

The National Grange

Legislative

Policy Book

and Grassroots Training Manual

2009



The National Grange **BUILDING** *50 Years of Service*

In the early 1800s, Washington, D.C. began to emerge as the legislative, administrative and judicial center of the United States. With the construction of the White House, Supreme Court and Capitol buildings, many political and grassroots associations and organizations moved to the small patch of land nestled between Maryland and Virginia, hoping that their political voices would be louder and that the government would enact laws important to their mission.

That's why in 1873 Grange members began to express a strong interest in purchasing a building to serve as their national headquarters in Washington, D.C. In 1943, under the leadership of National Master Albert S. Goss, the Grange purchased an eight-story office building at the prestigious location of 744 Jackson Place, N.W. – located across from the White House and bordering Lafayette Park, also known as Executive Square.

However, because of the building's proximity to the White House, the federal government asked the Grange to vacate its residence in 1956 to provide office space to White House staffers. Grangers across the United States were outraged by the government's request and flooded their Congressmen's offices with thousands of letters asking them to save their beloved building.

As a result, more than 100 bills were introduced into Congress to save the Grange building. Despite their efforts, the government refused to withdraw their demand but entered extensive negotiations with the Grange to assist them in finding another building. On January 25, 1956, the federal government seized the Grange building through eminent domain. In exchange, the Grange received land on H Street, N.W. to build a new Grange building. The land was approximately 50 feet by 75 feet, twice the size of the previous property and was worth more than \$190,000.

On January 8, 1959, ground was broken for the new Grange building. Architect E. Jerome O'Connor was chosen to design the building, and the Joseph Bahen Construction Company was given the contract to build. The estimated cost to erect the building was a little more than \$1.2 million until the federal government enacted new measures that would add to the overall cost of the building.

On March 19, 1959, the Grange received word from the Chairman of the National Capitol Planning Commission that the federal government had changed their mind about building government buildings on Jackson Place. Instead, they decided to restore Jackson Place in historical fashion with 19th century house-like buildings. Because of the Grange's proximity to Jackson Place and the White House, they ordered that the Grange building be limestone to harmonize with the newly-proposed historic building designs. This request added more than \$84,000 to the Grange building project. The total cost of the final building was \$1,366,252.00.

The official dedication of the new Grange building was held on June 29, 1960. President Dwight D. Eisenhower and U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Ezra Taft Benson were the dedicating officers.

The eleven-story building overlooks Lafayette Park, the Decatur House, the Old Executive Office Building, the New Executive Office Building and the White House. The National Grange occupies the 10th and 11th floors and leases the remaining floors. Many articles of memorabilia that are important to the history of the Grange can be found on those floors, such as William Saunders' personal collection of 125 volumes of rare books, 235 volumes of bound periodicals and more than 200 rare catalogues, pamphlets, serial publications, manuscripts, newspaper columns, personal diaries and awards. Mr. Saunders was one of the nation's premier experts on horticulture and landscape gardening in the 19th century. He was the first Superintendent of Propagating (later Experimental) Gardens at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, serving with distinction in that position for 38 years – from the creation of the Department in 1862 until his death in 1900. He was also one of the Seven Founders of the National Grange and served as the organization's first National Master from 1867 until 1873.

On March 25, 1977, the Grange held a mortgage burning ceremony to celebrate their beautifully-built, prestigiously-located and debt-free building. More than 200 Grangers were present at the ceremony. Today, the National Grange building is still located on H Street, N.W. and is the only privately-owned building in Lafayette Park.



The National Grange

2009 Legislative Policies and Grassroots Training Manual

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The Grange Mission



The Grange provides opportunities for individuals and families to develop to their highest potential in order to build stronger communities and states, as well as a stronger nation.

The Grange will accomplish this mission through:

Fellowship

- We give our members the opportunity to meet with and get to know their neighbors in a safe, family-friendly atmosphere.
- We provide a place where children, youth, and adults can grow, develop their talents and social skills, and learn leadership techniques.

Service

- We provide our members with the opportunity to discover and solve community needs.
- We give assistance to individuals in crisis.
- We provide a great place for community networking.

Legislation

- We have a grassroots approach to local, state and federal legislative change.
- We give our members a voice in state and federal government forums.



The National Grange

of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry

TO: Selected Local and State Grange Leaders, Members of Congress, Media Representatives and Friends of the National Grange

FROM: Edward L. Luttrell, National Master (President)

DATE: May 25, 2009

SUBJECT: NATIONAL GRANGE LEGISLATIVE POLICIES FOR 2009

It is my pleasure to present you this copy of the *National Grange 2009 Legislative Policies and Grassroots Training Manual*. This publication contains the official Grange legislative policies adopted at the National Grange's 142nd Annual Convention, which took place in Cromwell, CT in November of 2008. The diverse public policy positions in this document reflect the broad range of interests and concerns of Grange members across the 2700 local, county and state Grange chapters throughout the nation. "Celebrating the Responsibilities of Citizenship" is the theme of the National Grange's non-partisan, issue-oriented, grassroots legislative program. Promoting civic participation in our society has been a goal of the Grange for the past one hundred and forty years. Grange members understand that the most effective means to guarantee our personal liberties and secure our future prosperity is through greater involvement in our democratic process.

The mission of the National Grange Legislative Program is to provide Grange members with meaningful opportunities for non-partisan, civic participation in the public policy process. The National Grange Legislative Program also supports state, county and community Grange legislative programs and advocates for implementation of National Grange grassroots policy resolutions at the national level.

This year's *Legislative Policies* introduces the *Blueprint for Rural America 2009*, the National Grange's ten-point plan for revitalizing rural America and extending prosperity to U.S. agriculture. The *Blueprint for Rural America 2009* provides a summary of each issue along with "Action Plans" illustrating how Grangers can influence public policy. The *Blueprint* is an invaluable resource to answer questions about the National Grange's high priority issues.

We have also incorporated *Action 2009!*, the National Grange's Grassroots Training Manual as part of the Legislative Policies. *Action 2009!* provides a comprehensive grassroots legislative toolkit containing important information, materials, and resources that will allow any Grange to plan and organize a successful grassroots legislative program.

To our Congressional and media friends, we offer you the invitation to contact us with any questions you may have concerning our current policies or legislative agenda.

I encourage each Grange member to put this manual into practice and to make a difference in 2009 through the Grange Legislative Program. For additional information, please contact the National Grange Legislative Department by phone at 1-888-4GRANGE, by e-mail at mthompson@nationalgrange.org or through our website at www.nationalgrange.org.

Food Production, Prices, and the American Farmer

By Ed Luttrell, President of the National Grange

We live in a complex world filled with the ongoing challenge of producing affordable food for ourselves and the world. In 1960 it took 4 farmers to feed a hundred people and we exported 29% of our production around the world. Today 1.2 farmers feed a hundred people and we export 22% of our production to the world.

Farmers are faced with many challenges to produce the food, fiber, and fuel that our society needs. Increasing costs of production can make record market prices a breakeven point for the farmer. As fuel, fertilizer, chemical, and machinery prices escalate rapidly many farmers are quickly adjusting to the financial signals they are receiving. The USDA predicts that, as a whole, the agriculture sector will experience record net farm income of \$95 billion this year.

Farmers are rapidly moving away from “high input cost” crops, such as cotton, rice, sugar beets, tobacco, and even corn and rapidly increasing plantings of lower input crops such as soybeans, wheat and hay/forage. More and more farmers are exploring alternative marketing strategies such as producing traditional as well as specialty food that is sold and consumed by local consumers instead of being sold into national and international marketing systems.

They continue to adopt new technologies such as GPS precision agriculture production practices and multi-stacked genetically modified crop varieties. They are employing double or even multi cropping and grazing strategies to increase total output per acre. Livestock producers are controlling costs by relying more on alternative feed sources such as forage/grass and distillers dried grains (DDGs), a by product of ethanol production.

They are using new risk management tools, strongly supported by the Grange, that were included in the 2008 Farm Bill that allow them to insure the market value of their production, the total value of

their annual farm income or a combination of both. They are taking a hard look at the costs of financing and particularly land rental and purchase costs to be sure that they keep their interest and rental costs under control. Today farmers have more tools and more choices to address the financial challenges they face than at any time in our nation’s history.

The consumer is often influenced by misleading information distributed by a media that is focused on gaining readership or increasing viewership. Any commodity can drop in value overnight because of a news report on a single instance regardless of its relevancy or accuracy. The National Grange is committed to educating reporters and editors alike on the realities and effects of inaccurate or incomplete reports that harm both producers and consumers. We can show consumers that when producers are harmed by alarmist stories, they can lose local or American produced choices in their food supply.

This past year, stories that claim ethanol corn production is responsible for driving up food prices around the world have circulated throughout the media. While this is a minor contributor to escalating food prices, it is not the main reason. The National Grange attended a round-table discussion with a Senate discussion group with the goal of working with those who make the news. Agriculture needs to focus on educating and working with policy makers and the media if we wish to avoid or even to minimize potential damage created by the next study or news blast.

Other players in the food distribution chain blame the farmer for price increases. They should remember that the farmer remains the only part of the food chain that puts his labor and money into the production of food, fiber, or fuel with few assurances that he will have a crop to harvest or that there will be a market interested in his product at the price he needs.

The National Grange Blueprint for Rural America 2009

Priority Issues of Concern to Rural Americans and our Nation's Family Farmers, Ranchers and Foresters in the Year 2009

Introduction

The National Grange, the nation's oldest general farm and rural public interest organization, has developed a nine-point program to revitalize rural America and assure U.S. agricultural prosperity. The Grange has provided a grassroots voice for individuals, families, farmers, and rural communities since 1867. Today, Grange members, affiliated with more than 2,700 local, county, and state Grange chapters across the nation, are leaders in developing and advocating policies that benefit their communities.

1. Build a Solid Foundation of Prosperity for America's Family Farmers, Ranchers, and Foresters

America's family farmers, ranchers, and foresters are a highly diverse and constantly evolving group of more than 2.2 million entrepreneurs who differ greatly in the size of their operations, the products they produce, their enterprise structure, their needs for capital and financing, their use of farm labor, geographic location, environmental challenges, marketing decisions, and annual revenues derived from their agricultural operations. Fewer than 6% of U.S. farms today are large, commercial scale, farming-only businesses. These roughly 125,000 farms produce 75% of all domestic agricultural production. The remaining 94% of farms in the United States incorporate non-farm income as part of their business plan. The National Grange believes that Federal farm programs should foster increased participation in the agricultural sector as well as the broadest practical distribution of agricultural production by actively encouraging more Americans to include farming or ranching as part of their entrepreneurial business or personal lifestyle goals. According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, a majority of the farmers in our nation are over 57 years old and 35% of our farmers are over the age of 65. Farm policy must assure that today's family farmers can retire

with dignity and that their productive resources will be transferred to a new generation of farmers and rural entrepreneurs. Farm programs should reward innovative and sustainable practices, encourage sound conservation techniques, preserve prime agricultural land, assure compliance with existing international trade agreements, respond quickly to natural disasters, and facilitate the introduction of cost saving and environmentally beneficial new technologies for all segments of the agriculture sector. Finally, farm policy must protect farmers from risks that are beyond their control and from the undue concentration of market power that restricts competition or entry into the agriculture sector.

Action Plan

1. Support farm programs that make available credit, risk management, income support, and environmental stewardship for family farmers, ranchers and foresters, regardless of the crop or livestock they produce. Support sustainable practices like part-time, new uses, low investment/expense, aquaculture, agri-tourism, direct-to-consumer, and organic farming.
2. Protect farmers who rely on commodity markets or contract production from monopoly and market manipulation. Allow all farmers in a designated disaster county to be eligible for federal or state agriculture disaster assistance programs. Support country of origin labeling, food origin traceability, and voluntary national animal identification programs that protect the privacy of participating farmers.
3. Continue and expand direct federal government purchases of dairy products to support prices received by dairy farmers. Support direct financial assistance, such as the MILC program, for moderate-sized dairy farms as well as a farmer financed supply management/herd reduction programs.
4. Combat trade distorting practices instituted by foreign governments, such as currency manipulation and unilateral repudiation of sovereign debt, that make it more difficult for U.S. farmers to export their products. Continue cost effective export promotion programs, such as the Market Access Program, at current levels.
5. Facilitate the generational transfer of assets to a new generation of family farmers, ranchers, and foresters by: extending the existing \$500,000 per couple federal capital gains tax exclusion for private residences to agricultural land and/or to the sale of development or water rights on agricultural land; supporting federal programs for agricultural land use preservation and conservation practices on private land; support-

ing tax simplification for family farmers; supporting reform and eventual elimination of the estate tax and supporting accelerated depreciation of capital assets for farms and rural businesses.

2. Respond to the National Financial Crisis That is Sweeping Across Rural America

Today our nation faces the worst financial crisis in a generation. The financial crisis did not arise from the actions of businesses along the quiet main streets of rural America but its impact is being felt disproportionately in farming and rural communities. Today, rural counties are losing jobs at a faster rate than urban or suburban counties. Especially hard hit are rural counties dependant on manufacturing and low wage services, like call centers. Even the few remaining farming dependant rural counties are experiencing a sharp and painful economic downturn after posting record net farm income in 2008. Yet, throughout rural America entrepreneurs and small businesses remain the primary engine of prosperity. A larger portion of jobs in rural areas are held by people who are self employed, or who work directly for someone who is self employed, than in urban or suburban communities. Immediate action by the federal government to revive the national economy by cushioning the impacts of widespread unemployment, creating new jobs through extensive investments in rural public works infrastructure programs, restoring confidence in the financial system, and protecting the American taxpayer should be the overriding priority of the President of the United States and the Congress. Further investigation and possible prosecution or civil action against individuals involved in the collapse of the banking and financial industry should also be vigorously pursued. Companies that engaged in greed, corruption, incompetence, or fraudulent business practices should not be rewarded with taxpayer bailouts. Strict limits must be placed on the amounts of compensation to executives of companies that receive bailouts. Indefinite, direct government ownership or control of private business must be avoided at all costs. All major corporations, especially banks and financial institutions, that are deemed “too big to fail” and that have fallen into receivership or direct government ownership should be quickly restructured, broken up into small competitive businesses, or processed through bankruptcy in order to return their productive assets to the private sector. As the financial

crisis has spilled into the personal credit, small business, and farming sectors, rural entrepreneurs who are unable to get credit (and who are largely ineligible for direct government “bailouts”) are forced to close operations and sell assets. With the looming possibilities of large scale personal and small business bankruptcies, immediate action should be taken to regulate and restructure small business lines of credit, home mortgages, home equity loans, and credit cards, in order to require that loan terms are presented in easy to understand language. Variable interest rates should be restricted during the crisis to no more than five percent above the prime-lending rate. In the long run, systematic reforms to the federal government’s fiscal policy are critical to ensuring a return to general prosperity, price stability, and an equitable distribution of our nation’s productive resources among all members of our society. Our nation cannot simply shift the unsustainable excess of credit, borrowing, speculation, and financial leverage that occurred in the private sector (and that triggered this crisis) onto the public debt in order to artificially “stimulate” our economy indefinitely. Before the federal government can convince the American public that it will credibly provide meaningful oversight over the profligate business practices of private financial institutions in order to prevent a similar financial crisis from occurring in the future, our national political leaders must first lead by example by adopting concrete commitments to balance the federal budget within five years, further reduce the outstanding federal deficit, and address the burgeoning unfunded liabilities in our national social insurance safety net.

Action Plan

1. Support action by the federal government to revive the national economy by cushioning the impacts of widespread unemployment, creating new jobs through extensive investments in rural public works infrastructure programs, restoring confidence in the financial system, and protecting the American taxpayer.
2. Investigate individuals involved in the collapse of the banking and financial industry for possible prosecution and/or personal civil action. Preclude companies that engaged in greed, corruption, incompetence, or fraudulent business practices from receiving taxpayer bailouts. Strictly limit the amounts of compensation to executives of companies that receive taxpayer-funded bailouts.
3. Avoid indefinite, direct government ownership or control of private business at all costs. Quickly restructure, break into smaller, competitive businesses, or process through bankruptcy all major corpo-

rations, especially banks and financial institutions, that are deemed “too big to fail” and that have fallen into receivership or direct or defacto government ownership.

4. Regulate and restructure consumer, farm, and small business lines of credit, home mortgages, home equity loans, and credit cards, in order to require that loan terms are presented in easy to understand language. Restrict all variable interest rates on these loans to no more than five percent above the prime-lending rate for the duration of the financial crisis.
5. Call on the President and the members of Congress to adopt concrete commitments to balance the federal budget within five years, further reduce the outstanding federal deficit, and address the burgeoning unfunded liabilities in our national social insurance safety net. Support a Constitutional amendment or other binding measure to require a two-third vote in the U.S. House of Representatives to increase the statutory limit on the public debt.

3. Expand Telecommunications Services in Rural Areas

Universal access to affordable, reliable and competitive telecommunications technologies such as telephone, cellular, wireless, digital broadcast television, radio, Internet, satellite and competitive video services must be available to rural communities at affordable costs. Advanced telecommunications technologies are converging. Therefore, national, state and local laws that govern these technologies should remove the regulatory uncertainty that has deterred advanced telecommunications investment in rural America. The Internet delivers information, services and products efficiently, irrespective of geographic location. Rural telecommuters enjoy rewarding careers and lifestyles while conserving energy and reducing traffic congestion. Cell phones increase personal security in remote areas and offer cost effective service to low income individuals. Telemedicine and tele-education both bring vital new services to rural communities. Global positioning satellites improve productivity on America’s farms. Even with these benefits, we must protect children from inappropriate materials and we must reduce incidents of spam, fraud and loss of privacy from these technologies. Expanding access to new telecommunications technologies in rural areas will spark the creation of new service providers, new innovations and new applications that will become more affordable to rural communities.

Action Plan

1. Support programs such as the Universal Service Fund to guarantee that every rural community will have affordable local telephone service, cell phone, dial-up Internet and broadband Internet access. Support extending eligibility for providers of “Lifeline” service for low income persons to include cell phone companies.
2. Support legislation to assure that every rural community has access to free, over-the-air broadcast radio and television services, as well as competitive video, fiber optic, fixed wireless or satellite services. Provide educational and financial resources for the transition to digital television.
3. Protect children from inappropriate materials, combat incidents of fraud, reduce spam and increase privacy and security for individuals who use the Internet. Update “Do-Not-Call” registry programs to include computer dialed and live political telemarketing calls.

4. Achieve Energy Security for Rural America

Imported energy and high prices threaten our national security. High energy costs can force farmers to abandon crops in their fields or sell livestock at a loss. Renewable energy from our nation’s farms, better utilization of traditional domestic energy sources, and enhanced energy conservation are the keys to reducing our dependence on imported energy and combating global warming. However, existing national energy policies often contradict this effective three-pronged strategy. Renewable energy from our nation’s farms and rural communities is grossly underutilized and faces government regulatory and monopolistically driven hurdles to further integration into our national energy mix. Volatile energy prices, driven in part, by Wall Street speculators, have crippled our nation’s fertilizer and agricultural chemical production capacity. Proven reserves of domestic energy cannot be developed because of unscientific, ecological prejudices while environmentally marginal policies increase energy costs without benefits. Efforts to promote critical infrastructure improvements that will increase efficiency and reduce energy costs in rural areas, such as streamlined approval for improved road, rail, and water transportation as well as electricity transmission capacity languish. Voluntary and cost effective energy conservation programs critical to rural

communities, such as passenger rail service, regional air transportation service, telecommuting, telecommerce, home and farm weatherization, car/van pooling, and affordable inter-community bus service, are under utilized and lack financial support.

Action Plan

1. Promote the goal of generating at least 25% of domestic energy needs from renewable resources derived from America's family farms, such as biodiesel, ethanol, biomass, solar, and wind energies by January 1, 2025.
2. Develop traditional sources of energy from public and private lands as well as off shore, in an environmentally sound manner.
3. Support legislation to make energy saving infrastructure improvements in rural areas, such as streamlined approval processes and authorization for improved road, rail and water transportation as well as additional electricity transmission capacity.
4. Support efforts to reinstate the U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission's market oversight authority over energy markets.
5. Support effective energy conservation programs in rural areas such as passenger rail service, regional air transportation service, telecommuting, home and farm weatherization, public transportation, and car/van pools.

