

Decker, Denise - Washington, DC

From: John Stevens [JStevens@co.tulare.ca.us]
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2009 9:50 PM
To: RA.dcwashing2.frpp
Subject: Farm and Ranchlands Protection Program Interim Final Rule

228

Regarding the changes that Congress made to the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) in 2008 as stated in the Interim Final Rule released in January.

One key change was to state that the federal government's role in the program is to facilitate and provide funding for the purchase of conservation easements. Some might interpret that as meaning that you should not participate in the purchases directly, but only to provide the funding. I disagree. You are interpreting the program's requirements properly.

As a concerned citizen who cares about this important federal program I ask that you not be unduly influenced by the environmental organizations but to keep in mind the best interest of all the citizens of this country.

I believe you have made it clear that you are not purchasing a federal property interest, but rather the right to enforce the terms of an easement when and if necessary.

USDA should maintain full control of the program and not to consider allowing other entities to run the program.

Also, the new forest management plan requirement is perfect and you are doing a good job.

You should continue design and implement impervious surfaces standards.

The new national ranking criteria are very adequate for farmland protection projects.

John Stevens
Visalia, CA