Dear NASCOE Members;

Recently your NASCOE leadership held its annual Legislative Conference in Washington, DC during the week of February 6th. Approximately 200 NASCOE members from across the country participated in this conference to help discuss issues of importance to NASCOE with members of Congress. Over 400 visits were made to different members of Congress to deliver our message.

The message we delivered to Congress this year centered on the Farm Bill, Benefits and the ability of FSA to be more involved in the delivery of the crop insurance program. For years, NASCOE has sent a message to Congress that FSA can deliver programs faster and more efficiently than any other agency in USDA. But, time and time again, we used numbers to support our claim that could be refuted. Some 18 to 24 months ago, your NASCOE Leadership recognized the possibility of a major shift in farm programs and how these programs would be implemented. To respond to this shift, your NASCOE leadership commissioned Informa Economics, an independent firm, to study the feasibility of FSA assuming additional responsibilities related to the crop insurance program.

Informa Economics examined four scenarios: 1. FSA takes on the role of sales and servicing of crop insurance policies; 2. FSA takes on the role of selling crop insurance policies; 3. FSA takes on the role of servicing the crop insurance policies; and 4. Only FSA producing acreage and production reports. In short, this report revealed savings that range from $197 million to $2.5 billion annually, depending upon the level of FSA involvement. Understanding this study examined a wide spectrum of FSA involvement in the crop insurance program to identify cost savings and efficiencies, NASCOE has taken the following position: NASCOE recognizes the Informa report as an accurate portrayal of FSA’s capabilities to deliver provisions of the crop insurance program. Further, at a minimum, NASCOE supports consolidating the acreage reporting, production reporting and claims administration functions of crop insurance under the administration of FSA. Additionally, NASCOE advocates for FSA having an increased participation in crop insurance compliance activities to provide increased program integrity.

During our visits to the Hill, NASCOE members delivered the Informa Economics Report to congressional offices and they emphasized NASCOE’s position on the report. Our senate and congressional offices heard the message of cost savings and efficiencies identified in this study can be achieved WITHOUT requiring additional funding for staffing and delivery of the crop insurance program. Most members indicated that our nation’s leadership was intrigued by the amount of annual savings that were found through Informa’s research without interrupting the delivery of crop insurance products to producers.

Your NASCOE Legislative Committee sees the importance of informing the membership at-large of our actions on Capitol Hill this past week. Attached are several talking points for your use should you receive questions concerning this report from a local crop insurance representative or producer. These talking points will also ensure that NASCOE’s response remains consistent across the country.

Your Legislative Team;
Dan Root and Kevin Wooten