5. Improve the Quality and Availability of Rural Health Care

Rural citizens face daunting challenges in order to address their personal responsibilities to acquire adequate health care. To address these challenges, family farmers, ranchers and rural residents need 100% tax deductions for their health insurance and long-term care insurance costs, for medical savings accounts, and for medical flexible spending accounts. They need competitive priced health insurance choices such as nationwide association sponsored health plans and Medicare Advantage plans. Yet, health insurance has no value if there are no health care resources in rural areas. We must preserve access to modern pharmaceutical technologies for all rural families. The Medicare Part D program must provide rural seniors a wide choice of affordable prescription drug benefits that meet their individual needs at prices they can afford. Most U.S. farmers over the age of 65 receive greater direct financial benefits from

the Medicare program than from farm programs. Rural health care providers face regulatory barriers when they seek equitable reimbursement for treatments provided under Medicare and Medicaid. Rural health care providers also face a financial burden from medical malpractice litigation. Rural health care providers and patients also need aggressive deployment of advanced telemedicine and digital record keeping in order to provide adequate care to their communities.

Action Plan

1. Provide rural residents the means to address their medical financial responsibilities through 100% income tax deductions for health and long-term care insurance, medical savings accounts, medical flexible spending accounts, nationwide association health plans, and competitive Medicare Advantage plans.
2. Support Medicare Part D prescription drug benefits for rural seniors. Repeal regulatory barriers that rural health care providers face regarding reimbursement from Medicare and Medicaid.
3. Support comprehensive, national medical malpractice tort reform.
4. Support access to modern pharmaceutical technologies for all rural families.
5. Aggressively deploy advanced telemedicine and digital record keeping in rural communities to serve the needs of rural patients and rural health care providers.

6. Promote Practical and Effective Immigration Reform

The tide of undocumented and illegal immigration in our nation creates a financial and social burden on our nation to provide these individuals with basic public and governmental services. Undocumented immigration increases the risk of criminal or terrorist activity, presents the danger of a public health crisis, promotes the creation of a permanent underclass, and diminishes our national sovereignty. At the same time, the need for legal guest workers to meet unfulfilled labor needs in agriculture and other parts of our economy is critical. Little constructive progress has been made to secure our nation's borders or to provide for an orderly flow of legal guest workers. Stop gap measures such as erecting physical barriers along the borders, shifting the enforcement burden to private employers and ignoring the

problem through de facto amnesty that requires taxpayers and consumers pick up the bill for this crisis, have clearly failed. The primary responsibility to secure our borders, protect our sovereignty and assure the orderly supply of legal guest workers rests with the government at all levels. Increased efforts to secure our borders; increased cooperation among federal, state, and local law enforcement officials to respond to public safety threats by undocumented aliens; authorization to detain undocumented aliens pending investigation of their status; uniform verification of eligibility for individuals to receive government services; repealing the automatic rights of citizenship to the children of illegal aliens; and comprehensive reform of outdated guest worker programs are all practical, cost effective measures that should be implemented immediately. Requiring private employers to be responsible for enforcement of federal immigration law is vigilantism that places at risk the civil rights of both foreign guest workers and U.S. citizens. Requiring taxpayers to finance government services for undocumented immigrants who flaunt our laws is contrary to the principals of democratic accountability and popular sovereignty.

Action Plan

1. Support increased U.S. control of our nation's borders to prevent the entry of illegal and undocumented immigrants.
2. Support a prohibition on general amnesty for illegal aliens. Require proof of citizenship and/or legal residence to receive government benefits. Repeal automatic citizenship for children born to illegal immigrants, until their parents become U.S. citizens.
3. Allow law enforcement or immigration officials to detain any undocumented aliens, including individuals with expired visas, to facilitate orderly deportation.
4. Support enactment of practical and enforceable foreign guest worker programs, including expedited processing of foreign workers in the agricultural sector. Support reform of the H2A program to make it beneficial to farmers. Support the expansion of the H1B visa for foreign professionals to enter the United States in order to provide services in rural communities, where there is a documented need.
5. Support legislation to assure that agricultural employers are not responsible for verifying migrant or seasonal worker documentation at the time of employment. Support legislation to assure that employers who unknowingly hire illegal aliens will not be taxed or fined.

7. Support Transportation Improvements that Protect the Freedom of Mobility

Freedom of mobility is vital to rural life. Transportation is the lifeblood of our nation's economy. Federal transportation investments promote healthy economic growth. However, our highways, railroads, airports, and waterways are deteriorating from failure to support and maintain transportation infrastructure. Since 1970, Americans have increased the miles they drive by more than 148%, while new roads have increased by just 6%. Gridlock costs \$67.5 billion a year and wastes 3.6 billion hours. Grain literally rots on the ground waiting to be transported. Private owners of short-line railroads have increasingly proposed to abandon corridors that are vital to farmers transporting their crops to market. Our nation's commercial waterways are threatened by environmental regulations and deterioration. Our 2,574 local, rural airports are home to 40% of the nation's general aviation fleet. They are the primary source of passenger air transportation for 19% of the U.S. population. They are the fastest transportation option to emergency medical facilities in rural areas. They are indispensable for our forest fire-fighting capabilities, aerial pesticide applications, rural traffic enforcement, wilderness search and rescue, just-in-time package delivery, and other services critical to maintaining a healthy rural economy.

Action Plan

1. Support comprehensive, multi-year, federal surface transportation legislation that would benefit rural America through highway construction, rural highway and bridge maintenance, highway safety, and mass transportation. Support a Highway Trust Fund funded by dedicated motor fuel taxes. Support keeping Interstate Highways toll free.
2. Encourage railroads, trucking, and barge shipping companies to provide reliable and competitive bulk commodity transportation. Restrict mergers that further concentrate transportation resources. Support efforts to secure public ownership of vital short-line rail transportation corridors and facilities that benefit rural communities when those lines are proposed for abandonment.
3. Support federal expenditures to upgrade and maintain all inland waterways and commercial ports. Resist efforts to shorten transportation seasons on rivers for marginal environmental reasons.
4. Support appropriate national aviation fuel user fees

paid by all commercial aviation businesses to assure that the Federal Aviation Administration will continue to be able to oversee commercial passenger, freight air, and general aviation services at the 2,574 rural airports in the U.S.

8. Strengthen Civic Participation in Our Society

The on going challenges of September 11th 2001, as well as the current national economic crisis continue, to test the durability of our liberties and our duties of civic participation. Common frames of reference, such as language, expressions of faith and patriotism are fundamental prerequisites for individual liberties and vibrant civic participation. These shared references reinforce our national traditions of religious and social tolerance and foster continued dialogue among the various segments of our diverse society. Modern technology also facilitates civic participation through more open elections and direct communication with policy makers. Strengthening civic participation in our society by acknowledging the roles of language, faith, patriotism, and technology is the most effective means to guarantee our liberties, promote peaceful, meaningful dialogue, and maintain our way of life.

Action Plan

1. Support technology to increase civic participation through voter registration, absentee voting, nomination petitions, referendum petitions, jury selection, registering for selective service, or other civic responsibilities. Increase penalties for fraud regarding voting or other civic responsibilities.
2. Support efforts to make English the official language of the United States. Support legislation to assure that everyone living in the United States can learn English.
3. Support teaching about the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, and basic civic values in all schools.
4. Support adoption of a Religious Freedom Amendment to the United States Constitution to guarantee the right to practice religion without fear of prejudice or persecution. Support legislation to allow references to a divine presence at school and public events.

9. Enhance Public Safeties and Homeland Security in Rural Areas

Grange members cherish living in rural communities free of crime and fear. Public safety in rural communities is a national priority. Bioterrorism that could destroy the livelihood of hundreds of thousands of family farmers and ranchers is a real threat via the importation or domestic transportation of invasive pests and diseases. Consumers are at risk from imported food and manufactured products that often fail to meet the same strict scrutiny that domestically produced products face. Family farmers face blatant threats of fear and intimidation from FBI recognized, violent, domestic, extremist groups, such as the Earth Liberation Front and Animal Liberation Front, who attack private property as the means of imposing their radical agendas on society. Well-funded, ancillary, propaganda networks also support this extremist agenda and commonly blame these attacks entirely on the victims. Traditional crime is also increasingly making its way to our rural communities. Urban gangs recruit members in rural areas. Criminals use rural locations to manufacture and distribute illegal drugs, such as methamphetamine, and leave landowners with toxic waste sites. Laws regarding criminal penalties for the use of firearms during the commission of a crime are not adequately enforced or applied. The basic rights of crime victims in rural areas go unprotected. Rural law enforcement agencies are often unprepared to address these challenges because they lack the latest technologies needed to communicate with each other and other first responders.

Action Plan

1. Support legislation to combat the manufacture and distribution of methamphetamine and other illegal drugs in rural areas.
2. Combat bioterrorism by preventing the importation or domestic transportation of invasive pests and diseases. Support legislation to require that all imported food and manufactured products must meet the same standards for consumer health and safety as domestic products.
3. Support efforts to disrupt domestic terrorist activities by extremist environmental or animal rights organizations and their ancillary propaganda networks.
4. Support programs to protect the rights of victims of violent crimes in rural areas.
5. Support the strict enforcement of all existing laws pertaining to the use of firearms during the commission of a crime in lieu of additional restrictions on

the right to bear firearms.

6. Support programs to provide every rural law enforcement agency in the U.S. access to advanced telecommunications technologies that interface with other first responders.

10. Improve the Quality of Rural Education

Rural public schools are often the focal point and pride of their local communities. The National Grange supports strengthening public education in rural communities because every child is entitled to receive a high quality public education and every parent must be an indispensable part of the public education decision making process. An Office of Rural Education should be created by statute within the U.S. Department of Education to specifically advocate for the needs of rural school districts. We must improve keystone federal education statutes that directly impact rural public schools such as the No Child Left Behind Act, the Secure Rural Schools and Communities Self Determination Act, and the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act in order to return the authority to direct students' educations to parents, teachers, and local school boards and to assure that all federally mandated education programs, especially programs for special needs students, are appropriately funded by the federal government. We must reward teachers who successfully instruct their students to master the basic skills and knowledge necessary for becoming productive members of their community. We must further empower teachers and local schools officials to quickly confront, and if necessary, appropriately remove, disruptive and/or violent students from the classroom, without fear of professional retribution. However, the use of direct cash payments to students for the purpose of improving attendance, behavior and/or performance must be avoided. Rural public schools can proactively combat childhood obesity by offering only healthy foods and snacks to students, and by having ongoing physical education programs. Home schooling should be a viable alternative to traditional education in rural communities, especially where the distance and cost of transporting a student to and from school can impede a child's ability to learn. Non-intrusive regulations and cooperative partnerships with local school districts can assure that rural home-schooled students receive a high quality education.

Action Plan

1. Support legislation to create an Office of Rural Education within in the U.S. Department of Education.
2. Support reforms to the No Child Left Behind Act, the Secure Rural Schools and Communities Self Determination Act, and the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act to make them more responsive to rural public schools.
3. Reward teachers who successfully instruct their students to master basic skills and knowledge and empower teachers and local schools officials to confront, and if necessary, appropriately remove, disruptive and/or violent students from the classroom, without fear of professional retribution.
4. Proactively combat childhood obesity in rural public schools by offering only healthy foods and snacks, and by having ongoing physical education programs.
5. Support universal adoption of non-intrusive regulations and cooperative partnerships with local school districts to assure that all rural home schooled students receive a high quality education.

Agriculture

Policy Statement

We live in a complex world filled with the ongoing challenge of producing affordable food for ourselves and the world. In 1960 it took 4 farmers to feed a hundred people and we exported 29% of our production around the world. Today 2 farmers feed a hundred people and we export 22% of our production to the world. These American farmers and ranchers are the foundation of this abundant, safe and efficient food source. The Grange continues to pledge its support for rural America and family owned and operated farms and ranches.

Farmers and ranchers have depended on increasing production year after year in order to make a decent living. We feel that the farmer must consider alternative products and markets. There has never been a more crucial time in agriculture to have a unified voice. We must work together with others in a cooperative effort to advocate for agriculture. We have the responsibility to educate and convince all people in this country that they are receiving something of value in return for their support of agriculture.

Free trade agreements are not always fair when some segments of the economy are sacrificed. Free trade agreements have been negotiated on a bi-lateral and regional basis, which have the potential to be harmful to farmers and the economy. We need to be aware of and educate ourselves on this major issue. We encourage the National Grange to advocate for the creation of trade agreements that will be beneficial and flexible while protecting not only agriculture but also the American dream. The movement of agricultural products across our country as well as exports to foreign countries is vital to the economy of the nation.

The National Grange must continue to articulate our farm policy goals and then to communicate those goals to our elected leaders in Congress. It behooves America to maintain the family farm system as the cornerstone of agriculture. We must promote policies which allow our current generation of family farmers to retire with dignity, and draw on their past experiences to attract new generations of family farmers.

We congratulate the President and Congress on the passing of the 2008 Farm Bill which provides for a continuation of our strong agriculture economy. The National Grange must continue to articulate our goals and push for the rapid completion of the regulations to implement the Farm Bill and also ensure that the individual sections receive the necessary appropriations to implement them.

We must be aware of the significance to U.S. agricul-

ture of the advancements being made in other countries in their agriculture production and export technology. We must advocate for the education of our members and the general public on agricultural issues.

With the rapid population growth in our country, it is important that our rural areas are prepared for the influx of new residents. Progressive policies will be needed that will allow people to maintain the lifestyle that they desire, while preserving the character of rural America. Growth will place added pressure on the availability of public services, and we must ensure that these needed services are available to rural citizens. Having said that, we must also ensure that we have land and adequate water available for agriculture in the future.

Farmers continue to adopt new technologies such as GPS precision, agriculture production practices, and multi-stacked genetically modified crop varieties. They are employing double or even multi cropping and grazing strategies to increase total output per acre. Livestock producers are controlling costs by relying more on alternative feed sources such as forage/grass and distillers dried grains (DDGs), a by product of ethanol production.

Occasionally a person operating contrary to accepted practices is shown to the public and it is either implied or stated that this is the way things are done in order to change or even ban certain common practices. Many do not understand the significance American agriculture plays in our economy or its importance by providing a safe and plentiful source of food.

The National Grange supports a federal policy to allow the use of biotechnology in agriculture. We recognize that genetic engineering of plants and animals has already had a positive impact by increasing the availability of food, preservation qualities, and decreasing the environmental impact of agriculture.

The National Grange insists that the Environmental Protection Agency rely only on up-to-date scientific methodology and real world data in making accurate assessments of the risk to human health posed by the use of pesticides/herbicides. We favor expanded approval of generic pesticides and herbicides for use in agricultural production.

The National Grange should continue our efforts to convince Congress to extend the benefits of regional dairy programs to all dairy farmers and consumers across the nation. We realize that there is a disparity in the support price of liquid milk and manufacturing milk and will look to find ways to close this gap.

The National Grange supports the new Milk Income

Loss Contract (MILC) with the increased benefits including the new feed cost escalator based on the price of corn and hay feed.

The National Grange urges Congress and the Office of Management and Budget to consider the administrative costs in implementing government programs affecting the agricultural producer. The funds appropriated for these programs should be used to benefit the producer and not to support the administration. We need to continue to support the producer-approved commodity check-off program.

The National Grange encourages increased participation with youth organizations such as 4-H and FFA from the local to the national level, to draw on and develop the wonderful leadership abilities of these people. Local Granges should be encouraged to work in partnership with cooperative extension or other local agencies such as Community Involved Sustaining Agriculture (CISA), Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), Heifer International, etc. to implement these programs. We as Grange members must enlist our farm, rural and urban neighbors to join us as Grange members and increase our voice in the legislature.

The National Grange supports Country of Origin Labeling and strongly urges the implementation of the program on all food products by the USDA as provided in the 2002 Farm Bill. Further delays of this program are not beneficial to the United States producer or consumer. The National Grange encourages educating the consumer on the benefits of this program. The traceability and point of origin need to be a coordinated effort by the USDA and the Department of Homeland Security in order to reduce the administrative burden.

The National Grange is well positioned to address the constantly changing challenges that arise with agricultural and rural issues. By adopting innovative policies, the Grange can play a pivotal leadership role in providing support and guidance to farmers and rural citizens, and enhance our efforts to maintain the viability of agriculture as a significant economic force in our country.

Due to breeding practices and the use of anabolic steroids there appears to be an increase in injuries to racehorses. The National Grange urges states to study regulations to make horse racing safer for horses and jockeys.

The National Grange believes in our democratic process. Our answer must be to join with all interested parties to educate the public about the realities of agriculture and the principles of nature. Legislators, judges, and our citizens need to understand how and why certain methods are used and how agriculture is an essential component in protecting and improving the environment.

Family Farm Policies and Farm Preservation Programs

1. National Grange believes that policies promoting a viable family farm structure in America's agricultural sector are in the best interests of all citizens. We reaffirm our support for farm commodity programs that serve the best interests of producers and consumers. The National Grange supports programs that will stimulate interest and appreciation for an expanding agriculture industry that provides an abundant supply of reasonably priced food and fiber to meet our domestic needs and still export the products into the world markets.
2. The National Grange calls upon the President and Congress to support programs and policies that will help sustain and enhance family farms by increasing the net farm income, providing economic and tax incentives, and credit and/or tax credits for soil and water conservation without escalating the advantages to non-farm investors.
3. The National Grange believes that a family farm is a business or enterprise involved in the production of food, fiber and related products or services that is owned and operated by the members of a family who make the management and financial decisions and supply at least part of the labor.
4. The National Grange will continue to support the use of lands for the production of food and fiber as long as the enterprises are operated under best management practices as established by the Farm Program Division and the Natural Resource Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
5. Federal, state, and local agencies should work for efficient economic development policies that treat the agriculture industry on equal terms with other businesses and industries such as small business loans, tax incentives, marketing practices, and other programs that would help small farmers. The National Grange supports government rural development programs that provide local off-farm employment for rural people and that provide an improved income for small- and medium-sized farms.
6. The National Grange supports public relation programs that disseminate accurate information on the efficiency and productivity of American agriculture as well as the contributions it has made in providing an adequate supply of food and fiber, and the important role the food and agricultural industry plays in the nation's economy. We will cooperate with and support the efforts of other agricultural organizations

in their educational programs pertaining to false, unproven, and misleading statements about the production and safety of agricultural commodities in order to present a true picture of environmentally safe farm and ranch best management practices.

7. The State Granges and the National Grange urge state and federal governments to strengthen, expand, and enforce farmland protection programs to save our farmland for food and fiber production by designing tax laws to enable farm families to pass their land on to future generations. The National Grange supports a reduction in capital gains for retiring farmers who are willing to sell to beginning farmers. The National Grange will also work with Congress to find additional ways to contain urban sprawl through the use of purchasing development rights and conservation easements on agricultural land. Financial institutions, however, should not be allowed to develop agricultural land trusts. In addition land purchase or lease programs should not involve the federal government as the purchaser of private land or development rights.
8. The National Grange urges the USDA to strictly enforce the Agriculture Foreign Investment Disclosure Act. We further oppose the use of public funds and/or the services of government agencies in the development of U.S. based, foreign-owned agricultural enterprises.
9. The National Grange urges the appointment of a high-level staff person with appropriate resources as part of the Department of Homeland Security, to target the prevention and minimization of agro-terrorism. We further encourage federal, state and local governments to protect agriculture against bio-terrorism. The National Grange supports the Department of Homeland Security and other appropriate agencies in their efforts to investigate, monitor, develop, and implement plans for the prevention of and/or protection from acts of terrorism and destruction against agricultural producers, facilities of agricultural research, and major food processing and distribution centers.
10. The National Grange supports the passage of "Right-to-Farm" laws.
11. The National Grange urges the promotion of Agri-Tourism throughout the nation.
12. The National Grange believes that there is place for all in agriculture and advocates for:) small-scale farming and) the organic farming movement as an alternative option to current large-scale farming methods.

