



**Verde
Natural Resource Conservation District**

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P.O. Box 280

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Camp Verde, AZ 86322

April 12, 2009

Financial Assistance Programs Division

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service

1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Room 5237S

Washington DC 20250-2090

To whom it may concern:

This letter is to provide comment on the new 2008 EQIP Rule that became effective January 15, 2009. As representatives of the Verde Natural Resource Conservation District located in Camp Verde, Arizona, we support the EQIP program and the intent of the program in addressing resource concerns in our area.

The majority of the land within the district boundaries is public land and less than 5% is private land. Many of our agriculture producers have operations that consist of only public and state owned lands. We understand eligible land in the new rule to include:

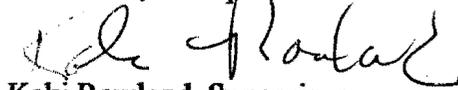
- (1) Privately owned land;
- (2) Publicly owned land where:
 - (i) The land is a working component of the participant's agricultural and forestry operation, and
 - (ii) The participant has control of the land for the term of the contract, and
 - (iii) The conservation practices to be implemented on the public land are necessary and will contribute to an improvement in the identified resource concern that is on private land.

As representatives of the Verde Natural Resources Conservation District, we ask that this be interpreted or changed to include state owned land as well as private land. Without this change, many of our agriculture producers would not have land eligible for the program and resource concerns that exist on these lands will increase and will not be addressed. By allowing inclusion of state owned land, states with lesser amounts of privately owned land have a more equitable opportunity to participate in EQIP and realizing the benefits that the program has to offer.

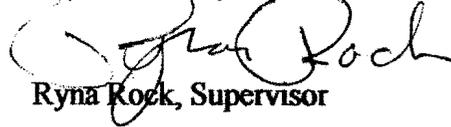
Sincerely,



Jodi Allen, Chairperson



Kaki Rowland, Supervisor



Ryna Rozk, Supervisor