

1 SJR55  
2 139761-4  
3 By Senator Whatley  
4 RFD:  
5 First Read: 22-MAR-12

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8 URGING CONGRESS TO REAUTHORIZE THE CONSERVATION  
9 TITLE OF THE UNITED STATES FARM BILL.  
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11 WHEREAS, deliberations needed to re-authorize the  
12 Farm Bill in 2012 will be particularly difficult given the  
13 need to reduce federal government spending, and we believe the  
14 Conservation Title can continue to meet vital national needs  
15 while sharing in budget reductions; and

16 WHEREAS, landowners, farmers, ranchers, forest  
17 managers, agricultural and forest businesses, hunters and  
18 anglers, local and state government officials, and nonprofit  
19 organizations representing a wide range of interests, can  
20 attest that, without any doubt, the programs within the  
21 Conservation Title work cost-effectively to serve the  
22 short-term and long-term interests of the American people; and

23 WHEREAS, the Conservation Title programs recognize  
24 that the health of America's soil, water, and other natural  
25 resources is essential to the long-term productivity and  
26 economic viability of agriculture and forestry, that

1 protecting and managing our natural resources is critical to  
2 the future of American communities, and that most of our  
3 nation's opportunities for hunting, fishing, and observing  
4 nature depend upon privately owned habitat on farms, ranches,  
5 and forest land. The Conservation Title programs help to  
6 protect these resources in a uniquely successful way by  
7 funding a variety of voluntary partnerships and cooperative  
8 conservation efforts between the U.S. Department of  
9 Agriculture and private landowners. These conservation  
10 programs are essential to the sustainability of U.S.  
11 agriculture and forestry and to meeting the growing demand for  
12 food and fiber at home and abroad; and

13 WHEREAS, while America has become a more urban  
14 nation, agriculture, forestry, and outdoor recreation continue  
15 to be essential to America's economy, and according to the  
16 United States Department of Agriculture, farm and farm-related  
17 employment includes about 24 million jobs. Estimates by the  
18 American Forest and Paper Association are that forest  
19 management and forest dependent industries account for  
20 approximately five percent of the total U.S. manufacturing  
21 GDP, produce about \$175 billion in products annually, and  
22 employ nearly 900,000 people; and

23 WHEREAS, A study by United States Fish and Wildlife  
24 Service finds that hunting, angling, and wildlife-dependent  
25 recreation contribute \$122 billion annually to our national  
26 economy. Much of this economic activity is located in rural

1 areas where these activities are vital to local economies.  
2 Natural resources-based products represent a significant  
3 proportion of the export sector so essential to our economic  
4 health. Indeed, U.S. agricultural exports exceeded \$137  
5 billion and accounted for a \$42 billion farm trade surplus in  
6 2011, one of the few bright spots in the American economy last  
7 year; and

8 WHEREAS, the Farm Bill programs fund voluntary  
9 agreements between the USDA, nongovernmental organizations and  
10 farmers, ranchers, and foresters to keep their land in  
11 agriculture and forestry, to preserve natural habitat in rural  
12 landscapes, to save the productivity and economic value of  
13 soil and water, and to assist in the management of  
14 agricultural and forest lands. The result is real conservation  
15 with multiple benefits for every region of America, not the  
16 least of these is helping landowners to stay on the land as  
17 stewards of America's legacy of natural resources; now  
18 therefore,

19 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, BOTH  
20 HOUSES THEREOF CONCURRING, That by copy of this resolution to  
21 each member of the Alabama Congressional delegation, we urge  
22 each of you to vote to reauthorize the Farm Bill in a manner  
23 that sustains the integrity and effectiveness of the  
24 Conservation Title and maintains conservation funding that  
25 meets our national needs and prioritizes working lands

1 programs that promote conservation practices that keeps land  
2 in agricultural production.