Federal Programs, Commodity Loans, Target Prices, and Farm Storage Programs

1. The National Grange supports legislative and administrative actions that will obtain an economic return for farmers on their investment of capital, labor, and management that is equal to that of the other segments of the economy. Farm programs should be based on units of production, not acreage, and provide the individual farmer with maximum flexibility in their planting and production decisions. Production yields should be based on the proven yield of the land on that farm. We support allowing farmers to re-establish their proven yields by allowing use of federal crop insurance records. However, we support allowing a farmer to exclude any farm yield or county average yield history when crop insurance records show a yield is less than 50% of the normal yield for a given crop and is caused by any God given weather related disaster (drought-heat, flood, wind, hail, etc.) that is out of a farmer's control. We further support requiring all crop production bases to be established using a soil suitability criteria rating rather than relying only on past crop history and changing farm programs so that a farmer will not lose their farm base from under-planting.
2. Target prices for major commodities should be set in relationship to the national average cost of production, and set at a level that will not encourage over production. Marketing loan programs for major commodities, including soybeans and minor oilseeds, wheat, feed grains, cotton, rice, and other government-supported commodities should provide for a loan rate that is set at the national average cost of production and that redeems the loan at the lesser of the original loan or the state's monthly, weekly, or daily average market price as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture. The farmer should retain the difference between the regular loan rate and the marketing loan, provided the loan differential is subject to the \$50,000 payment limit. In the absence of a marketing loan, the traditional loan rate should be set at or near the cost of production.
3. The National Grange supports the Farm Storage Facility Loans Program and a farmer-owned reserve program to assist farmers in marketing their crops during times of volatile pricing when grain elevators are unable to provide hedging protection. Storage rates should be commensurate with the cost of

on-farm storage enabling farmers to take advantage of storage payments. The Secretary of Agriculture should have discretionary authority to waive the interest charges on reserve loans. We further urge that there be a strict monitoring of grain stored under loan contracts by county, state and national USDA officers, and State Departments of Agriculture.

4. The National Grange encourages Congress to develop new farm programs that take into consideration the cross sector effects of such programs. We urge that competitive sectors be consulted in an effort to lessen the cross sector impacts. We support voluntary "Revenue Assurance Plans" such as the ACRE program in the 2008 farm bill as an alternative to present farm programs as a means of assisting family farmers.
5. The National Grange supports "Constructive Receipt" income exemptions that will exempt advance farm program payments from taxable income for the year they are received and, instead, treat those payments as potentially taxable income for the year they were intended to cover.
6. The National Grange supports allowing small farmers to have more than 1 plot of less than five acres per farm enrolled in set-aside programs.
7. Surplus food purchased by the Government should not be sold at reduced prices to be in competition with ongoing farm prices. Instead, we encourage surplus foods to be given to charitable organizations.
8. The National Grange supports efforts to have Loan Deficiency Payments (LDP) figured on average yields for a particular farm using the average production history (APH) according to the Federal Crop Insurance Records rather than the actual production for the current year. The producer should retain the right to choose the day when the LDP price would be established.

Conservation Reserve and Agriculture Conservation Programs

1. The National Grange supports the continuation of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) in the 2007 Farm Bill to provide long-term solutions to natural resource concerns on our nation's farms.
2. The National Grange recommends that the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Farm Service Agency (FSA) enforce the inspection of CRP land for noxious weed control. CRP payments

should be withheld from owners of the CRP tracts that are infested with noxious weeds until the FSA or NRCS certifies that the noxious weed control program is being carried out by the landowner. Additionally, all noxious weeds on land enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) should be controlled by uniform standards. To assist landowners in their responsibility to control noxious weeds, we further urge the USDA to change the date when mowing is allowed on CRP lands from July 15 to at least as early as June. The National Grange urges the NRCS to only enroll class 3 or higher erodible land into the CREP.

3. The National Grange supports federal funding for soil conservation, including sufficient funding to retain technical assistance for conservation. Federal guidelines should provide authority to the local committees so they can best meet conservation needs. Conservation contracts should follow land ownership with penalties assessed for destruction of said practices before the final contract date. In the event any federal conservation cost-share funds are granted to states, all such funds should be made available to farmers for cost-share payments. Conservation funds should be used for the cost-sharing program for which they have been appropriated and none of these funds should be diverted for administrative costs of the states' delivery systems. The Farm Service Agency should update its state conservation funds distribution formulas to help address the most serious long-term conservation needs. The National Grange further supports legislation mandating that a landowner repay three years of payments if they break a CRP contract.

Dairy Policy, Milk Marketing Orders, Dairy Prices, and Inspections

1. The National Grange supports a federal dairy program that recognizes regional differences based upon the cost and amount of production, availability of markets, percentage of production that is allocated to CCC stocks, and the percentage of Class I use. We support creating five regional dairy marketing areas: (1) Northeast Dairy Marketing Area (CT, DE, ME, MD, MA, NH, NJ, NY, OH, PA, RI, VT); (2) Southern Dairy Marketing Area (AL, AR, FL, GA, KS, KY, LA, MS, MO, NE, NC, OK, SC, TX, TN, VA, WV); (3) Upper Midwest Dairy Marketing

- Area (IL, IN, IA, MI, MN, ND, SD, WI); (4) Inter-mountain Dairy Marketing Area (AZ, CO, ID, MT, NV, NM, UT, WY) and (5) Pacific Dairy Marketing Area (AK, CA, HI, OR, WA). However, we support allowing states to “opt out” of participating in their regional dairy marketing area program, if they choose. We further support creating Regional Dairy Boards to administer these regional dairy marketing area programs that have authority to establish: (1) over-order price (a price higher than the marketing order or non-marketing area price for Class I milk; (2) equalization pools to equalize over-order prices to producers throughout a regulated area; and (3) processor administrative fees. We further support requiring producer referendum to approve any proposed over-order price establishment, amendment, or termination. We believe that funding for the regional dairy marketing program and the regional dairy boards should come from a National Dairy Producers Fund established with the U.S. Treasury from which the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture shall distribute available funds to the regional dairy boards which, in turn, shall make payments to eligible producers of all milk classes under the regulations established for that region’s dairy marketing equalization pools. We further support requiring each covered processor that purchases Class I milk during a month that will be sold in the regulated area of a region to pay into the National Dairy Producers Fund an amount equal to the region’s over-order premium multiplied by the quantity of purchased Class I milk for that region.
2. The National Grange supports the use of Basic Formula Price (BFP) in determining the base price for dairy products as well as multiple component pricing for all classes of milk. The National Grange urges Congress to require the USDA to raise the support price of milk for the benefit of both the producer and the consumer rather than reducing the effective support price of milk by “tilting” the prices that the government pays for the various components of milk to over emphasize those components that sell at or above current market prices. We continue to support government direct purchases of dairy products for domestic programs. The National Grange also supports a Safety Net Program that establishes a minimum price for milk paid to farmers.
 3. We support the continued payment of Class I differentials and oppose any effort to form a national pool of Class I milk differentials. We further support maintaining the current classification of reconstituted milk and oppose the de-pooling of Class III milk.
 4. The National Grange supports the implementation of a forward contracting pilot program for all classes of milk other than Class I.
 5. The Grange continues to seek an increase in exports of milk and milk products. We support funding of the Dairy Export Incentive program (DEIP) to the full limit permitted by WTO agreements.
 6. The National Grange opposes the importation of caseinates and urges the adoption of tariff rate quotes on Milk Protein Concentrates entering the country. Also the National Grange urges the adoption of standards on how MPC is used and inspected to ensure compliance.
 7. The National Grange continues to support the National Dairy Product Promotion Program as a means to promote and increase the consumption of dairy products. We urge the USDA to periodically account to the public for any monies that have been collected from dairy farmers under any assessment programs.
 8. The National Grange supports maintaining legal differentiation between real dairy products and “imitation” or “substitute” products on food labels even if the nutritional equivalency of these products is the same. We suggest that any “imitation” or “substitute” product that resembles a dairy product may not in any manner be allowed to bear the name of the dairy product that it is purported to resemble.
 9. The National Grange supports legislation that would extend the present pay and trust provision of the Packers and Stockyards Act to the dairy industry. We further support a national security fund, funded by processors or secured by bonding, to protect against processor bankruptcy if the fund does not preempt a stronger state program.
 10. We recognize the need for dairy farm and dairy plant inspections to help ensure the highest quality of dairy products, but insist that duplication of inspections by government entities (city, county, state and federal) be discontinued, where possible. All levels of government should agree to accept uniform and reciprocal dairy farm and dairy plant inspections.
 11. The National Grange supports the Milk Income Loss Contracts (MILC) program in the 2008 Farm Bill.
 12. The National Grange at all levels encourages the Dairy Co-ops to voluntarily initiate a program that allows membership of the Co-op to vote on any program that takes money out of the farmer’s pocket with a yes vote for approval.
 13. The National Grange opposes legislation that requires the labeling of milk/milk products as it re-

lates to BST. The National Grange discourages the promotion of rBST-free milk as being safer or more wholesome. We urge the United State Department of Justice, the Federal Trade Commission, the USDA, State Attorneys General, and State Departments of Agriculture to investigate false and misleading claims about organic and rBST-free milk that are harmful to the image of non-rBST-free milk and take the proper actions to enforce this policy. Also, the National Grange urges dairy education and promotion groups to better educate consumers that antibiotics are not allowed in milk and dairy products that are sold to the public.

14. The National Granges urges a reform of multiple component pricing in the federal milk marketing order dairy system to follow the California state milk marketing order model by having a mandatory survey of all dairy manufacturing plants including all types of cheeses in order to determine the value of milk components for dairy pricing and to establish a yearly survey of these plants to better determine their operating costs so that the 'make allowance' is set at a level that is most beneficial to both the plant operator and the dairy producer to ensure a healthy dairy industry. The National Grange also will advocate that any further increase in the 'make allowance' for manufacturing plants must come from the marketplace and not from the dairy producers proceeds.
15. The National Grange requests a serious look into the method for pricing of milk produced by dairy farmers to reflect a reasonable margin of return on farmers' investment and to provide for a reasonable living standard.
16. The National Grange opposes any proposal, which calls for a milk tax or cuts called for in the commodity payments.

Tobacco Policy

1. The National Grange supports programs at the federal level to help tobacco farmers diversify their farming operation by raising and marketing of alternative crops and will support new research programs to discover new uses for tobacco, such as a new source of protein.
2. The National Grange supports steps to make U.S. tobacco more competitive in the world market. We urge that all tobacco that is exported as U.S. tobacco must be certified as 100% U.S. tobacco.

Horticulture, Beekeeping, and Honey

1. The National Grange recommends continuing research to improve the development of more freeze resistant nursery stock and methods of frost control.
2. The National Grange recommends that a realistic tariff be placed on imported honey to protect the financial position of the U.S. bee industry that is necessary for the pollination of U.S. agricultural crops. We support the enactment of federal laws that will provide for the inspection of honeybees and honeybee hives that are transported across state lines in an effort to better control the spread of honeybee diseases and parasites. We urge Congress to set up a "bee zone" and appropriate the necessary funds to stop or at least slow down the northward invasion of the killer bees. We further recommend that the USDA promote a program to educate the general public on the importance of bees, and on the destructive Africanized bees now invading the southern United States. The National Grange supports legislative funding for more research into the cause of honeybee colonies disappearance by disease, unidentified predators and other unknown reasons. We also support the establishment of an indemnity program to reimburse bee farmers for their colony losses.
3. The National Grange supports expansion of Federal Crop Insurance and Multi-Peril Insurance Programs to include horticultural crops.
4. The National Grange calls upon the Department of Agriculture, land grant universities, and industry to continue research efforts to determine expanded uses for surplus fruits and vegetables.

Cotton, Soybeans, and Peanut Policies

1. The National Grange supports continuing the current peanut program in the 2008 Farm Bill. We recommend closer communication between the USDA and the peanut growers associations.
2. The National Grange will support a cotton program that provides for a marketing loan at a level that will encourage the continued exportation of cotton as well as research into the eradication of detrimental insects.
3. The National Grange supports the use and promotion of soybeans.

Livestock Production and Animal Care

1. The National Grange continues to support the beef promotion programs. We urge State Beef Councils to join in cooperative efforts to target Beef Check-off funds to larger consumer audiences. However, the National Grange recommends that the National Beef Promotion Board consider eliminating the \$00 “Beef Check-off” on any animal that sells for \$20.00 or less.
2. The National Grange seeks a federal indemnification standby program for all livestock and poultry diseases that require condemnation and slaughter to eradicate or control the given diseases. We further support federal indemnity programs to indemnify farmers against loss through no fault of theirs in cases such as radioactive fallout, chemical contamination, and bio-terrorism.
3. The National Grange supports exotic animal farming provided it does not create a health hazard for the domestic livestock industry.
4. The National Grange continues to support the beef promotion programs. We urge State Beef Councils to join in cooperative efforts to target Beef Check-off Funds to larger consumer audiences.
5. The National Grange supports using animals in animal agricultural research in order to advance the science of animal husbandry in the most humane and economic fashion. The National Grange supports efforts to clarify that animals not be declared “sentient beings” that are entitled to the same legal protections as humans. We support the development of educational programs that demonstrate the advantages and humaneness of modern animal husbandry. We oppose any legislation and/or regulations that would hinder good animal husbandry practices. Instead, we support developing a code of “best management practices” for the care and maintenance of agricultural animals and other animals that are under human control. We also support efforts to severely punish individuals and organizations that commit illegal actions against animal agricultural producers and animal agricultural and biomedical researchers and facilities. We support the voluntary efforts of farmers in reducing the number of injured or downer animals. We encourage livestock auction markets to continue their programs of not accepting animals that are injured or are too weak to stand.
6. The National Grange strongly supports the veal industry’s continued use of confinement stalls and crates as part of comprehensive humane animal treatment practices employed by the industry. We further recommend that a USDA grader be assigned to all veal calf slaughtering plants so that a farmer or seller receives a fair price from the packing plant for their veal based on the grade that was determined by the inspector and not the plant manager.
7. The National Grange supports rodeos, the use of animals in rodeos, and the great heritage rodeos represent.
8. The National Grange supports pro-active efforts to address legitimate concerns regarding concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) and the compliance of CAFOs with Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, hazardous substance release laws and other environmental laws that directly protect the health and safety of the general public. We support direct input by the agricultural industry, scientifically based regulations, transparent research regarding actual conditions on farms, sensible control and enforcement, the development of nutrient management plans, developing cost efficient odor reduction technology, and the zoning of agricultural districts as effective means of addressing CAFO management issues. We recommend the development and use of “the best management practices” (BMPs) for the handling of animal and poultry wastes. We support liability protection for farmers who follow the appropriate regulations and BMPs. We also support strict laws that regulate large livestock enterprises so that they store, process and apply nutrients according to an approved nutrient management plan to assure that excess nutrients will not contaminate the air or waters of the United States. We also recommend strict construction standards to new earthen manure lagoons and set a phase-in period after which existing lagoons would have to meet appropriate standards. We support prohibiting indefinite storage of animal waste by requiring treatment according to federal wastewater standards if the waste is not applied to land or used in another environmentally sound matter. We further support regulations or other provisions to prevent animal owners from using contracts or similar arrangements to avoid responsibilities for animal waste management. We support imposing tough new penalties on the worst polluters. However, we believe that the implementation of any rules and regulations forcing compliance with the Clean Water Act for CAFOs should not become mandatory until all technical expertise and funding is secured and available for the timely compliance with these directives. Any information pertaining to CAFO Nutrient Man-

agement plans should be kept confidential, or should not be subject to public disclosure laws since it could be detrimental to the farm operation.

9. The National Grange encourages Congress to provide adequate cost-share funding of at least three million dollars annually for manure pits.
10. The National Grange urges the passage of legislation maintaining the voluntary NAIS system for livestock and poultry and providing adequate funding for the program to be administered through USDA. One of the strong tenets of the program must be strict privacy protection in the national identification program at all levels of government. We further recommend that the method of identification could be breed specific as approved by each breeds' national association such as ear tags, microchips, and/or lots for small animals. The National Grange also supports tax incentives for voluntary participants in NAIS.
11. To help ensure open international trade, the National Grange believes there should be an animal trace-back framework developed and administered by the USDA in case of a health emergency. The procedure should have the following elements once implemented:
 - 48-hour trace-back capabilities
 - Confidentiality
 - One integrated system incorporating breed organization system
 - Federal funding
12. 1 The National Grange supports legislation that clarifies that animal manure is not a hazardous or toxic substance.

Livestock and Poultry Disease Control

1. The National Grange supports continued efforts to eradicate Brucellosis, Johne's disease, Hoof and Mouth disease, Bovine Leukemia virus, tuberculosis, and screw worms, as well as the continued monitoring of our nation's borders against re-infestation of these and other infectious livestock diseases.
2. The National Grange supports funding of increased research to control and eradicate poultry diseases and parasites.
3. The National Grange supports blood testing for Johne's disease in cattle. We further support the development of a test that can isolate the causal organism of Johne's disease in a shorter time frame.
4. The National Grange requests that health charts show freedom from TB and Brucellosis when dairy cattle

are either sold or shown.

5. The National Grange supports the use of antibiotics in livestock and poultry feed unless the Food and Drug Administration or other agencies have scientifically established and determined that the use of these antibiotics are detrimental to human health.
6. The National Grange supports the establishment of firm guidelines for the management of bison and elk in the National Parks to control the spread of Brucellosis and the high risk of undulant fever in humans.
7. The National Grange supports state and national regulatory efforts to closely monitor and test animals on game farms in order to prevent the spread of potentially devastating communicable diseases to surrounding domestic and wild animals.
8. In the event of a suspected finding of contaminated livestock on a farm, the National Grange supports on-farm feed source inspections conducted by State Departments of Agriculture as opposed to the proposed FDA inspections.

Food and Meat Inspection Programs

1. The National Grange urges an increase in inspection regulations on all livestock, feed, meats, dairy products and all by-products being imported from foreign countries to the United States for the protection of our animal industry. We support extending mandatory inspection regulations to seafood. We support legislation to implement pathogen detection and reduction strategies based on sound science that targets micro bio-contamination by pathogens that may be harmful to consumers. However, we will oppose adopting "user fees" to pay for inspection services and or any changes in the system that will result in less than continuous inspection during processing of meat and poultry for human consumption.
2. The National Grange will seek legislation to have the uniform expiration date stamped, not coded, on all processed food.
3. The National Grange supports legislation requiring more open notice to the consumer on products containing M.R.M (machine removed meat).

Farmer Credit Programs and the Farm Credit System

1. One of the functions of the Farm Service Agency (FSA) should be a lender of last resort for farmers

who are unable to acquire needed capital from conventional lending sources. Caution must be exercised to avoid granting undue advantage to large operations at the expense of family-sized farming units. The Grange urges the FSA to strengthen farm loan programs and assist borrowers in “graduating” to conventional credit sources. Loan programs should provide needed short and long-term low interest credit for soil and water conservation. We believe that the local committees should have the legal authority to act upon all farmer loans. We support providing emergency loans and management assistance during times of natural disasters, commodity embargoes, or economic setbacks to expedite the application, review and granting process for these loans. During situations of economic stress facing FSA farm borrowers, we support maintaining the right of mediation on farm loan foreclosures. We further believe that the present owner/operator or beginning farmer should be given the first consideration of sale or lease in disposing of foreclosed farms.

2. The National Grange supports Farm Credit System programs that will service the needs of farmers who are actively and directly engaged in the production of agricultural commodities. The National Grange opposes the acquisition of Farm Credit institutions by any bank outside the Farm Credit System. We support retaining the present tax exemptions that apply to the Farm Credit System. We specifically recommend that the Farm Credit System create policies and programs that will assist young and beginning farmers. We support legislation to prohibit the Farm Credit System from increasing its activities regarding insurance coverage for its farm borrowers.
3. The National Grange recommends that the lending authority of the Farm Credit System be expanded to address the total needs of rural communities, including rural economic development. We support the financing of on-farm and off-farm facilities that add value to agricultural commodities or provide services to agricultural production and marketing as well as financing for agricultural exports to all foreign markets. We further support FCS financing directed toward the development of rural enterprises engaged in the development of alternative uses for agricultural commodities and the development of rural infrastructures, such as water and sewer systems and the creation of state of the art telecommunication systems for rural areas.
4. The National Grange supports requiring all agricultural lending institutions, including those under the Federal Reserve System, to consider the security and

payment history of the applicant rather than relying entirely upon his/her cash flow.

