
Animal Protection Institute  
Animal Protection of New Mexico  
Animal Defense League of Pennsylvania  
Appalachian Conservancy

Appalachian Audubon Society  
Appropriate Technology Transfer to Rural Areas  
Arizona Ed-Venture Tours  
Ashland Conservation Commission  
Back Country Coalition  
Bard College Earth Coalition  
Basset Rescue of Southeast Florida Miami Field  
Division  
Bluewater Network  
Broadened Horizons RiverKeeper Project  
Buckeye Forest Council  
Buff Rock Farm  
Bull Run Mountain Organic Farm  
C & K Farms  
Capital Area Audubon Society  
Center for Food Safety  
Center for Great Lakes & Aquatic Sciences  
Center for Ethics and Toxics (CETOS)  
Center for Environmental Connections  
Center for Food Safety  
Central Kansas Conservancy  
Charlston Natural History Society

Chicago Ornithological Society  
Citizens of Putnam County for Clean Air and Water  
Clean Water Action Alliance  
Clean Water Action Council of N.E. Wisconsin  
Clearwater Biodiversity Project  
Clinch Coalition  
Coalition for Jobs and the Environment  
Coalition For Health Concern  
Colorado Wild  
Colorado Green Party  
Colorado Wildlife Alliance  
Committee for Idaho's High Desert  
Community Food Security Project - Occidental  
College  
Community Nutrition Institute  
Concerned Citizens' Coalition  
Concerned Citizens of Central Ohio  
Concerned Citizens of Fountain County  
Concerned Citizens Coalition of Roane, Calhoun,  
and Gilmore Counties  
Concerned Citizens Committee of SE Ohio  
Conservation Action Project  
Creation Keepers  
Defenders of Wildlife  
Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society  
Delmarva Poultry Justice Alliance  
Denny's Street Shop  
Devil's Fork Trail Club  
DeWitt County Farmers Union  
E Trucking, Inc.  
Earth, Body and Spirit  
Earthroot Education  
  
East New York Farms!  
Ecoworld Conservation  
Ecozone Environmental  
Endangered Habitats League  
Environmental Horizons  
Environmental Friends of Minnesota  
Environmental Action  
F.A.R.M. Families Against Rural Messes  
Family Farm Defenders  
Farmers for Farmers  
Farmworker Health and Safety Institute  
Farmworkers Association of Florida  
Fathers For Justice  
Finger Lakes Land Trust  
First Defense for Animals  
Fontana Native American Indian Center, Inc.  
Food and Farming Forum

Forest Watch  
Forest Guardians  
Forestry Monitoring Project  
Franciscan Sisters of the Poor  
Fresno Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides  
Friends of the Earth  
Friends of Animals, Inc.  
Friends of the West  
Friends of the Nescopeck  
Friends of the Abajos  
Fyke Nature Association  
GartnerGroup  
Global Resource Action Center for the Environment  
(GRACE)  
Great Lakes United  
Greater Wyoming Valley Audubon Society  
Green Party of Orange County  
Green Party of Colorado  
Green Party of Orange County  
Green Party of Pima County  
Green-Rock Audubon Society  
Growing Gardens  
H.E.E.L  
Heartwood  
Heron Food & Garden Co-op  
High Country Citizens' Alliance  
Hightower Radio  
Hoosier Environmental Council  
Houston Animal Rights Team  
Idaho Rural Council  
Idaho Conservation League  
Idaho Coalition United for Bears  
Illinois Student Environmental Network  
Informed Choices  
Iowa State University Greens  
Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement  
Jade Mountain Sales  
Just Food  
Kalmiopsis Audubon Society  
Kansas Natural Resource Council  
KC Food Circle  
Kettle Range Conservation Group  
Kindle Farm  
Klamath Siskiyou Information Services  
Klamath Forest Alliance  
L.A. Coalition to End Hunger & Homelessness  
LAWS, Land, Air & Water Society, a Chapter of  
the Idaho Rural Council  
LittleWolf Conservation Society  
Loleta Greens

