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FORT MYERS, FLORIDA

33902
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March 12, 2009

Handwritten initials "ZF" inside a circle, with a signature below it.

SENT VIA FAX

Easements Program Division
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Wetlands Reserve Program Comments
P O. 2890
Washington, DC 20013
202-720-9689
Attn: Susy

RECEIVED MAR 12 2009

Handwritten initials "SF" inside a circle.

Re: Docket Number NRCS-IFR-08013

To Whom it May Concern:

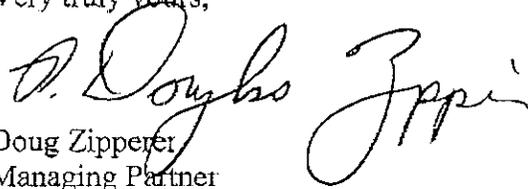
I am the managing partner of Zipperer Farms, LLC. Zipperer Farms currently farms approximately 6,800 acres of land in Hendry County, Florida, and is currently seeking to place some or all of this land in the Wetlands Reserve Program

As you know, the 2008 Farm Bill provides that an exception to the 7 year holding period may be granted if the "Secretary determines that the land was acquired under circumstances that give adequate assurances that such land was not acquired for the purposes of placing it in the [WRP] program established by this subchapter." 16 U S C 3837(a)(3). The interim rules list the "*demonstration of status as a beginning farmer or rancher*" as the example of a circumstance that gives adequate assurance that the land was not acquired for the purposes of putting it in the WRP. 7 CFR Part 1467.4(c)(2)(iii)

The WRP's self-proclaimed goal is the restoration and protection of wetlands in the United States. The successful restoration and protection of the Everglades in Florida, a national wetland treasure, hinges on our state's ability to use the WRP to help restore agricultural lands to their natural condition. I believe it is imperative to the goal of the WRP in Florida, and more importantly to the restoration and preservation of the Everglades, that farmers, ranchers and others in the agricultural industry be able to avail themselves of the exception to the 7 year holding period requirement that I highlighted in italics above. For these reasons, I ask that you consider keeping the following language in the interim rules in place as is:

“(iii) The land was acquired under circumstances that give adequate assurances, as determined by NRCS, that such land was not acquired for the purposes of placing it in the program, such as demonstration of status as a beginning farmer or rancher.” 7 CFR Part 1467.4(c)(2)(iii)

Very truly yours,


Doug Zipperer
Managing Partner