Agriculture Trade Policy

1. The National Grange continues to support legislation, trade agreements and other measures that will lead to the freeing of world trade between nations on a mutually beneficial basis. We support “fast track” trade legislation to provide the President with sufficient legal authority to negotiate effectively for a reduction in trade barriers, both tariff and non-tariff. The Grange must continue to work for sound trade agreements for agriculture by encouraging the Administration and Congress to aggressively ensure that American farmers achieve access to all markets covered by trade agreements. We support negotiations to eliminate all tariff and non-tariff trade restrictions against United States’ agricultural exports. We continue to favor the principles set forth in the World Trade Organization (WTO) and will support amendments to the WTO that will call for swifter remedies to trade disputes. However, in any new trade negotiations, the National Grange will strongly support the inclusion of provisions to protect the sanctity of existing State Laws, including vigorous defense of challenges to such laws by federal authorities in any multi-national trade court or dispute resolution panel.
2. The National Grange supports the permanent appointment of a chief agricultural negotiator in the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative. We support the strong representation of U.S. agricultural interests in all negotiations regarding U.S. trade relations. In addition, we insist that representatives of USDA and the Department of Homeland Security also be represented at all trade negotiations. We urge Congress to diligently scrutinize all future trade agreements to protect the interests of farmers and consumers before approving those trade agreements.
3. The National Grange continues to work for an adequate food supply for the entire world. We encourage increased food production in developing countries. To that end, we support an international food program that provides for the support of all nations in a cooperative endeavor to meet current and projected food needs in deficient areas and ensures that food will be available and efficiently distributed. All nations should give more support for research, education and development of programs designed to improve the capability of farmers in food deficient areas to meet more of the food needs of their people.

4. The National Grange supports the development of a consistent policy on the use of sanctions by the U.S. government. The National Grange strongly believes that food and food producers should never be used as political pawns for homeland security and politics. The Grange opposes trade embargoes as a first choice of action, but should all choices fail, short of military action, and a trade embargo becomes the only alternative, the Grange urges the federal government to embargo all products- agricultural, industrial and technical- instead of specific agricultural commodities. If sanctions become necessary as a tool of foreign policy, then sanctions should be used only as a consequence of multilateral sanctions.

Agriculture Imports

1. The National Grange supports strict enforcement of laws regulating the importation of harmful species of plants and animals. We further support measures which will require tighter oversight and control at port of entry and market outlets in an effort to control the importation of exotic fowl, pet birds, and the establishment of procedures for the treatment of imported cargoes to prevent the importation of plant or animal insects or diseases.
2. The National Grange supports legislation that would require the USDA to certify that food products coming into the USA for human consumption have not been grown or treated with products that are not currently registered for use on food products in the United States.
3. The National Grange does not approve of using inspections, grading, health, and sanitary or labeling standards as non-tariff barriers to trade. We do support placing import quotas and/or import tariffs on agricultural commodities as a means of protecting domestic markets from seasonal and over trend market penetration surges. We urge Congress and the President to investigate dumping of food products from other countries onto the U.S. market that affect our domestic agriculture industry. We insist that all imported agricultural products, including value added commodities, meet the same strict inspection, unapproved pesticide residues, grading, and labeling standards as domestically produced products and that these standards be strictly enforced, and the country of origin supply certification that the imported product is free of harmful diseases and pests. The National Grange supports policies on food origin labeling, consumer educational programs and the traceability

of the origin of food between USDA and Homeland Security and increased funding for the inspection of imported food products and ingredients. We specifically recommend that all imported products be labeled with the name of the country of origin including meat, poultry, seafood and fresh produce until the consumer purchases it as a means of providing vital information about food sources. We further support the elimination of all export subsidies on agricultural products imported into the United States or the imposition of countervailing duties to offset the subsidy value.

4. The National Grange supports strict enforcement of existing countervailing duties to offset the subsidy value on certain agricultural and timber products being imported from Canada to protect the agriculture and timber industries in states along the Canadian border.
5. The National Grange supports opening the U.S. border to Canadian live beef under thirty months of age for immediate slaughter.

Agriculture Exports and Embargoes

1. The National Grange encourages its members to work through their commodity export promotion organizations on increasing the producers' participation in export market development. We strongly support retaining the present system of private enterprise and cooperatives in export sales. We continue to support government export credit programs, including blended credit, and propose the establishment of a revolving export credit fund. We further support the formation of a national marketing federation of regional marketing cooperatives to cover all agricultural export commodities and better serve the world's markets. We encourage all segments of the agricultural community to increase their private investment in export market development for American agricultural commodities.
2. The National Grange supports legislation or administrative action that will continue to maintain and increase the exporting of agricultural commodities. The Grange will oppose restrictions being placed on imports into the United States that could result in retaliatory action being taken against U.S. agricultural exports by the exporting country. We support increasing market development programs conducted through the USDA and AID with emphasis on financing and development of the infrastructure

of recipient countries to facilitate the receiving and distribution of U.S. agricultural products. We further recommend new emphasis on cash sales for agricultural products along with aggressive exportation of high value-added products. We strongly support keeping the authority to determine national agricultural export policy in the USDA and believe that additional consideration should be given to greater participation by the USDA in the administration and distribution of United States' food aid programs.

3. The National Grange urges the Grain Inspection Service of the USDA to take all necessary steps to ensure that only grain of the quality specified in the purchase be moved into the export market. We support a thorough investigation of the practice by grain buyers of adulterating the grain their purchase from farmers with foreign matter and additional moisture prior to resale by the USDA and by State Departments of Agriculture.
4. The National Grange supports integrating and coordinating existing state and federal governments' export marketing programs, such as the Market Access Program, the Market Promotion Program, and other similar programs that are designed to develop and expand foreign markets for U.S. farm products. The National Grange supports the development of marketing programs to expand agricultural exports that encourage the participation of new export marketing groups, such as farm cooperatives and export trading companies. Farmers selling commodities directly into the export market should be subject to all of the protections and restrictions that apply to corporations and other commercial ventures that are selling into the export market. We support all efforts to maintain the sanctity of export contracts. We support monitoring and full public disclosure of information concerning sales to foreign countries.
5. The National Grange will oppose any attempt to embargo, restrict or otherwise burden the export of logs or any other privately grown agricultural commodity by a complete or partial ban, quota, or tax of any nature.
6. The National Grange supports swift implementation of the Taft-Hartley Act's provisions against workers who refuse to load agricultural commodities for export.
7. The National Grange supports developing agricultural trade with Cuba. We seek means whereby Cuba might be extended loans and/or credit to purchase U.S. agricultural products.

Marketing and Cooperatives

1. The National Grange strongly supports agricultural cooperatives and the special legal status granted to agricultural cooperatives under the Capper-Volstead Act which authorizes farmers and producers to form associations for the purpose of collectively processing, handling, and marketing agricultural products in interstate and foreign commerce. We support tax law changes that would allow cooperatives to raise additional equity capital to expand cooperative operations as long as such equity does not undermine farmer ownership and control of their cooperative. We support allowing grain-marketing cooperatives to receive commodity loans.
2. The National Grange supports purchasing, processing, marketing, rural electric, rural cable and satellite television, rural broadband and telephone cooperatives that are providing high quality products and services to their members.
3. The National Grange urges the USDA and other appropriate agencies to continue their educational programs for farmers on the use of the futures market through hedging and other marketing options to increase farm profitability.
4. The National Grange continues to support the efforts of commodity organizations to improve the promotional activities for their products.
5. The National Grange endorses federal and state legislation to protect the bargaining status of cooperatives.
6. The National Grange supports extending the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1937 to include all agricultural commodities.
7. The National Grange urges the USDA to cooperate fully with the states in developing direct farmer to consumer marketing programs.
8. The National Grange recommends that the provisions of any check-off be approved by a majority of the producers of that commodity in a national referendum. Following producer approval, the programs shall be mandatory, without refunds, and that no more than 5% of the check-off funds can be used for administrative costs. The funds shall be under the control of the promotion board with final decisions and ultimate responsibility for administering check-off programs residing with the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
9. The National Grange supports a study to determine the feasibility of a check-off program for agricultural commodities to fund a research, educational

and promotional program on the nutritional benefits that product.

10. The National Grange supports a national agricultural marketing policy which would encourage farmers to retain important production and marketing decisions in their own hands and that would encourage domestic regional marketing cooperatives to develop a cooperative marketing federation that is capable of entering into the international market for selling farm commodities.
11. The National Grange supports retaining present state standards for Maple Syrup, and opposes any mandatory federal regulations that would be less stringent than present state regulations.
12. The National Grange urges the United Soybean Board to continue to focus check-off monies toward research to combat the aphids and rust situations.

Chemicals for Agriculture: Weed, Pest and Predator Control

1. The National Grange urges the EPA to consult with state, industry, and user groups when developing policy and regulations that relates to pesticide industries. The National Grange urges the EPA to use a reasonable approach in carrying out the provisions and requirements of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act. We recommend relying on impartial scientific research data that is based on the normal human consumption patterns of a product before suspending or canceling the use of a particular chemical. We support increased research and education being done by the USDA and EPA to improve integrated pest management. We support the reinstatement and full funding of the USDA's Pesticide Data Program. We further recommend that Congress provide additional funds for land grant colleges and universities to be more actively involved with biological pest control research.
2. The National Grange supports efforts to provide information to growers and farmers on actions that can be taken when adverse public statements are made questioning their use of agricultural chemicals that are legally registered with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). We further seek legislation that would protect a farmer from criminal or civil liability regarding that farmer's use or disposal of an EPA-registered and approved herbicide or pesticide in accordance with the manufacturer's printed instructions.
3. The National Grange supports the reasonable and practical use of agricultural chemicals as well as reasonable and practical standards for reentry to fields or areas treated with agricultural chemicals. We urge the USDA to establish a certification program for applicators that encourages herbicide best management practices to prevent adjacent property damage. We further support adequate funding for increased research by all appropriate government agencies to develop, improve, and disseminate information on alternative or sustainable agriculture. We support developing educational programs for farmers on the safe use and disposal of agricultural chemicals, including their containers, in an environmentally safe way.
4. The National Grange supports allowing the continued and appropriate use of the following farm chemicals: 2-4-D for weed control; triazines for crop protection; Elgetol for thinning apples; Compound 1080 for predator control; Methyl bromide for controlling insect infestations in stored commodities and any chemicals found to be effective in controlling fire ants. We further encourage the EPA to reevaluate their restrictions on certain pesticides that are used for grasshopper control so that a more effective environmental control program may be offered to farmers and ranchers.
5. The National Grange supports legislation that provides increased and continuous funding for the IR-4 minor use pesticides program. We recommend streamlining the approval process for minor use pesticides by reducing the cost and time necessary for registration or re-registration.
6. The Cooperative Extension Service and the State Departments of Agriculture, in cooperation with retail and wholesale dealers of lawn and garden pesticides, should conduct special pesticide application classes for homeowners to ensure the proper use and disposal of unused chemicals and their containers.
7. The National Grange opposes the EPA classifying plants as a pesticide based upon genetic engineering.
8. All fertilizer manufacturers using toxic, heavy metal, chemical or radioactive wastes should be required to list those components on the package label.
9. The National Grange will support a high priority program for the control of noxious weeds on all lands including Witchweed, Tartanian Honeysuckle, Russian or Autumn Olive and Multiflora Rose. We further urge Congress to prohibit all sales of any form

(live, dried, seeds) of any plant that has been placed on a state, regional or national noxious weed list.

10. The National Grange urges the USDA to continue funding for the control of the Asian Gypsy Moth; Pine Beetle; Tussock Moth and the Asian Long Horned Beetle. We support additional funding and legal authority to restrict the importation of foreign pests into the U.S. We urge USDA to alert the general public to the potential threat that foreign insects pose to our native species.

Research and Extension

1. The National Grange strongly supports the cooperative Extension Service (ES) as well as the land grant universities in their effort to maintain a quality extension program in their respective states. We recommend renewed federal funding for the State Farm Safety Specialist position and farm safety programs, establishing a job retraining program for displaced, disabled, or injured farmers and ranchers, maintaining a viable 4-H Program, and increased funding by all government entities so that the ES can provide information on alternative and sustainable agricultural practices and marketing methods.
2. The National Grange continues to strongly support adequate funding for basic and applied agricultural research from federal, state and private sources. We specifically recommend full funding of the federal share of agricultural research, especially in cases of emergencies when increased research is required. We strongly support additional research to provide the technology that is pertinent to small-scale agriculture, including more emphasis on research in the areas of marketing, insect control, disease control, energy use, improved product quality, and soil and water management.
3. The National Grange supports increased funding for the National Seed Storage Laboratory in an effort to preserve plant material and seed germ plasm.
4. The National Grange will support research and education programs that will promote the goals of sustainable agriculture research, of precision agriculture practices and organic farming practices. The goals of research in these areas should be the development of the most efficient and effective Best Management Practices (BMP's) to reduce soil loss due to erosion, make animal nutrition more efficient, reduce the amount of waste, reduce the nutrient levels in waste, and to identify methodologies that will result

in higher profitability from production through market development.

5. The National Grange supports the Teff Research Bridging Ethiopia and Kansas/Nebraska concept proposal that will pursue cooperative farming and marketing practices that will raise income and pricing control of internationally cooperating smallholder farmers.
6. The National Grange urges the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), land grant universities and producer funded organizations to study the phenomenon of 'falling numbers' in wheat, a condition which causes wheat flour to not bind together as needed and causes a price reduction to the grower.
7. The National Grange supports increased research through the states in growing mushroom spawn.

Biotechnology Policy, Research and Application to Agriculture

1. The National Grange supports a federal policy to allow the use of biotechnology in agriculture. We recognize that genetic engineering of plants and animals has already increased the availability of food, and decreased the environmental impact of agriculture, resulting in safer, longer-lasting, more nutritious and better tasting food. We further support continued research on biotechnology and genetic engineering, including further scientific research into non-human cloning. We support an approval process for genetically modified plants and animals, including plants and animals intended for industrial and pharmaceutical production, which utilizes science based decision making to assure the safety of agricultural products. To that end, the National Grange philosophically supports the efforts of National Science Foundation (NSF) concerning their Plant Genome Initiative.
2. The National Grange supports legislation requiring that patented plants and livestock developed through biotechnology (gene-splitting, cloning, genetic engineering, etc.) be made available to all farmers regardless of the farm size.
3. The National Grange supports establishing a scientific advisory committee composed of representatives from the Food and Drug Administration, the United States Department of Agriculture, the National Institutes of Health, and the National Academy of Science to provide the public with information regarding biotechnological research and the effect that any new discovery may have on the envi-

ronment, food safety, or human health. The Grange urges these agencies as well as the other national farm organizations to publicize the safety of GMO's to help reduce the resistance of this technology.

4. The National Grange supports pending current congressional legislation that would allow U.S. farmers to save seed from GMO seed for their own use if they pay a tech fee per bushel that would go to the patent holder. Furthermore, the National Grange supports legislation to protect farmers from claims of having "patented DNA" in their crops if that DNA was prevalent due to "pollen drift." We also support further testing of the effects of pollen drift.
5. The National Grange supports legislation whereby the research and development costs (Bio Technology Fees) that are borne solely by the U.S. farmer; either be eliminated; or negotiated in trade agreements that would require participating countries to share these costs.

Anti-Trust Issues

1. The National Grange encourages the USDA to enforce the Packers and Stockyards Act.
2. The National Grange calls on the Federal Trade Commission to investigate the agricultural supply, agricultural transportation, grain handling, pricing policies and the potential anti-competitive marketing practices of all large corporations in the food processing and food marketing industries. We oppose the concentrated growing, marketing and distribution of agricultural production by large corporations other than farm co-operatives in the U.S. We call upon the Federal Trade Commission to investigate the pricing policy of the food industry and anti-competitive marketing practices, such as the purchasing of shelf space and product location that places new and less expensive generic brands at a marketing disadvantage. We express deep anti-trust concerns regarding the control of the U.S. seed supply to both Congress and the Department of Justice and urge both to conduct a close review of recent acquisitions and mergers.
3. The National Grange urges the Secretary of Agriculture to appoint a study committee composed of representatives from farm organizations, commodity groups, and integrators to study the terms of grower contracts to determine fairness to both parties and their acceptance by lending institutions. We further support better nationwide reporting of price and contract information, including forward con-

tract prices, and on going studies of the relationship between farm gate prices and retail prices. We urge USDA to fully fund these efforts.

4. The National Grange urges the Commodity Futures Trading Commission to address issues related to Internet and other exchange trading mechanisms of agricultural production contracts. We urge the imposition of necessary regulations on the public trading of off exchange agricultural production contracts where appropriate to protect the farmer.

USDA Responsibilities, Authorities, and Organization

1. The National Grange supports the repeal of the USDA's personnel regulations that forbid USDA employees from actively participating in the meetings and other activities of farm organizations, from holding office in farm organizations, from participating in membership recruitment campaigns, or from acting as a volunteer financial or business agent of a farm organization. This should not change or alter the USDA's other regulations concerning general employee conduct.
2. The National Grange strongly urges the USDA to devise plans to reduce the paperwork for farmers to participate in federal farm programs. We urge the USDA and its agencies to format all reports, applications etc., that are to be filed by farmers, so they may be filled out via computer media using commonly accepted word processing programs, and returned to the agency for processing.
3. The National Grange continues its long-standing support of the County and Community Committee System as the proper means of supervising and administering all farm programs. We pledge our full support for the federal government in investigating incidences of discrimination and in implementing action that will bring about changes to end racial discrimination in USDA policies. We urge stricter monitoring and enforcement of the Farm Service Agency's farm programs in order to eliminate any abuse of farm program regulations. The Grange supports funding and staffing of the Farm Services Agency at levels that are consistent with congressional mandates. In meeting these mandates, we will support co-location and cross-agency use of personnel from various agricultural agencies within counties where offices now exist.

Disaster Assistance and Risk Management

1. The National Grange strongly supports the continuation of the multi peril Federal Crop Insurance program (FCI) that provides coverage on all program, non-program and specialty crops on a nationwide basis. We support changes in the FCI program that would include multi-peril insurance for all crops. We recommend that federal crop insurance coverage be updated annually to reflect the cost of production. We further believe that area coverage should be dropped and a realistic production base should be established for each tract of land.
2. The National Grange urges the USDA Risk Management Division to take steps to accelerate the processing and payment of claims. We support using uniform standards for grading fruits for market, hail and other damage payments.
3. The USDA Risk Management Division should discontinue providing insurance coverage on a percentage basis. Coverage should be changed to insure crops on a dollar amount of loss per acre (or unit). The National Grange recommends removing any percent cut on estimated yields if weather conditions prevent timely planting. In addition, the USDA Risk Management Division should delete all of the current footnotes and should clearly state all exceptions, limitations and other provisions concerning crop coverage in the insurance policy.
4. The National Grange supports disaster aid relief that is based on individual rather than countywide losses. We support allowing all farmers in a designated disaster county to be eligible for federal or state agriculture disaster assistance programs. We urge the federal government to make available a recourse loan on a need basis for damaged commodities.
5. The National Grange supports provisions in the 2008 Farm Bill that authorize the USDA Risk Management Division to allow an option that will permit producers covered by the USDA Risk Management Division's crop insurance to obtain a replant payment if replanting is required.
6. The National Grange supports "permanent disaster" provisions in the 2008 Farm Bill that authorize the Farm Service Agency (FSA) to streamline procedures that will expedite implementation of the disaster and market loss program payments without reducing any other farm bill program spending.
7. The National Grange supports the Farm and Ranch Risk Management (FARRM) account program al-

lowing farmers and ranchers to deposit a set-aside amount of pre-tax dollars into an interest-bearing account to average income fluctuations as adopted in the 2008 Farm Bill.

8. The National Grange supports legislation or regulatory action to delay the due dates for crop insurance premiums from the current October 30 until November 30.
9. The National Grange urges federal crop insurance to cover losses caused by 'falling numbers' in wheat, a condition that causes wheat flour not to bind together.

Farm Labor

1. We recommend establishing procedures for negotiating labor disputes that will minimize disruptive labor strikes, especially during critical growing and harvesting periods. We also support a prohibition on the exclusive use of hiring halls for supplying agricultural labor and a prohibition on the use of secondary boycotts.
2. The National Grange supports legislation that will reduce federal funding of the Legal Service Corporation (LSC), a federal agency that provides legal services to the poor, including migrant farm workers. The LSC legal services should be limited to representing the poor in the courts, not an advocacy group for farm employees that investigate perceived violations of the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act.
3. The Workman's Compensation Insurance Program should be the exclusive remedy for work-related injuries under the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Workers Protection Act.

Farm Safety

1. The National Grange supports a comprehensive farm safety-training program for operation of farm machinery, use of chemicals, and animal management to be funded through the Cooperative Extension Service at land grant universities.
2. The National Grange supports legislation that would require manufacturers of tractors and self-propelled farm equipment that may be used on public highways be equipped with signal lights and reflectors that would be visible from all sides. Machinery and wagons should be equipped with reflector tape.