Louisville Audubon Society  
 M-W & Associates Environmental Policy  
 Madison Greens  
 Mankato Area Environmentalists  
 Many Voices  
 Maricopa Audubon Society  
 Marion County Water Watch  
 Marlboro College Env. Quality Committee  
 Maryland Conservation Council Inc.  
 Michigan Land Use Institute  
 Mid West Anti-Drift Coalition  
 Minnesotans for Safe Foods  
 Missouri Rural Crisis Center  
 National BLM Wilderness Campaign  
 National Family Farm Coalition  
 National Center for Appropriate Technology  
 Native Forest Network, Yellowstone Branch  
 New Jersey Environmental Lobby  
 New Mexico Sportsmen  
 No Spray Action Network  
 North American Wolf Association  
 North Carolina Rails to Trails  
 Northeast PA Audubon Society  
 Northern California Association of River Guides  
 Obed Watershed Association  
 Oklahoma Family Farm Alliance  
 Olympic Environmental Council  
 Orca Quest  
 Oregon Natural Resources Council  
 Oregon Watersheds  
 Oregon Tilthe  
 Organic Consumers Association  
 Orthopedic Massage Education & Research Institute  
 Ozark Riverkeepers Network  
 Ozark Riverkeepers Alliance  
 PA Audubon Society  
 Pacific Organic Farm  
 Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's  
 Associations  
 Parsons Biological Consulting  
 Peninsula Environmental Center  
 Piedmont Plateau Group of the Sierra Club of North  
 Carolina  
 Prairie Winds  
 Predator Education Fund  
 Predator Conservation Alliance  
 Prescott National Forest Friends  
 Princeton Environmental Action  
 Progressive Agriculture Organization  
 Puget Sound Urban Wildlife Photography Club  
 Rails-to-Trails Coalition of Kansas, Inc.  
 Rancher Damage Control  
 Rayonier Hazardous Waste Cleanup Project  
 REP America (Republicans for Environmental  
 Protection  
 Rivendell Co-op  
 Rivers Unlimited  
 Roseland Organic Farms  
 Rural Sanitation Authority  
 Salem Audubon Society  
 San Fernando Valley Alliance for Democracy  
 Save Our Rivers  
 Save the Valley, Inc.  
 Save Endangered Wilderness  
 SEDG - Shenandoah Ecosystems Defense Group  
 Shoreline Study Center  
 Sierra Sea Club  
 Sinapu  
 Sky Island Watch  
 Society For Animal Protective Legislation  
 Sonoma Valley Voice  
 SORR (Save Our Rural Resources)  
 South Bay in Defense of Animals  
 South Dakota Resources Coalition  
 South Carolina Forest Watch  
 South Carolina Student Environmental Action  
 Coalition  
 Southern Plains Land Trust  
 Southern Appalachian Biodiversity Project  
 Southside Concerned Citizens  
 Spirit of the Sage Council  
 Spiritmates of the Wolf  
 Stanford Open Space Alliance  
 Stewards of the Land  
 Sunflower Consulting  
 Superior Wilderness Action Network  
 Sustainability Project  
 Taking Charge of Your Life  
 Texas Public Employees for Environmental  
 Responsibility  
 The Canadian Record  
 Trevor Zoo  
 Union County Preservation Association  
 United Church of Christ Network for Environmental  
 & Economic Responsibility  
 University of Minnesota Environmental Action  
 Utah Environmental Congress  
 Virginia Forest Watch  
 Washington's Eighth District Conservation

Coalition  
West Virginia Rivers Coalition  
Western Wisconsin Chapter of the Izaak Walton  
League  
Western Nebraska Resources Council  
Western Wisconsin Chapter of the Izaak Walton  
League  
Wild Utah Project  
Wildlife Watch  
Wildlife Damage Review  
Wisconsin Family Farm Defense Fund  
Wisconsin State Division of Izaak Walton  
Wolf Justice League  
Women's Group of Bakersfield  
World Four, World Four University/Universities

Wyoming Outdoor Council    Active Students for a  
Healthy Environment (ASHE)