Miscellaneous

1. The National Grange continues to support the development of aquaculture. The National Grange supports and promotes the use of sustainable seafood that is harvested from the wild or from aquaculture in measured quantities and that uses methods ensuring the long-term health and stability of the species and the larger aquatic environment.
2. The National Grange supports legislation that would ensure a producer the “right to harvest” any legally planted crop in spite of any environmental or regulatory action arising between planting and harvest time.
3. The National Grange opposes research, production, processing and marketing of industrial hemp.
4. The National Grange supports requiring all meats in the national school lunch program to meet the new standards used by the United States Department of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Service.
5. The National Grange supports initiatives to encourage the use of farm structures as a base for communication antennas or renewable energy production.
6. The National Grange seeks a more aggressive position on the issue of irrigation water shared by the U.S. and Mexico on behalf of the U.S. interest and that the period of payback for the excess usage of irrigation water be limited to two years rather than five years.
7. The National Grange urges manufacturers to embed serial numbers into cast components of new tractors and/or hide them inside of the housings to deter theft.

National Grange Legislative Programs

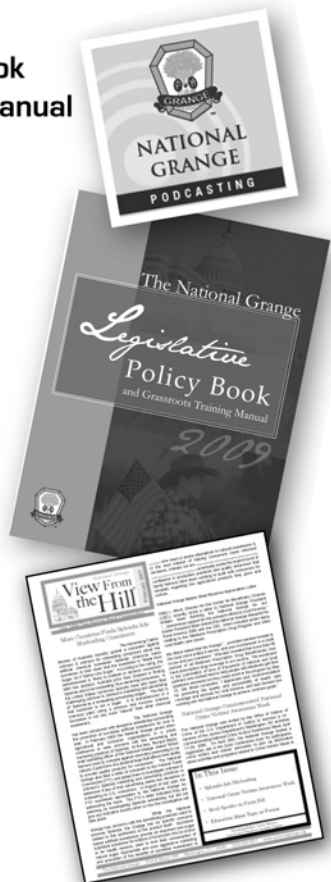
Every year the National Grange Legislative Department gives thousands of Grange members the opportunity to take direct action on timely issues affecting Rural America. In 2009, Grange programs that **“Celebrate the Responsibilities of Citizenship”** include:

2009 Legislative Policy Book and Grassroots Training Manual

- **Blueprint for Rural America** - Nine priority grassroots legislative issues for the National Grange
- **Action 2009!** - Grassroots training manual for local, county, and state Granges

National Grange Website www.nationalgrange.org

- Download archives of National Grange legislative statements, testimonies, press releases, and editorials.



Grangers Organized to Vote

- Personal e-reminders to register, file for absentee ballot, and vote in 2009
- **Rural Voters Matter** - The National Grange's award winning candidates' issues guide

National Grange Legislative News Service

- **View from the Hill** - Monthly legislative newsletter
- **Action Alerts** - Timely e-mail updates on federal legislative issues
- **State Legislative Round Up** - Legislative success stories from local, county and state Granges across the nation
- **GrangeBlog** - Weekly discussion of policy issues from a Grange point of view
- **Grange Point of View** - Monthly Podcasts on a variety of legislative issues

Citizenship & Public Affairs

Policy Statement

We, the United States of America are a privileged country where every citizen has the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. We must never forget that our freedoms exist because our forefathers fought and died for them and our troops continue to fight for freedom throughout the world. We must uphold these freedoms as we support our troops and as we celebrate Memorial Day and Veteran's day.

We have the responsibility to pass on to future generations the importance of family, God, education, work and moral treatment and respect of our fellow beings. Patriotism and participating in government affairs must be taught as well as modeled. We cannot be apathetic in our government's decisions.

The Grange must support families as they carry out these responsibilities. The Grange urges families to remember its roots in agriculture as we move into a rapidly changing world. The importance of family and community must never be lost and the Grange can help lead our families to preserve and protect the American family and the communities those families live in.

Social Welfare Programs

1. The National Grange urges enforcement of current food stamp regulations and encourages related social agencies to assist food stamp recipients with information about foods that meet their basic needs. The National Grange asks the food stamp program to allow essential non-food personal articles such as laundry soap and toilet paper to be purchased using food stamps and opposes replacing food stamps with cash distributions.
2. The National Grange supports requiring additional means to facilitate the identification of each child's father for purposes of welfare recovery.
3. The National Grange supports the continuation of the WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) Program.
4. The National Grange supports federally assisted housing programs that are designed to assist the poor, near poor, elderly, and handicapped. However, we oppose any "shared housing" concept that would force persons to share their federally assisted dwelling with other persons not of their choosing. We further oppose including 'disadvantaged per-

sons' including the mentally ill and other categories of people, in government subsidized housing for the elderly.

5. The National Grange supports legislation, which protects senior citizens and dependent adults from neglect, physical, and financial abuse.
6. The National Grange encourages states to establish a central adoption information center where information on adoptable children could be recorded.
7. The National Grange strongly urges public transportation carriers to continue Operation Home Free that gives runaway teenagers free transportation home.
8. The National Grange supports legislation in Congress that would help revitalize rural areas by establishing a Venture Capital Fund to aid businesses in rural areas.

Native Americans

1. The National Grange supports legislation to impose a statute of limitations on land claims of not more than 40 years on legal actions that are taken by Native American Nations to recover land they sold or otherwise exchanged.
2. The National Grange supports Native Americans in their reservation treaty rights to retain their mineral deposits.
3. The National Grange recommends that non-reservation lands that are purchased by an Indian tribe, or its individual members, should remain on the county's tax rolls. The National Grange also supports legislation requiring the U.S. government to make payments to local governments in lieu of current property taxes for all land purchased for Indian tribes under the Federal Tribal Acquisition Program.
4. The National Grange believes that those Native Americans who use modern technology when they hunt or fish away from established Indian reservations should be subject to the same laws as other citizens.
5. The National Grange supports the continuation of all rights and privileges enjoyed by Native Americans as U.S. citizens, including fulfilling all responsibilities associated with such citizenship.
6. The National Grange supports laws to prevent the robbery or desecration of Native American graves and burial sites and to require newly discovered hu-

man remains, grave artifacts and/or sacred items of Native American origin to be returned to the tribes or areas of their origin.

Elections

1. We believe that projections and/or final results of national elections should not be reported or broadcast by the news media until the polls have closed in all western states.
2. The National Grange urges all of its members to exercise their right to vote. We further recommend that all ballots and pertinent instructions for all elections be printed in the English language only and that proof of citizenship be required at the time of voter registration. We oppose same day registration voting laws. The National Grange urges legislation that will provide minimum standards for Presidential and Vice Presidential ballots in all states.
3. The National Grange urges the streamlining of the voting process for members of the Armed Forces during election time to make it easier for them to vote and ensure that their vote gets counted on Election Day.
4. The National Grange supports the current Electoral College system for presidential and vice-presidential elections.

Campaign Reform

1. The National Grange supports campaign reform legislation with definite guidelines regarding limits of spending. We support legislation to prohibit Political Action Committees (PACs) from making contributions to political campaigns. We support the current provisions of the Federal Election Campaign Act concerning matching funds for the Presidential election campaign. We urge State Granges to support similar election and campaign reforms in their respective states.
2. The National Grange supports legislation that would make it illegal for any candidate, holder of public office, or national party, to accept campaign gifts or contributions from foreign countries and/or citizens of foreign countries—at all levels of government.

Elected Officials

1. The Grange favors changing the term of office of Congressional Representatives from two to four

years. We also favor 12 consecutive year term limits for Senators and Representatives.

2. The National Grange supports a ban on automatic salary increases for elected officials and Members of Congress, separate from those of judges and other federal government employees. All Congressional pay raises should be considered by Congress during normal business hours and on their own merits as a separate entity to be discussed in open committee hearings and voted on by roll call with a three-fourths majority voting in the affirmative as opposed to being attached to some unrelated piece of legislation. Any approved Congressional pay increases should take effect at the next session of Congress. The National Grange further favors strengthening the law limiting the amount of gifts and money that members of Congress can accept.
3. The National Grange supports eliminating the current Congressional retirement system and mandating instead that members of Congress participate in both Social Security and the Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS). We further recommend that all laws, including employment laws, apply to Congressional members.
4. The National Grange recommends that Congress adopt contingency provisions to maintain government continuity in the event of mass casualties among the members of the U.S. House of Representatives and/or the U.S. Senate.
5. The National Grange supports legislation requiring any elected or appointed government official who is convicted of a felony to forfeit their taxpayer-funded pension.

Governmental and Legislative Affairs

1. The National Grange believes: a) that all government-mandated programs and agencies must contain “sunset” provisions, including a target termination date; b) that systematic and continuous reviews of all mandated programs be made periodically by an appropriate board of review; c) that all mandated programs must be funded and financed by the government of origin; d) and that at any point funding is not provided, the mandate will be removed.
2. The National Grange supports the present status of Washington, D.C. as both a “federal city” and the nation’s capitol, which is not affiliated with any state government and not a separate state in and of itself. We further favor restricting the Congressional

delegates from non-tax paying territories of Guam, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico to being non-voting members of Congressional committees.

3. The National Grange supports legislation that would specifically make protection of private property rights and compensating private property owners for property that is taken for public use as a part of the federal statutes. The National Grange supports strengthening the Constitution's guarantee that a person owning property has the right to control such property, including restricting trespassers, and excluding liability for injuries to a trespasser.
4. The National Grange calls for a federal Blue Ribbon Study Commission to review all regulations enacted, seek comments from the affected persons or industries, and make needed changes in the regulatory process. We urge federal agencies to make information and forms available to concerned parties about new regulations at least 90 days before the enforcement date of new rules and regulations.
5. The National Grange supports a constitutional amendment that allows the President to exercise a line item veto for budget appropriations and authorization bills.
6. The National Grange opposes all legislation limiting the individual's ability to lobby and communicate with our elected officials either directly or through organizations such as the Grange.
7. The National Grange urges the U.S. Congress to expedite funding for a resilient, mobile, wireless, data network between local and state first responders and emergency personnel with federal emergency agencies, such as FEMA, Homeland Security and the National Guard.
8. The National Grange will lobby for Congress to return the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to an independent agency free from the direction of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Government Service

1. The National Grange supports efforts to improve the collection and dissemination of accurate and timely statistical data by all federal agencies. The National Grange opposes the decision of the Department of Commerce Census Bureau to cease including farm families in the yearly survey report as a separate category.
2. The National Grange supports legislation that would

make compliance with regulatory requirements regarding equipment and services for volunteer fire departments contingent upon providing financial assistance to those volunteer fire departments.

3. The National Grange encourages the federal government to provide assistance within 24 hours following the successful request by a State Governor for a declaration of a national disaster in the United States.
4. The Grange supports legislation requiring the Federal Emergency Management Agency to document and inventory all temporary housing distributed by the agency to citizens whose residences have been destroyed by a natural disaster so these units can be refurbished and reused after they are no longer needed at the original site.

Government Spending

1. The National Grange supports a constitutional amendment requiring a balanced budget as a permanent solution to our deficit problems.
2. We support efforts at all levels of government to reduce costs and excessive paperwork, to review regulations, and to generally reduce any undue influence of government on the private sector. We favor the review of all tax supported federal incentive programs for possible reduction or elimination. We encourage all levels of government to downsize or eliminate jobs where possible.
3. The National Grange supports requiring a two-third vote in the House of Representatives to increase the statutory limit on the public debt.
4. The National Grange believes that all funds left in any federal program budget at the end of each fiscal year or any treasury surplus should be applied to reducing the national debt, provided that such amounts shall not automatically be removed from the next year's program budget.
5. The National Grange opposes the federal government's indiscriminate purchase of physical assets for the public domain. Instead, it should support the retention, protection, and development of the physical domain in the best long-term interests of our citizens. If these physical assets cannot be used, they should be sold, and the money should be used to decrease the deficit.
6. The National Grange supports the enforcement of regulations to assure that government programs abide by the bidding process, when appropriate.

Monetary Policy

1. The National Grange continues to support the Federal Reserve Board's independence from congressional and presidential management or control.
2. The National Grange supports reducing the minimum denomination of Treasury Bills and Notes.
3. The National Grange supports the continued use of paper one-dollar bills rather than replacing them with a coin. We favor the continuation of the penny.

Social Security

1. The National Grange encourages Congress to positively reform the Social Security System to ensure its future solvency. The National Grange urges the continuing investigation of all Social Security programs ensuring that only those who are eligible are receiving benefits. The National Grange supports using Social Security funds for Social Security programs only. We oppose the utilization of any funds from the Social Security Trust Fund to achieve a balanced federal budget or for any purpose other than Social Security benefits.
2. We ask Congress to proceed with caution when proposing changes to Social Security and we request that the public be provided with explicit and concise information concerning any major changes in the Social Security system. We further believe that any increase in retirement age must be on a gradual basis during a preset determined amount of time.
3. Returned and/or un-cashed Social Security checks should go back to the Social Security Trust Fund.
4. We support legislation that would increase the penalties for fraud that involves the use of another person's Social Security number.
5. The National Grange endorses the present computation formula that is used to derive Social Security benefits.
6. The National Grange urges Congress to revise Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and other programs for the elderly and handicapped so that an individual's benefits will not decrease if they decide to marry.
7. The National Grange supports legislation that would remove all Social Security "Earning Limits" for individuals.
8. The National Grange supports any and all federal bills that would eliminate the Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Provisions, therefore restoring full Social Security benefits to public

employees and surviving spouses.

9. The National Grange supports reform that would expedite the application for and processing of Social Security Disability benefits for all clients. We further urge that terminally ill persons be permitted to apply for Social Security Disability benefits upon diagnosis of the terminal illness and the application process be completed within four months of the initial application.
10. The National Grange lobbies to amend the Social Security Act to assure that a beneficiary is paid for the month of his or her death.

Veterans Affairs

1. The National Grange supports the continued operation of all Veterans' Hospitals and veterans' eligibility for medical care and benefits. We further support continuation of the current Disabled Veterans' Compensation Schedule maintaining the current benefits and the criteria for qualifying. The National Grange encourages additional federal funds to be appropriated for the Veterans' Administration for the purpose of improving the service and care of servicemen in the Veterans' Administration hospitals.
2. The National Grange supports the celebration of Veterans Day as a stand-alone holiday, and not in combination with General Election Day, or any other holiday.
3. The National Grange believes disabled veterans should remain eligible to receive all their service related retirements benefits and any other benefits to which they are entitled without offsets or reductions. The National Grange supports legislation requiring the Department of Veterans Affairs to pay the widow/widowers or estates of veterans, any retro-active disability benefits they are entitled to, even if the veteran should die before the submitted claim is processed.
4. The National Grange urges all levels of government to protect the parental rights of military personnel such as custody or visitation rights while serving in combat on active duty.
5. The National Grange supports the addition of the phrase "So help us God" to President Roosevelt's quote on the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C.
6. The National Grange supports allowing all veterans registered in the Veterans Administration health care system and residing in nursing facilities, both private and state owned, to receive their drugs through

the VA pharmacies at the patient's co-pay price prior to admission.

7. Tinnitus is a condition caused by inner ear damage from exposure to hazardous noise levels causing constant ringing or roaring in the ear. The National Grange supports legislation allowing for a separate 10% disability rating by the Veterans Administration for each ear when veterans suffer from Tinnitus as a result of military service.
8. The National Grange encourages a permanent educational assistance program to serve current and future military veterans.

Telecommunications

1. The National Grange endorses and supports the Rural Telephone Bank.
2. The National Grange supports legislation to promote an integrated telecommunications network to assure widely available, high quality telecommunications to all of the nation's users at a reasonable cost as was originally intended by the Communications Acts of 1934 and 199 We further believe that access to affordable and reliable broadband Internet service is vital to preserving the quality of life in rural America.
3. The National Grange supports a national broadband policy that will:
 4. Create a nationwide fiber optic network.
 5. Remove the regulatory uncertainty that has deterred broadband investment in rural America.
 6. Provide the incentive for private businesses, government agencies, and private citizens to invest in rural broadband deployment and stimulate broadband competition.
 7. Spark the creation of new service providers and new innovations that will assist a host of new technologies become more affordable, including cutting-edge wireless technologies that promise to deliver broadband to even the most remote parts of our country.
8. Allow Public Utility Districts (PUDs), or other public utilities to get involved in establishing the wireless communication systems.
9. The National Grange supports continued strict enforcement of the Federal Communications Commission's national "Do Not Call List". The National Grange supports expansion of the Do-Not-Call list to include computer dialed political telemarketing.
10. The National Grange supports legislation to prevent installation of the microcircuit (dubbed "clipper chip") surveillance devices.
11. The National Grange urges the Federal Communications Commission to establish pilot programs such as an easy-to-dial phone numbers for non-emergency situations.
12. The National Grange recognizes the importance of the Universal Service Fund (USF) to the American public, especially in rural communities. To this end, the Grange supports the current fair, nondiscriminatory, and competitively neutral revenue-based Universal Service Fund collection system. The National Grange opposes the Federal Communications Commission proposed connection-based "Phone Tax" as it will shift funding for the Universal Service Fund from phone companies with high volume long distance profits to rural and "necessity" phone customers who can least afford additional costs on their basic telephone service. The National Grange further urges the Universal Access charges in the 1996 Telecommunications Bill be fully implemented. The National Grange urges the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to approve any petitions by wireless telephone companies that demonstrate their ability to meet the obligations of Lifeline service, especially in rural areas, so they can serve low-income consumers with wireless Lifeline telephone service through the federal Universal Service Fund.
13. The National Grange recommends the U.S. Congress and the State Legislatures to enact laws that would require the communication industry to continue to transmit information on existing technology for a minimum of 5 years after new technology has been developed and is put into service.
14. The National Grange will work with telecommunications coalitions to encourage an increase in the number of cellular phone towers in a large amount of rural America.

Broadcasting

1. The National Grange supports the concept of public broadcasting and urges improved service for our rural communities. The National Grange supports continuing the present level of federal funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting through self-supporting sources of financing.
2. The National Grange supports the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association in its efforts to help rural areas receive satellite TV reception. The National Grange supports legislation to ensure that satellite dish owners in rural areas pay no more for their service than cable TV subscribers in the cities

do. The Grange supports regulations requiring satellite television companies to provide rural customers access to more than one predetermined set of local channels including local public access channels in the customer's region.

3. The National Grange believes that the FCC should prohibit the scrambling of the 24-hour weather information. The National Grange encourages the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to issue instructions to all radio stations to include weather alerts, covering the city and state from which they are broadcasting.
4. The National Grange supports the continuation of religious broadcasts on radio and television.
5. The National Grange urges Congress to maintain the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) as a watchdog agency to protect the public from unfair practices and monopolies. We oppose media mergers where one company can control all forms of media. We encourage the FCC to provide ample opportunity for new media companies and medium-sized media companies to be able to compete.
6. The National Grange supports elimination of the foul language, obscenities, and vulgar images used on TV, radio, or public places and fully supports the increased penalties for violations imposed by the FCC. The National Grange supports legislation to prohibit advertising the use of the "900" number during children's shows.
7. The National Grange lobbies the FCC to ban the use of emergency vehicles sirens in all radio advertisements to prevent hazards and confusion on the roadway.
8. The National Grange urges Congress and the Federal Communications Commission to require broadcast media to maintain a constant volume level during an entire broadcast, including commercials.
9. The National Grange supports the current financial assistance to support quality, commercial-free educational children's programs.
10. The National Grange supports all efforts to allow freedom of the press, and opposes any attempt to inhibit free speech.

Patriotism, Prayer, and Religious Observances

1. The National Grange strongly supports maintaining The Star Spangled Banner as our National Anthem. The National Grange supports legislation to maintain the wording of the current Pledge of Allegiance

including the words "Liberty", and "under God". The National Grange believes that the Pledge of Allegiance should be recited in every U.S. school classroom and by members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives during their opening session each day.

2. The National Grange favors making new national cemetery facilities available.
3. The National Grange supports laws prohibiting the desecration of the American Flag. Flag desecration should be classified as a federal felony and the penalty be strictly enforced with no exception. We urge Congress to pass a constitutional amendment that will ban the desecration of the American Flag. The National Grange supports legislation mandating all United States Flags to be made in the United States from domestically manufactured materials.
4. The National Grange opposes any attempts by any federal, state or local government agency to dictate membership qualifications for any social or fraternal organizations.
5. The National Grange supports adoption of a Religious Freedom Amendment to the United States Constitution. We support the right to practice the religion of our choice without fear of prejudice or persecution. Until then, the National Grange supports an interpretation of the U.S. Constitution, which allows schools, or any other governmental authority, to permit religious prayer, such as invocations and benedictions, as part of any function, especially at graduation ceremonies. The National Grange further supports the right of children to voluntarily participate in prayer in public schools. We support the words "In God We Trust" remaining on our currency and as our national motto. The National Grange supports all public Christmas functions, displays, and/or songs. We believe that all crosses on city emblems or municipal property should remain intact. We further do not believe that courts of law should have final jurisdiction to consider lawsuits to remove religious displays from city or municipal property. Instead, the majority of the voters in that jurisdiction should determine the final decision.

Miscellaneous

1. The National Grange supports programs that strengthen families and advocates educational programs that emphasize the importance of families and the prevention of family dysfunction. The consequences of policies and laws should be carefully examined as to

their impact on the family unit.

2. The National Grange supports all rights that are granted in the United States Constitution or Bill of Rights and urges Congress not to consider legislation eliminating or repealing these rights.
3. The National Grange supports the definition of marriage to be the union of one man and one woman, and supports the necessary national laws to withhold any legal recognition from same sex marriages.
4. The National Grange opposes the creation of a National Identification Card.
5. The National Grange favors a Constitutional amendment to make English the official national language. The National Grange supports legislation to require
6. that English be used on all forms through out the United States.
6. The National Grange favors the establishment of a new branch of the Smithsonian dedicated to the nation's food and farm heritage.
7. The Grange supports the establishment of a national tag, collar, or coat identifying a service animal as defined by the American Disability Act (ADA).
8. The National Grange supports a National Weather Service Doppler Station along the coastal area of Washington State allowing weather forecasters the ability to look at weather conditions through the Olympic Mountains and on the coast more accurately.

Learn more

about your NATIONAL GRANGE BUILDING

A DVD celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the National Grange Building is available from the National Grange. To request your free copy, please contact Samantha Johnson at 888-447-2643 ext. 109 or sjohnson@nationalgrange.org.



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Conservation & Natural Resources

Policy Statement

The National Grange recognizes that the protection of the environment and the conservation of our natural resources are vital national priorities if our country is to remain a pleasant, healthful, and profitable place to live. However, the zealous pursuit of unrealistic and unnecessary environmental and conservation goals can cause not only economic damage to industries that are important to our country, they can also distort the important role that private property rights play in maintaining our liberty. We do not believe that Americans must sacrifice their property or surrender their constitutional rights in order to preserve our environment. Property rights should incorporate greater expectations of fairness and due process for individuals within the context of our relationship with government and society.

We insist that the protection for private property ownership derived from the U.S. Constitution, state constitutions, and the common law be vigorously protected. We believe in limiting the role of the federal government in setting national land use goals and priorities to ensure the preservation of farmland for agricultural purposes. Adequate and full compensation should be paid in all cases of the taking of private property by the government or under the color of government authority, including, but not limited to, government grazing permits, water easements and areas designated as critical habitat for endangered species.

We need to increase our effort to be a source of outreach, leadership, and education by encouraging the support of U.S. agriculture as part of the solution to the energy crisis.

We need to encourage further protection and support increased efforts to educate the public, and, in particular, children in school, about the continued importance of the right to own property and the responsibility to protect our most vital resource — America's farmland.

We believe the continued increase in the price of fuels has had an injurious effect on the welfare of the family farm and rural America. Because our dependency on foreign oil presents a fragile, ever-changing dilemma, the increased use of alternative fuels would mean less dependency on foreign oil and increased markets for agricultural crops. There are ways for agricultural commodities to be processed to blend with petroleum to provide cleaner and less expensive fuel. The economic and environmental benefits to society of ethanol and agricul-

tural oil based fuels are being proven. We propose the following action plan to address this crisis:

Support legislation to enact tax incentives to manufacturers of blended fuels to expand and develop more refineries for the use of farm commodities.

Accelerate any necessary funding for research and development of ample and affordable alternative fuels, with incentives being provided to companies that convert their equipment to the use of blended fuels that will help reduce our dependency on imported petroleum and reduce air pollution.

Work vigorously with state and national legislators to advocate on behalf of consumers and to take any steps necessary to maintain reasonable petroleum prices and curb increasing economic inflation.

The National Grange encourages wider use of wind energy with governmental subsidy support in appropriate areas suited to sustaining wind power development. The equipment used in production of wind power must be inspected by local utility companies under the guidelines of state Public Utility Commissions or the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and when decommissioned, the wind power generation equipment must be removed and the landscape returned to its natural condition.

The Grange, at all levels, also demands responsible stewardship of our natural resources from all who own or use them. Responsible stewardship recognizes a balance between use and preservation. The National Grange supports coordination among federal, state, and local governments when developing land use management plans for federal lands. In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the customs, culture and economic stability of the local area must be preserved.

The Grange recognizes the importance of and protection of all watersheds. We also recognize that watersheds do not adhere to boundaries of private and public lands. The Grange opposes the "locking up" of watersheds or portions thereof for a single use by any person or agency, especially public lands that have historically been utilized in the growing and harvesting of timber, forage, and other renewable resources.

The National Grange supports respective regional representation in the appointment of qualified individuals to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

The 1973 Endangered Species Act is a major impediment to sound environmental and natural resource management. The National Grange must continue to work

closely with the National Endangered Species Act Reform Coalition to obtain final passage of Endangered Species Act reform.

We must unite our message of all Americans sharing equitably in the cost of species conservation. Cooperative efforts with states and local governments, businesses and individual landowners must be encouraged and current disincentives in the law must be removed. The National Grange will work to ensure that the cost of preserving species not be allowed to fall unfairly on individuals and communities.

Water Projects

1. The National Grange recommends that federal, state, and local governments work closely with each other and local landowners in the development and construction of watershed projects, dams, and reservoirs for multiple uses, such as flood control, storing and releasing surplus flood water, replenishing underground water, hydroelectric power generation, irrigation, industrial and municipal use, and recreation. Once a project has been authorized, we believe that it should be constructed, even if a moratorium has later been imposed. We urge both Congress and the President to make the necessary funds available in order to complete all planned and feasible federal water development projects and provide cost share assistance for the rehabilitation of dams and other flood control structures that were previously constructed with federal assistance. The National Grange supports efforts to provide state and federal funds to pay the recreational share of impoundment facilities on small water development projects.
2. The National Grange believes that the federal government should compensate any loss or diminution of water rights resulting from the exercise of a federally reserved right.
3. The National Grange supports legislation to consolidate the activities of the Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior to eliminate duplication.
4. The National Grange supports local control over state water projects.
5. The National Grange supports a national water policy requiring all alternate sources of water, including full development of desalination plants for urban uses, must be considered before approval of any water diversion project.
6. The National Grange supports the use of existing multi-purpose dams, creating possible draw downs or transfers of water from productive agricultural lands to waters that could possibly assist in flushing young salmon to the ocean, and urge the development of alternative methods of enhancing the fish population including salmon.
7. The National Grange requests the U.S. Corps of Engineers and all environmental agencies to facilitate restorative dredging of rivers prone to flooding.
8. The National Grange supports the accurate monitoring of water drawn from the Great Lakes Water Basin by industrial and agricultural entities and we believe that agricultural water usage should be exempt from any permits and/or fees resulting from the monitoring of the Great Lakes.

Irrigation and Reclamation Act Rules and Regulations

1. The National Grange supports irrigation rules and regulations that prohibit abuse of the Reclamation Reform Act and assure the fullest measure of benefits from federal irrigation projects for family farmers. The National Grange supports the continued development and widespread utilization of more efficient irrigation systems in addition to legislation outlawing the practice of using trusts, partnerships, corporations, and estates to circumvent the 960-acre irrigation subsidy qualification that favors small farmers.
2. The National Grange supports a ranking system where the highest priority for utilization of water on agricultural lands should focus on maintaining our ability to produce food with a limitation to the actual agricultural production of crops (food, feed, and fiber), livestock, poultry, aquaculture products and processing animals and crops for food purposes. The non-producer sale of ornamental plants, fertilization and watering of commercial and private lawns should have lower priority.

Klamath Basin Aid

1. The National Grange will actively work to reverse the actions of the Ninth Circuit Court and permanently restore the flow of life-giving and life-sustaining water from Klamath Lake to the farmers and farm communities served by the irrigation systems.
2. The National Grange urges Congress to investigate the closure of irrigation facilities for the benefit of

suckerfish in the Klamath Falls Basin and determine the consequences of the loss of irrigation water in the Klamath Falls Basin in Oregon and California.

State Authority for Water Rights

1. The National Grange vigorously supports state control of water rights. We oppose any federal plan that infringes on states' water rights. In particular, any water resource planning that is conducted by state or federal agencies must respect both the states' sovereignties and the agricultural sector in establishing priorities for water allocations. The National Grange firmly opposes the inter-basin transfer of water that would diminish the flow of water into downstream states unless such transfer is in accordance with an approved river basin compact.
2. The National Grange supports maintaining minimum water levels along the Great Lakes in order to continue the current amounts of commerce, hydroelectric production and tourism. We support only allowing those states and provinces that belong to the International Joint Commission on the Great Lakes to remove and use of the waters of the Great Lakes.
3. The National Grange supports a nationwide grassroots effort to stop federal government agencies' taking of individual water and water rights.

Clean Water

1. The National Grange supports federal clean water laws and regulations that are based upon realistic and obtainable goals and are enforced uniformly between the states. We regard a zero pollution standard as being totally unrealistic and unobtainable.
2. The National Grange recommends that adequate state and federal funds be provided for any soil or water conservation program required by the Clean Water Act, including at least 75% of the federal cost share on agricultural best management practices for non-point source pollution abatement administered through local conservation districts. The National Grange urges Congress and the President to clarify Clean Water Act Section 303 (d) so that the Total Maximum Daily Load will be reasonable and attainable without extreme hardships placed on agriculture and other industries.
3. The National Grange supports legislation to provide funds to study water quality regarding groundwater

contamination. We further support the creation of groundwater protection and management plans that will limit the amount of toxic chemicals in groundwater realizing that a policy of no degradation is unobtainable. We support local control of groundwater management and management plans and support the enforcement of penalties to cities and towns that improperly dump waste in our streams and waterways. Also, the National Grange supports government agencies at all levels to develop and institute an emergency program for the transportation, storage, delivery and restoration of groundwater resources.

4. The National Grange supports an organized effort to prevent reauthorization of the Clean Water Act that will exclude provisions requiring a state to designate any water with a population of a threatened or endangered species as an Outstanding Resource Water.
5. The National Grange urges the passage of federal legislation that would amend the regulations of the Clean Water Act, to limit the powers of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Environmental Protection Agency over inland waters and wetland, thus preserving States and individuals rights. The National Grange supports keeping the word "navigable waters" in the Clean Water Act.
6. The National Grange urges the U.S. Government to engage in diplomatic negotiations on the environmental impacts that contribute to air and water pollution before permitting the transfer of electricity across the borders into the United States.

Wetlands

1. The National Grange supports legislation to improve the wetlands regulatory programs by federal, state or local governments to streamline the permitting process; delineate wetlands by categories based on readily identifiable natural characteristics, environmental value, function, and abundance; refine the wetland mitigation system; improve the system of compensation for private landowners; and increase the role of the states in the wetland permitting process. We further support exempting wetland designations from areas that are artificially created by irrigation, stock water ponds, fire protection ponds or have been cropped for one of the last five years.
2. The National Grange requests Congress to put a moratorium on the funding and design of new wetlands to aid in the control of mosquitoes carrying the West Nile virus.

Soil Conservation and Non-Point Source Pollution

1. The National Grange supports voluntary programs to control specific known point sources of pollution, as well as non-point sources of agricultural pollution. We support the concept of conservation tillage practices and other types of sediment control. We encourage broad participation in the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act studies in order to assure that quality, locally designed and controlled conservation programs are developed in order to meet the needs of family farmers. We specifically support the continuation of cost sharing programs to establish grass strips along the boundaries of cropland, fields and waterways to control soil erosion and runoff. We also support programs offering at least 50 percent cost share assistance to correct agricultural pollution and free technical assistance prior to non-income producing practices that require major expenditures.
2. The National Grange supports the privately financed National Endowment for Soil and Water Conservation, the creation of an American Conservation Corps as well as vocational programs to educate and train youths to help in the conservation of our woodlands and other natural resources, using presently established facilities. We believe that all citizens should share in soil conservation costs through tax dollars that support state and federal programs focusing on technical assistance, research, education, loans and cost sharing programs.
3. The USDA should redefine water conservation in the national soil and water conservation programs to include both irrigation and drainage.
4. The National Grange supports locally developed storm water management programs administered through local conservation districts.
2. The National Grange supports a program to educate consumers on the proper handling and disposal of hazardous household waste, such as energy saver light bulbs and any other items containing Mercury.
3. The National Grange supports levying a fine against any company that is found to be responsible for an oil spill that is equal to the costs that the government incurs in cleaning up the oil spill, including the wages of the government and military personnel, and should not be deductible from federal, state or local corporate income taxes.
4. The National Grange supports realistic insurance coverage plans being made available by the federal government at a reasonable cost for existing and future storage tanks and other causes of toxic and hazardous waste pollution.
5. The National Grange supports legislation that would require urban sewer sludge disposal to be strictly regulated, i.e. knifing or ground injection as used in agriculture. We only support the burning if such burning meets EPA air quality standards.
6. The National Grange supports federal legislation prohibiting the dumping of waste material or raw sewage from foreign countries in landfills located in the United States.
7. The National Grange requests the Federal Trade Commission to place a warning label on CCA copper pressure treated wood and to continue research on non-toxic materials in preparing wood for building materials.
8. The National Grange supports public education of the dangers of sodium azide and legislation to set guidelines for the proper storage or disposal of all unused airbags.
9. The National Grange supports agricultural exemptions from the Environmental Protection Agency's Spill Prevention Containment and Control ruling.

Toxic and Hazardous Wastes

1. We urge the Environmental Protection Agency to work in conjunction with local government entities to determine when and if Superfund cleanup is necessary in any specified parcel of land or body of water. Funding should come from an assessment on companies that produce such wastes and from fines resulting from non-compliance. We further support efforts to overhaul the Superfund program so it will expedite clean-ups and prioritize the sites deemed necessary for clean up.

Mining

1. The National Grange urges federal agencies to work with the states to develop surface mining guidelines giving the states the flexibility to control and supervise the surface mining of coal, gravel, and similar materials. To ensure against the destruction of surface mined areas, a performance and a completion bond should be required of the mining companies that would assure the completion of reclamation plans as they are developed. Such plans should require the return of the land

where strip mine operations occur to a reasonable topography and fertility level and should be enforced by law. The deposits that are required under Section 402(a) of the Surface Mine Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 should be returned to the states for strip mine reclamation. The National Grange further supports any regulation or law that holds the coal company liable for subsidence damage to structures caused by underground mining.

2. The National Grange supports changes in the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act that recognize the special conditions of small independent mine operations and provides for greater forbearance in correcting violations.
3. The National Grange supports exempting counties from Federal Mining Standards as pertaining to road building materials and maintenance.

Bottle Bills and Recycling

1. The National Grange supports legislation that would require a deposit on non-biodegradable beverage containers and urges manufacturers to use recycled materials whenever feasible.
2. The National Grange supports requiring all government agencies initiate a recycling program for paper, metal, glass, etc. Government agencies should also be required to use recycled paper whenever feasible.
3. The National Grange supports legislation encouraging an economical, biodegradable, and resource-efficient approach to product packaging. We support the use of biodegradable plastic containers, packing materials that are made of cornstarch and petroleum and urge all manufacturers to use as little packaging material as possible while still retaining the quality and safety of their products.
4. The National Grange supports restricting the disposal of tires in landfills in addition to supporting all efforts to recycle all used tires. We also urge the U.S. Department of Transportation to utilize recycled materials containing polymers and other man-made materials to build and repair roads.
5. The National Grange supports legislation banning the use of Bisphenol A (BPA) in all plastics. In the meantime, manufacturers should be required to label their products BPA free, if appropriate, and more efforts should be made to educate consumers on the risk factors of BPA and the code number system on plastic containers.

Energy Conservation

1. The National Grange supports energy conservation in agriculture, industry, commerce and the home by the use of tax credits and incentives.
2. The National Grange supports economic assistance to low-income persons and those who are on small, fixed incomes to assist them in paying for the high cost of energy.
3. The National Grange supports all oil and gas price decontrol as a positive step in reducing our need for foreign oil and gas. The National Grange believes that all companies, including farm cooperatives, should be allowed to sell gasoline at both the wholesale and retail levels without divesting. However, we also support standby petroleum allocation measures that would ensure a timely and reasonably priced supply of petroleum products to agricultural producers, transporters, processors, farm cooperatives, and independent refiners in the event of a nationwide or regional shortage.
4. The National Grange supports the following practices to guard against supply uncertainty and unreasonable high prices: 1) retain one billion barrels of U.S. oil reserve while supplies are adequate; and 2) encourage greater use of natural resources, especially those that are renewable and non-polluting. The National Grange only supports further releases from the U.S. Strategic Oil Reserves in the event of war or interruption of delivery of foreign supplies of petroleum into the U.S.
5. The National Grange supports establishing realistic new fuel economy standards. We support legislation to direct the U.S. Secretary of Transportation to set fuel economy standards at their maximum feasible level, taking into account technical feasibility, safety, and the economic impact to the public. The National Grange urges increased research and development of more fuel efficient, internal combustion engines. We further favor legislation that would prohibit any person or corporation from purchasing a patent with the intent of hindering any inventions that would conserve gasoline and other fuels.

Energy Development

1. The National Grange urges the repeal of laws and regulations that have discouraged United States' energy production by private enterprise. We support a national energy policy that will encourage the development of all forms of domestic energy, traditional

and alternative, including solar, wind, geothermal, ethanol, surf/tidal, shale, tar sands, hydroelectric, agricultural products, wastes, peat, wood, coal, coal gasification, oil, natural gas, nuclear, hydrogen, biodiesel and methanol in an environmentally sound manner without exploiting our parks and wildernesses in order to reduce our dependence on foreign oil. The National Grange supports new energy technologies only after they have been proven feasible and we support the continuation of successful energy technologies.

2. The National Grange favors the complete utilization of petroleum and the other mineral resources, including the exploration and production of oil reserves on the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and from any outer continental shelf lease sales in accordance with the terms of an environmentally sound development plan.
3. The National Grange supports legislation requiring the nation's motor fuels to contain a renewable component (Biodiesel and/or Ethanol). We support increased development and use of ethanol and ethyl tertiary butyl ether (ETBE) in gasoline blends with adequate income tax incentives to make the production and use of ethanol and ETBE economically feasible. We further support the goal of at least a 10% blend of ethanol to be used in at least 50% of all gasoline sold for motor fuel to be made available in all states.
4. The National Grange supports regulated oil and gas production in the United States that protects landowners and allows adequate compensation while allowing production to continue.
5. The National Grange supports an examination and reform of environmental laws so that new oil refineries can be built to supply our fuel needs. New oil refineries should be built, if feasible, in areas other than the Gulf Coast. We further support a study of the need for different mandated formulations for gasoline, and if possible, a reduction in the number of gasoline blends to make it easier and less expensive to refine and transport the finished product.
6. The National Grange endorses the goal of generating at least 25% of domestic energy needs from domestic renewable resources while continuing to produce safe, abundant and affordable food, feed, and fiber by January 1, 202
7. The National Grange urges the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, U. S. Coast Guard, and any other pertinent federal agencies to develop and strengthen regulations regarding the siting of liquefied natural gas terminals, and consideration should

be given to the overall economic impact on the region before any site is approved.

Rural Electric Cooperatives, Public Power and Rural Electricity Consumers

1. The National Grange supports the continued application of the existing preference concept of the Federal Power Act being granted to public power utilities in the licensing and re-licensing of federal hydroelectric facilities. We further support granting co-preference in the licensing and re-licensing of federal hydroelectric facilities to rural electric cooperatives.
2. In order to assure adequate electric and telephone service to rural areas, the National Grange actively supports continuation and expansion of the existing USDA Rural Utility Service low interest revolving loan fund to assure the financial stability of rural electric and telephone cooperatives.
3. The National Grange supports continuing electric service to urban areas that are within a rural electric cooperative's service area. However, rural electric cooperatives that provide electric service to predominantly rural areas should continue to have first priority for low interest federal financing. In addition, we urge the electricity industry to charge rates for farmers and small businessmen that are competitive with their large wholesale customers.
4. The National Grange supports legislation to establish solid waste-to-energy plants that will produce power in an environmentally safe manner that can be accessed by public utility districts, rural electric cooperatives, and municipal utilities.
5. We support maintaining the current structure of rural electric systems without forced deregulation of publicly owned plants or any other action that would be detrimental to rural electric consumers. The National Grange supports reform to the Public Utilities Regulatory Policies Act, so that non-utility generating stations operate to sell their output to competitive market rates and eliminate the oppressive rates being passed on to the consumer.
6. The National Grange supports requirements for increased accountability and responsibility on the part of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and power companies in the operation of any nuclear power plant. The National Grange supports the careful selection by the Department of Energy of sites for the disposal of low-level nuclear wastes, excluding

prime agricultural, forest, and parkland. We urge that the public be involved in the decision to conduct additional research on the long-term consequences to the environment of the disposal of nuclear wastes. The National Grange further urges the Department of Energy to conduct an extensive educational program to inform citizens of the safeguards and hazards that are involved in the disposal of these wastes.

7. The National Grange opposes the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's imposition of a Regional Transmission Organization (RTO) and Standard Market Design (SMD) on the Northwest Region of the U.S. We support the present cost-based rate system, as determined in the 1937 Congressional Bonneville Power Administration repayment agreement, requiring Bonneville Power Administration to adopt for pricing electricity, instead of a market based repayment pricing system. We support the present federal Power Marketing Administrations. We further recommend the establishment of Power Marketing Administrations in areas of the United States where desired and feasible. We vigorously oppose selling the Western Area Power Administration and Bonneville Power Administration to private power companies. The National Grange also supports the allowance of the Northwest Region to develop an alternate approach to strengthening the transmission system.

Public Lands Management Practices

1. The National Grange believes that multiple use of non-reserved land should be the cornerstone of the United States' public land policy in order to achieve the following objectives: energy exploration and development; sustained yield management for food and forest production; recreational uses for all citizens; responsible wildlife management; soil conservation and watershed protection. Since it is important for rural economies to keep public land in food and fiber production, we support any regulation pertaining to water rights, lease improvements and contamination remediation that allows for agricultural production.
2. The National Grange supports the maintenance of appropriate conservation practices on all public lands leased to private individuals yet will continue to support placing a moratorium on the acquisition of private land by the U.S. Forest Service. The National Grange recommends that a user fee be implemented for all commercial and recreational use of federal land requiring a permit.

3. The National Grange urges federal agencies to intensify prescribed burning on national public lands as a forest management technique. We support adoption of forest management programs in national parks that specifically exclude the use of natural uncontrolled forest fires, such as those that are caused by lightning, as a forest management technique. All local, state and federal agencies should promptly conduct an economic impact study once a forest fire is declared controlled and move expeditiously to reforest and restore the catastrophically burned landscapes. We support the efforts of "Communities for Healthy Forests" in mandating immediate restorative action. We further support federal legislation to accelerate the salvage harvest of dead and dying timber on public lands while that timber still has a commercial economic value.
4. The National Grange supports appropriations for the U.S. Forest Service and the National Park Service to adequately carry out an expanded silviculture program, wildlife management, water and soil protection, weed control, recreational needs, protection of natural, historic and cultural resources, to develop additional forest campgrounds and increase the available spaces in existing campgrounds to keep them open year round where economically feasible. We also urge that U.S. Forest Service campground fees be raised to more nearly cover the costs of operating these campgrounds.
5. The National Grange favors the increased planting of lumber-producing trees on both national and state forest lands, including increased funding for federal and state tree nurseries, to produce additional seedlings for lumber. We urge the U.S. Forest Service to permit selected timber stands to reach old growth and be harvested on a sustained yield basis. Furthermore, we support prohibiting states from exercising authority to restrict the sale or export of logs that are harvested from state-owned land.
6. The National Grange recognizes the states' rights to own and/or manage Bureau of Land Management (BLM) unreserved lands, not including national forest lands, Revenues that are now received by counties should be protected when control of any federal land is assigned to state governments.
7. The National Grange supports legislation to require federal and state governments to pay a proportionate share of monies, in lieu of taxes, to those counties, cities, and communities that provide public services to the parks and recreational areas within their boundaries in addition to supporting federal legislation allowing national parks to keep a major portion

of entrance fees to be used for the development and maintenance of recreational facilities.

8. The National Grange calls on federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to investigate and prosecute incidents of tree and trail spiking and the destruction of logging equipment on federal and state lands.
9. The National Grange supports amending the National Antiquities Act to include public comment.
10. The National Grange encourages the U.S. Forest Service to amend the National Forest plan to remove the 21-inch Diameter at Breast Height rule (DBH) for any National Forest.
11. The National Grange supports that any responding agency to a fire, whether it is local, state or federal, be required to notify adjacent landowners and other authorities with jurisdiction, for their own safety, of all wild and grass fires in the area.
12. The National Grange supports the use of State and/or Federal funds for the mitigation of loss of land value due to state and federal logging restrictions on riparian land be available only to small landowners and not be available to large corporations, landowners, or trusts.
13. The National Grange supports keeping the Mt. St. Helens a National Monument rather than a National Park.

Federal Grazing

1. The National Grange supports basing all decisions on federal grazing regulations, including grazing fee pricing formulas, upon solid economic principles, current livestock market prices, and good conservation practices. We favor legislation that would further limit any overall reduction in grazing to 10 percent or less on any given allotment except in the case of emergencies such as drought. We strongly believe that federal grazing permittees should be consulted as grazing plans are developed.
2. The National Grange strongly supports considering the economic impact that restrictions on grazing in riparian areas (areas between the stream banks) may have on farmers before legislation is passed.
3. The National Grange encourages the Bureau of Land Management and National Forest Service to carry out an aggressive program to fill all grazing allotments on Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service lands. However we support restricting the selling of federal grazing permits to anyone other than someone using the permit for grazing purposes.

Land Withdrawals and Wilderness

1. The National Grange supports releasing all public lands not currently designated as wilderness or wilderness study areas to multiple uses. The establishment of any additional national forest wilderness preserves or any large-scale government land acquisition should be prohibited. All land that is capable of producing commercial timber, farm and grazing lands or commercially-valuable minerals should be prohibited from inclusion into any established park or wilderness area that would erode a county's tax base. The National Grange recommends that in national recreational areas classified other than primitive, the broadest possible range of activities compatible with a forested area be permitted, subject to user fees. The National Grange supports legislation to significantly restrict acreage set aside for parks, wilderness, and wildlife preserves in Alaska in addition to providing access through federal lands.
2. The National Grange supports regulations governing the management of federal wilderness areas should allow for controlled access roads for emergency use as well as the salvage of timber, using modern harvesting techniques where natural disasters such as blow-downs or insect infestations have occurred. We oppose the destruction or obliteration of any Forest Service roads and further oppose designating any roadless areas of the National Forest System as permanently off limits to logging, mining or other development.
3. The National Grange believes any extension of the federal Wild and Scenic River System should not include private property. Should there be a proposed change in the designation of rivers and streams, we favor a vote by the citizens of the jurisdiction.
4. The National Grange supports the property rights of all farmers and ranchers and demands that the owner's consent be given before any action is taken by the Federal Government to acquire private land.
5. The National Grange supports legislation directing mitigation of identified losses of public and private lands from the state tax base due to federal acquisition through transfer of an equivalent acreage from federal land to public or private ownership, or by providing an annual payment-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILT), based on an independent economic impact analysis to be adjusted annually for inflation.
6. The National Grange supports maintaining the management of all federal facilities, like the National

Bison Range, by the United States federal government and not by any other sovereign nation or international entity.

Wildlife Management

1. The National Grange encourages Congress to amend the Endangered Species Act (ESA) to restore proper perspective by requiring public hearings and economic impact statements on the impacts to the affected areas before a species may be listed. We support changes to the ESA to require that only a pure biological and numerical definition of an endangered species be used without being based on sub species, distinct populations, or hybridization. We believe that only those species actually threatened with extinction should be listed in the ESA, taking into consideration total populations, available habitats, and recovery areas on the North American continent. We further support a review of the ESA with the following guidelines: focus on keystone species (organisms critical to the stable functions of entire habitats and ecosystems), not minor or reduced species; rely on public lands for preservation; encourage voluntary protection by individuals and corporations; curtail taking of private lands for ESA; balance human costs with ecological benefits; compensation for private property owners for loss of usage of their property due to the ESA. The National Grange supports legislation legally allowing people to defend themselves or their property from an attack by any animal listed as an endangered species without concern of retribution from government authorities.
2. The National Grange supports legislative and regulatory measures to prohibit further implementation of any Wolf Recovery Plan. We further support the passage of legislation to outlaw the propagation of wolves or wolf hybrids.
3. The National Grange believes it is the responsibility of the federal government to control the expanding populations of legally protected plants and animals where those plants or animals pose a threat to human life or health, or where those plants or animals pose a threat to established economic activity. We encourage state and federal wildlife conservation agencies to assist farmers in all cases of crop and property damage by wild game.
4. The National Grange is opposed to any Grizzly Bear recovery plan. We support legislation requiring government agencies to notify property owners when they relocate park bears or other potentially danger-

ous animals. The property owners to be notified are those who are within the normal range of the animals that are being released.

5. The National Grange strongly supports the continuation of licensed hunting and trapping of game animals, waterfowl, and game birds. However, we favor the levying of stiff penalties for poaching of wildlife. We further support the continued usage of steel jaw traps.
6. The National Grange believes that wildlife management areas should not be used for recreation or any other development that diminishes the value of the lands for wildlife management purposes.
7. The National Grange supports legislation to expand the hunting season of Canadian and snow geese from November 1st - April 1st. We also support increasing the daily bag limit for Canadian and Snow geese.
8. The National Grange supports any prairie dog management plan that allows people to control the prairie dog population through shooting and toxicants, without the need for a special license.
9. The National Grange opposes the listing of the eastern oyster on the endangered species list.

Preservation of Fishing Resources

1. The National Grange urges the Pacific Marine Fisheries Commission to support the designation of only those marine sanctuaries that guarantee fishery usage and recognize the fishery management authority of the current sanctuary boundaries.
2. The National Grange supports legislation to reauthorize the Magnuson Fisheries Conservation Management Act. We urge all appropriate federal agencies to work closely with all state wildlife agencies to maintain sustained fishing yields by regulating sport and subsistence fisheries in order to allow for the adequate recovery of fish and aquatic species into many areas where they have declined. We support the United States working with all countries to regulate commercial fishing to allow for the adequate return of fish into many areas where fish yields have declined. We further support an extension of the U.S. territorial sea to not less than 50 miles where foreign commercial fishing may not be performed to aid in salmon recovery.
3. The National Grange favors all reasonable measures to save the Pacific Salmon in the Columbia and Snake Rivers as long as the first priorities for these river systems is power generation, water use,

and navigation. We support securing the passage of a treaty between Canada and the United States to govern the operation of the salmon industries in each respective nation. We support uniform regulation of all net fishing in the Columbia River, Puget Sound, and the Pacific Ocean before drastic economic measures to reestablish wild runs of Pacific Salmon are enacted. The National Grange recommends that fish ladders be included in the planning of any future dam construction on streams or rivers where fish migration may be affected. We favor the transport of juvenile fish, the hatchery propagation of salmon stocks, flow control, and control of the salmon harvest until a final Pacific Salmon recovery plan is in place. We support the establishment of a program to audit the harvest of salmon on the lower Columbia River. We further believe that all salmon fishing on the Columbia and Snake Rivers should be restricted to hook and line methods only. We recommend to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service that spawned out salmon carcasses be planted near remote site incubators for smolt releases as a food source for the young fish.

4. The National Grange urges the federal government to continue funding the National Marine Fisheries Service at the current levels to enable them to continue the biological studies that will lead to the elimination of drift net fishing by all nations.
5. The National Grange supports adequate funding of the Marine Mammal Protection Act for use by the various states in developing appropriate marine mammal management plans and policies. In addition, we urge Congress to exclude Harbor Seals and California Sea Lions from the Marine Mammal Protection Act and place them under the control and protection of the states, including a controlled harvest season for Harbor Seals and California Sea Lions, until the yearly run of the Pacific Salmon increases to the point where the salmon will no longer be considered for protection under the Endangered Species Act. We further support efforts to utilize harvested Harbor Seal and California Sea Lion carcasses to avoid waste.
6. The National Grange supports the ongoing research of *Pfisteria* and the effects it has on major waterways.
7. The National Grange favors the regulated harvesting of fresh water clams and mussels.
8. We support legislation requiring all shipping lines to change their ballast water in the open ocean to curtail the further introduction of foreign species, such as the Zebra Mussel, into our domestic waterways.

9. The National Grange supports legislative and regulatory measures to prohibit the National Marine Fisheries Service from taking control of private lands, breaching of dams, and killing of hatchery salmon under the authority of its 4 (d) Rules. The National Grange urges Congress to order the National Marine Fisheries Service to reconsider the proposed setbacks on private property along all bodies of water or to pay for the taking of the property. We urge Congress to intervene and formulate a true scientific basis for establishment of buffers/setbacks and buffer/setback restrictions along all bodies of water. We encourage the National Marine Fisheries Service do more to start identifying corrective measures beyond licensing and regulation to save the fish off our nation's coasts that include avoiding by catch, single-species management, ocean sanctuaries, eco-friendly gear, and consumer alertness. We further believe that alternative sources of fish production i.e. aquaculture, should be encouraged where appropriate.

Private Timber Land Management

1. The National Grange supports the voluntary use of good conservation practices and sustained yield management practices on private forestlands.
2. The National Grange believes that in return for public benefits resulting from improved forest management on individually owned forest lands, a portion of the expenses that are involved in management should be borne by the public through assistance programs and cost-sharing incentive payments. Any forest management assistance programs should recognize the multiple use aspects of private forest lands, including timber production, watershed protection, wildlife habitat, recreation, and scenic values.
3. The National Grange supports efforts to establish forests or pastures on appropriate marginal farmland.
4. The National Grange requests Congress to control arbitrary appeals of U.S. Forest Service timber sales assessing penalties to the appellant to cover the costs of failed appeals.
5. The National Grange supports legislation to require each appeal of timber sale to post a security bond.
6. National Grange advocates harvesting fire-ravaged timber from fire recovery zones before the value of the timber is lost.

Environmental Regulations and Controls

1. The National Grange supports requiring instigators of court actions brought against properly approved and financed federal, state, or municipal construction projects to post an adequate bond with the court that is sufficient to pay all costs that are incurred due to the delay caused by such action if the action fails.
2. The National Grange seeks legislation to clarify that national environmental impact statements must equitably weigh economic, social, and environmental impacts to reduce the delay these statements impose on many worthwhile and needed projects. Such studies should include the full economic impact on the local, state or national economy.
3. The National Grange supports the EPA's standards on the use of dangerous trace metals. We further support continued EPA programs to monitor the industrial and farm uses of materials that contain dangerous trace metals.
4. The National Grange supports new "Right to Farm" laws at the local, state and federal levels to further protect them against charges of civil or criminal violation of environmental regulations when those charges apply to normal activities that are essential to a farm operation.
5. The National Grange urges Congress to keep the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) at its current status as an independent federal agency, and not elevate the agency to a Cabinet level.
6. The National Grange urges Congress to reduce the EPA to a sub-cabinet level agency.

Private Land Use, Planning, Zoning, Farmland Protection, and Eminent Domain

1. The National Grange urges the USDA, in conjunction with land grant universities, to provide assistance to local governments and citizen groups in educating the public on the importance of keeping land in agricultural production and in developing farmland retention programs which protect the rights of landowners and the prerogatives of local governments. The National Grange supports land use planning and zoning remaining a function of local and state governments.
2. The National Grange urges that the transfer of de-

- velopment rights be used to protect family farms. Whenever land is designated for permanent agricultural use, farmers should receive adequate compensation for the loss in land value. We call for the immediate enactment of regulations or legislation that will require and facilitate the timely payment of fair compensation to private property owners for property losses they have sustained as a result of oil and/or gas explorations on their property so they are not forced to obtain such compensation through costly litigation and support legislation prohibiting any implementation of the American Heritage Rivers Initiative that would infringe upon private property rights.
3. The National Grange urges the Farm Service Agency or any other agency not to relinquish the use of any farmlands, wetlands, or other lands to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or any other government agency.
 4. The National Grange will continue to work to improve locally controlled site-specific resource and environmental management in the Columbia Basin.
 5. The National Grange supports legislation reaffirming congressional power over international agreements concerning disposal, management and use of lands owned by the United States and also protects state powers, from federal actions designating lands to international agreements. The National Grange further supports legislation protecting private interests in real property from any federal actions designating lands to international agreements.
 6. The National Grange seeks legislation specifying when property is acquired by a federal agency through condemnation or negotiated price for a specific public purpose yet not used for that purpose, the original owner shall have first right of repurchase at the original price or at a lesser price if the value of the property has been decreased. We support legislation that eminent domain be used only for public purposes, such as rights of way for transportation and utilities.
 7. The National Grange urges the federal government to replace, whenever possible, condemned private land with public land of equal value/productivity, and to maintain a balance between public and private lands throughout the nation.
 8. The National Grange supports changing laws so that, in points of controversy, private property rights take precedence over environmental regulations.
 9. The National Grange supports legislation to prohibit the Federal Government or any agency or authority of the Federal Government from exercising its power of eminent domain to be used for private economic

development unless there is an immediate danger to the health and/or safety of citizens. Furthermore, the National Grange supports federal legislation to require that no state, political subdivision of a state or any person or entity to which such power has been delegated shall exercise its power of eminent domain, for the purpose of private economic development or over property that is subsequently used for economic development unless there are situations of immediate danger to the health and/or safety of citizens. Any state or political subdivision that exercises the power of eminent domain for private economic development shall be ineligible for any federal economic development funds for any purpose for a period of at least two years.

10. We support the ranchers and other landowners in Southern Colorado who oppose the Army's proposal to take land by eminent domain for the expansion of the Ft. Carson Army Base and urge Congress to pass legislation prohibiting the Base's expansion through the use of eminent domain.

Clean Air

1. The National Grange supports a clean air policy that will best protect agricultural interests, relieve automotive passengers, freight users and carriers of costly and unnecessary restrictions, and will protect the physical and economic health of industry and the general public.
2. The National Grange proposes that Congress determine state compliance to the Clean Air Act by statute and not by administrative regulations. Until then, we urge state and national administrative flexibility in deadlines for meeting Ambient Air Quality Standards. The National Grange strongly urges the EPA to retain the existing National Ambient Air Quality Standard for ground-level ozone.
3. The National Grange opposes any national mandatory motor vehicle emission inspection and maintenance programs. We oppose any national law or regulation that would require the use of "stand alone" vehicle emission testing facilities. The National Grange supports exempting agricultural equipment and machinery manufactured prior to January 1, 1993 from the current Clean Air Act.
4. The National Grange favors the repeal of the ozone provisions contained in the Clean Air Act to allow the use of Freon for refrigerators, freezers and air conditioners.
5. The National Grange favors reducing sulfur and nitrogen oxide emissions from coal-burning plants. The National Grange encourages more research into clean technology and revision of EPA standards for use of coal and gas in building new generating plants.
6. The National Grange supports changes in the United Nations Climate Change Treaty before it is ratified by the United States. We urge the Kyoto Protocol to include uniform standards for all major countries, developed and developing. In the meantime we support the following measures: expansion of voluntary efforts to limit greenhouse gas emissions; scientific research and educational programs on climate; investing in the development and deployment of new technologies and urging utilities to update their older plants bringing them into compliance with the current Clean Air Act.
7. The National Grange supports a program of government incentives that will reduce commuting by private vehicle, increase subsidies for mass transportation or car pooling, and sponsor more research to make alternative energy cars viable.

Grange Youth: An Essential Piece



One of the keys to a successful Grange is a vibrant, strong youth program. Grange youth programs provide an opportunity for personal growth, leadership and community service. To learn more about Grange youth programs visit www.nationalgrangeyouth.org, the National Grange Youth Facebook Group, or contact director Charlene Shupp Espenshade at youth@nationalgrange.org.

Education & Health

Policy Statement - Education

Education is a crucial element in the long term success of our nation. In order for our country to remain competitive around the globe, our nation's children must receive a world-class education.

We must encourage our youth to excel. It doesn't matter if they plan to go to college, a trade school, or enter the work force; they need to understand the world around them. A quality education opens minds to new possibilities while encouraging students to think for themselves. We also must encourage our young people to learn and grow in school in a direction and pace most appropriate to their abilities. In today's information age, we have an extremely structured educational system that often has trouble recognizing and adapting to the needs of each unique student. We must return the power of education to parents, teachers, and local school boards. Parents must be made an essential part of the decision process. We must find ways to reward teachers who encourage and empower their students to become successful.

The National Grange supports public education and the idea of strengthening and improving the public education system because we believe every child should be able to receive a high quality public education. We support the continued collaboration with the Organization Concerned About Rural Education to seek improvements to the No Child Left Behind Act. We believe that all federally mandated programs be funded appropriately by the federal government to the extent that the requirements of these programs not cause an unrealistic burden on the state and local school systems.

The National Grange applauds the reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools and Communities Self Determination Act (SRSCA) while working on a long-term solution for rural forest counties and schools.

The National Grange supports home schooling as a viable alternative to traditional education. Further, we support the use of nonintrusive regulations in order to ensure that home schooled students receive a high quality education.

The National Grange urges local schools to remove disruptive and violent students from the classroom and provide alternate education until the underlying cause has been corrected. We further urge the reform of state and federal regulations so that schools actively ad-

ressing this problem are not at risk of being classified as failing schools.

We support schools using agricultural based curriculums such as Ag in the Classroom and Food for America. We encourage the study of cooperatives to be included in these curriculums.

The National Grange encourages school districts to include Armed Forces representatives at a school's Career Day.

The National Grange encourages Granges at all levels to become actively involved in the educational process of students and community members in the fight against tobacco and alcohol abuse. We also support educating the American public about the misuse of legal and illegal drugs.

We strongly encourage Grange members nationwide to play an active role in their local school systems. It is essential for our members to invest in our children's education through volunteering and the donation of school supplies such as the third grade dictionary program. These contributions will help us remain positive role models for school children.

Policy Statement- Health

We as individuals need to take responsibility for our own health. With the cost of health care coverage and prescription drugs on the rise, we must advocate affordable health insurance for all. Equitable billing requirements and reimbursements for medical, dental, and alternative health care treatments are essential. We support a cap to be in place on malpractice suits to help reduce the cost of health care and make it possible for physicians, especially those in rural areas, to continue practicing medicine.

In this growing age of technology, it is becoming increasingly easier for people of any age to purchase narcotics and stimulants online. Therefore, the National Grange supports banning the delivery of such controlled substances over the Internet with or without a prescription.

Even though we believe that prescription drugs should be affordable to all Americans, we need to be mindful of safety. Drugs manufactured in the United States must meet stringent FDA standards. However, we have no guarantee that imported prescription drugs will meet these standards, but we believe that with proper control

and monitoring, drugs from other countries can be safely imported.

The National Grange supports the effort to reform Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) rules so that unused controlled prescription medications can be disposed of by a broader range of professionals. We encourage a study to determine the most economical and safest means of disposal for these substances.

The National Grange encourages broader consumer education for Medicare recipients so that they can better determine any discrepancies in billing in an effort to help reduce fraud.

Defective and contaminated products imported from other countries are of great concern to all Americans. We encourage government agencies and consumer safety advocates to be diligent in safety inspections on imported products and report all findings to the public. We also encourage consumers to make educated and wise purchasing decisions. We further encourage the government to require the country of origin to be clearly labeled on all imported products.

The National Grange recognizes the importance of proper nutrition in combating obesity and the diseases that come from it. Educational programs for all ages should be provided to encourage healthy eating and to teach the benefits of exercise and reduced caloric intake. We encourage schools to take a proactive stance by offering healthy snacks, such as milk in their vending machines, and by having an ongoing physical education program.

Education

Vocational Education/ Continuing Education

1. The National Grange supports vocational, continuing and adult education. We encourage State Granges to support educational programs within each state serving those persons who are beyond public school age in need of further education, such as the Job Corps Program and agricultural program areas. We also support providing rehabilitative training equivalent to high school education or trade school to prison inmates.
2. The National Grange strongly believes that vocational agriculture should be a major vocational program area, including the development and supervision of occupation experience programs for year-round in-

struction from professional agricultural educators where needed.

3. The National Grange strongly supports the return of vocational education curriculum to all high schools, community colleges and trade schools, including the funding for these courses. We further support career evaluations at the middle/junior high school level to prepare students to make subsequent educational or training decisions in the appropriate area of their choice.
4. The National Grange supports the federal government's continued investment in career technical education by reauthorizing the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 199
5. The National Grange supports the use of the voucher system in vocational rehabilitation programs, allowing the recipient to choose the vocational rehabilitation program which best satisfies his/her requirements and occupational goals.

General Education Policies

1. The National Grange supports public education and supports the idea of strengthening and improving the system of public education. The National Grange urges Congress to amend the "No Child Left Behind" law so local tax dollars on education are spent more responsibly. Parents should have a choice of schools based on the schools' performance numbers provided that those parents furnish transportation for the children. We believe that every child should be able to receive a public education, and that the state is responsible for providing said education, which shall include the following: a broad curriculum with emphasis on basic language, physical education, math, and science skills; an opportunity for students to choose either vocational or "college preparatory" training; functional buildings; frequent public reports and accountability of funds; and basic training in agriculture, including the "Ag in the Classroom" program, covering both production and consumption.
2. The National Grange supports the adoption of a comprehensive health education curriculum.
3. The Grange supports the teaching of foreign languages, including sign language. We recommend that all other subjects be taught in the English language and that all non-English speaking students and residents in the United States be given the opportunity to receive immediate instruction in the English language through programs such as English-As-A-Sec-

ond-Language.

4. The National Grange supports affordable telecommunications services for rural schools and libraries.
5. The National Grange supports strong educational standards, but does not believe that the establishment of National Education Standards Testing achieves this goal.
6. The National Grange supports the retention of the Head Start program.
7. The National Grange supports the teaching of both the theory of evolution and the story of creation, allowing individual school boards and students to make their own choice.
8. The National Grange supports posting the Ten Commandments in schools, courthouses and other public facilities.
9. The National Grange supports legislation that would bring about protection of parental and/or guardian rights in the guidance, control and administration of their dependent minors' health care. This legislation should be written to include any and all federal, state and local government agencies.
10. The National Grange supports the teaching of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States, including the Preamble and the Bill of Rights, in schools.
11. The National Grange urge that United States' citizens, rather than foreign students, be given preference in obtaining publicly-funded scholarships.
12. The National Grange endorses "Read Across America"; we recommit our organization to engage in programs and activities to make Americans the best readers in the world.
13. The National Grange supports traditional educational standards in American schools by making certain that school textbooks, today and in the future, are not modified to the point where our historical family gender specific terminology is altered or lost due to political or social pressures.
14. The National Grange opposes any legislation that may be proposed permitting or requiring non-security school staff to carry firearms while at school.
15. The National Grange urges the Federal Department of Education to encourage all local school systems to retain recess for elementary school children.
16. The National Grange supports legislation to establish standardized requirements for schools nurses in all 50 states as well as legislation to adequately fund school nurse programs to be able to handle the increased workload.

Education for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Special Needs Children

1. The National Grange believes that parents of deaf and hard of hearing children, deaf and hard of hearing people, teachers, and professionals who are trained in the area of educating the deaf should assist in determining the extent, content, and purpose of the educational program, and particularly consider those program options that provide the pupil with an appropriate and equal opportunity for communication access, including the state's school for the deaf, which may be the least restrictive environment for a deaf or hard of hearing child.
2. The National Grange strongly supports continuation of the Education of the Deaf Act to provide maximum benefit for deaf and hard of hearing persons, both in programs and services, including funding for Gallaudet University and the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID).

Educational Funding

1. The National Grange supports the continuation of the federal guaranteed student loan, grant, and work-study programs. The National Grange recommends that Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and Expected Family Contribution (EFC) regulations be adjusted to reflect family expenses, such as real estate taxes, medical expenses and other financial obligations in the determination of financial aid. We urge strict enforcement of the requirements for repayment of federally financed student loans with severe penalties for default. The National Grange suggests that the guidelines for student financial aid laws be revised so financially independent students are eligible to receive financial aid for their higher education.
2. The National Grange supports the retention of Federal Government Impact Aid for public school districts that lose traditional revenue sources due to a federal presence or activity.
3. The National Grange supports federal categorical aid to school library centers.
4. The National Grange believes that public funding should be used only in public schools. We support redirecting public funding to nonpublic or Charter schools, only when the money is for special needs students where the law mandates special training not

available in public schools.

5. The National Grange supports federal funding for state allocation of dollars for rural education to promote better salaries and benefits for teachers in rural education and to improve rural school conditions.
6. The National Grange urges adequate funding by the federal government for all federally mandated education programs. In particular we support equal educational opportunities for exceptional and handicapped persons including federal funding at the 40% level for federally mandated individualized education programs for special needs children.
7. The National Grange supports federal legislation protecting the Upward Bound Talent Search designed to benefit low-income students seeking college educations.
8. The National Grange supports legislation that awards grants to institutions for history teacher preparation initiatives stressing content mastery in traditional American history and the principles on which the American political system is based.

Nutrition

1. The National Grange urges adequate funding for school breakfast and lunch programs. We support the American Dietetic Association's current guidelines recommending two to three servings of dairy products daily in the school nutrition program. We urge the USDA to keep dairy products in the Food Pyramid and encourage all consumers to include adequate amounts of calcium in their diets. School breakfast and lunch programs should provide balanced diets to meet a child's daily nutritional requirements.
2. The National Grange urges the agricultural community to provide nutrition education programs for consumers and school-aged children and support continued funding for the Farmers' Market Nutrition program.
3. The National Grange supports any legislation to prohibit the sale of junk food and soda pop from vending machines in elementary and junior high schools. We also urge school districts to seek out contracts with vendors distributing more healthy alternatives such as milk.
4. The National Grange opposes any additional tax on "fat" foods for the purpose of preventing obesity. Instead, educational programs should be provided to encourage eating a variety of nutritious foods in moderation, and to teach the basic interaction of calorie intake and energy expenditure.

Food Safety and Labeling

1. The National Grange believes the agricultural industry should be free to advertise their products as long as the advertisement is accurate and is based on facts.
2. The National Grange favors strict enforcement of all food labeling laws by the Food & Drug Administration. We encourage the National Safety Working Group and Congress to enact far-reaching legislation increasing the inspection rate and level of safety of imported foreign foods, drugs, and manufactured goods. We also support legislation requiring food companies and restaurants to clearly mark food labels and items on menus that may contain ingredients such as Monosodium Glutamate (MSG) and inform patrons if their food contains peanuts, are exposed to peanuts, or has been cooked in peanut oil. We recommend that a ban be placed on the use of all sulfites on fresh fruits and vegetables in restaurants. We further recommend that all manufacturers of food and drink who use sulfites in their products be required to specify on the product label that a sulfite was used. However, we support each individual restaurant's right to decide whether to include calorie counts on their menu boards of calorie, fat, carbohydrates and sodium on their menus for all food and beverage items.
3. The National Grange urges the Department of Health and Human Services to review and strengthen the regulations pertaining to manufactured products used in the home canning process, including requiring a manufacturer's name and expiration date on these products.
4. The National Grange favors continued testing of cider processing but strongly urges Congress and the USDA not to require pasteurization of all commercial cider.
5. The National Grange supports the initiation of a regulated food products irradiation program. We further support federal funding for a program to educate the public about the benefits of irradiated food products.
6. The National Grange supports easy and inexpensive access to vitamins and supplements. We urge that all herbal medicines sold in the United States be labeled with a warning to consult with a physician or pharmacist before using. We further support legislation that would require manufacturers and processors of dietary supplements to report certain information to the Secretary of Health and Human Services annu-

ally, including a list of supplements manufactured and the labeling and major ingredients for such supplements.

Health

Family Planning

1. We oppose any amendment to the United States Constitution that denies an individual the freedom of choice for abortion. We recognize the need for readily available family planning information for those who need or desire it. However, we do oppose partial-birth abortions. Government financing should not be available for abortions, except in cases of rape, incest, endangered health of the mother, or serious defects of the fetus. We support educational efforts, which would emphasize the necessity for licensed hospitals and medical doctors when abortions are necessary. We further support requiring all abortion agencies to provide counseling by qualified professional personnel to explore all possible options before an abortion and we favor state legislation requiring abortion and family planning clinics to notify parents or guardians of minors who are seeking drugs or abortions.
2. The National Grange supports the release of adoption records that will provide family health history.
3. The National Granges opposes the distribution of any contraceptives to middle school age students.

Health Care Consumer Protection, Patients' Rights and Accessibility

1. The National Grange supports access to affordable health care and health insurance for every American regardless of age, race, income, health condition, or location with freedom of choice of medical provider and facility. In addition, health care cost containment strategies should maintain the highest quality of care without compromising effectiveness and efficiency. We favor legislation to guarantee that the attending physician's decision is the governing factor regarding appropriate medical treatment or length of hospital stay. The physician's decision should be the deciding factor for coverage whether or not treatment or hospitalization takes place in or out of the

patient's home state. We believe HMOs should be required to accept the determination of the attending health care provider as evidence of the need for an emergency visitation or ambulance service.

2. The National Grange supports proposals for health care reform that include the following safeguards:
 - a) allow patients to sue HMOs for medical malpractice;
 - b) place a cap on how much an individual may sue for per medical malpractice suit, including a \$250,000 cap on malpractice awards arising from non-economic claims (i.e. pain and suffering);
 - c) place a cap on malpractice awards regarding product liability;
 - d) require insurance companies to provide hospital coverage for birth as deemed necessary by the doctor;
 - e) establish an efficient grievance and appeal process for patients when medical procedures or payments are denied by insurance companies/HMO's;
 - f) require that insurance companies cover all legally mandated medical services deemed necessary by a doctor at federal, state, or hospital levels, including preventative procedures such as well baby check ups and childhood immunizations;
 - h) require insurance companies to pay claims within 30 to 45 days of receiving properly completed forms and bills.
3. The National Grange urges federal agencies to be more aggressive in their investigations and prosecutions of fraud, waste, and abuse in the health care system. We support efforts to maintain the National Practitioners Data Base allowing consumers to have access to malpractice reports so they can properly choose the best medical professional for themselves.
4. The National Grange supports tax deductible medical savings accounts (MSAs) in the form of an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) type account to be used strictly for medical expenses. We support extending health care coverage under COBRA for all terminated employees who qualify for a period of up to 36 months or until eligible for Medicare/Medicaid and include portability of health insurance coverage — even if there is a pre-existing condition — for those who change jobs or become unemployed. The National Grange supports tax incentives for businesses to provide health insurance coverage for their employees and 100% tax deductibility of health insurance premiums for the self-employed and individuals acquiring private health insurance.
5. The National Grange favors the passage of laws, which allow parents/guardians in conjunction with their doctors to decide whether or not to keep severely physically and mentally handicapped chil-

dren alive by life support systems without interference by the government.

6. The National Grange urges that the new federal and state laws on privacy of medical information be examined, and amended if necessary, so that medical practitioners may release or disclose limited information when necessary to contact relatives or others who are needed to authorize medical treatment. We further support legislation that would require patients, when physically or mentally able, to submit their medical background to health care professionals.
7. The National Grange supports legislation such as “The Small Business Health Fairness Act” or any other legislation that would allow professional associations to offer members group health insurance on a national basis thus making it more affordable.
8. The National Grange strongly urges hospitals to charge uninsured patients the same rates that are negotiated by insurance companies and Medicare for their clients.
9. The National Grange supports legislation requiring all restaurants and all public buildings to be smoke free.
10. The National Grange supports legislation to amend present law to require builders and landlords to include carbon monoxide detectors as well as smoke detectors in buildings they build or manage.

Rural Health Care

1. We urge that the federal government maintain block grant/matching funds to states for community health clinics.
2. The National Grange supports legislation to ensure that fairness in price and benefits offered becomes a part of any and all medical insurance programs. The National Grange believes that payment to health care providers should adhere to a schedule of fees for services provided that is fair and equitable across the United States.
3. The National Grange supports incentive programs for doctors who will agree to practice in rural areas where basic medical care is not available.
4. The National Grange supports the establishment or use of the necessary infrastructure for the expansion of telemedicine into rural areas.
5. We encourage local Granges to present programs that educate the community about pharmaceutical assistance programs.

Medical Research / Awareness

1. The National Grange supports and recognizes the value of medical research in increasing the quality of life. We support improvement in the quality of health care services and access to new and existing technologies. We encourage continued funding of medical research, including those using animals.
2. The National Grange encourages research to continue on alternative treatments, such as acupuncture, hypnosis, massage therapy, prayer, and meditation, which may be used in conjunction with the standard treatments that are showing results against diseases.
3. The National Grange supports the National Cancer Institute and encourages Congress to continue providing funds for research.
4. The National Grange supports the establishment of a “radiation data base” on radiation releases to the public resulting from both intentional and unintentional releases due to nuclear weapons testing and accidental releases from nuclear power plants.
5. The National Grange urges that the correct information about Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS) should be given to all parents and caregivers of children under five years.
6. The National Grange urges adequate funding for agencies at all levels dealing with the HIV and AIDS problem and supports increased emphasis on testing.
7. The National Grange urges the use of government funds for stem cell research only on postnatal or adult stem cells. We further support the research and possible use of cord blood stem cells and, promote the registry and donation of cord blood stem cells. However, we support legislation banning full human cloning.
8. The National Grange supports legislation that would ban the patenting of natural occurring genes. We only support the patenting of treatment and/or alterations of those natural occurring genes.

Medicare / Medicaid

1. The National Grange supports the following reforms and changes in the Medicare and Medicaid programs: a) equity of payment between inpatient and outpatient procedures according to Medicare’s Diagnostic Related Groups; b) equity in reimbursements between rural and urban hospitals; c) prohibit hospitals or doctors from setting fees or discontinuing Medicare assignments for specific diagnosis

- during treatment on the basis of the method of payment or from charging amounts above the Medicare limits for Medicare services; d) faster processing of claims to permit faster reimbursement; e) extended coverage to ensure sufficient time for full recovery; f) prohibit health care professionals and (g) all reimbursements under the Medicare program to all Medicare patients, medical personnel, suppliers, etc. must be made in a 3 month timeframe.
2. The National Grange supports a full investigation of the causes of the rapid increase in Medicare/Medicaid costs. We further support a cap on the annual increase in Medicare deductions of no more than the general inflation rate. The National Grange strongly urges Congress to refrain from reducing payment to physicians and providers under Medicare since it would add an additional burden to patients needing to use the program.
 3. The National Grange will lobby for a change in current Medicare insurance to include coverage for hearing exams and hearing aids. The National Grange urges Medicare and Medicaid to review their payment schedules and make changes which recognize recommended and accepted medical procedures and screening tests, such as: coverage for the prostate-specific antigen test (PSA); increased coverage for home health care costs; reimbursement for services of midwives and physicians' assistants; coverage for outpatient office laser surgery.
 4. The National Grange favors legislation permitting retired people to deduct the cost of their supplemental health insurance from their taxable income. We support changing current regulations to permit seniors who are "grandfathered" by residence address into a Medicare supplemental insurance program to be allowed to move anywhere within the original service area without being dropped from their insurance plan. We further support a division of assets procedure for Medicaid and Medicare that would preserve the financial stability of a healthy spouse.
 5. The National Grange supports the right to have a second doctor in the operating room, where medically required, for patients on Medicare.
 6. The National Grange supports legislation that would give eye and dental insurance to seniors age 65 plus for those procedures that Medicare does not cover, with a co-pay/deductible for amounts over 100 dollars.
 7. The Grange at all levels works to convince our government that Medicare money should also be spent on health screening for early intervention of diseases which is far more economical than the huge cost of treating advanced stages of the diseases.
 8. The National Grange urges Congress to pass an act allowing Medicare information to be given to an assigned representative and that the representative be allowed to act on behalf of said patient without consignment of Medicare and/or Social Security benefits.
 9. The National Grange encourages the Federal Government to simplify the Medicare Part D program to achieve substantially lower drug prices for beneficiaries and require all aspects of the program to be implemented within 60 days of an applicant's enrollment.
 10. The National Grange supports allowing Medicare to help cover the cost of purchasing hearing aids and eye ware. The National Grange also supports legislation to change the regulatory language that categorizes hearing aids as cosmetic devices to the category of prosthesis devices in all instances for Medicare as well as Medicare supplemental insurance.

Long Term Care and Assisted Living

1. The National Grange supports coverage for long-term nursing/in-home care, including an allowable tax credit for long term care insurance premiums, and an allowable tax credit for adult day care expenses incurred by primary care givers of adults who cannot care for themselves. A tax credit should also be available for programs to provide assisted living to the elderly in their own homes. We urge changing the Medicare entitlement and managed health care insurance programs so that they provide payment for assisted living programs.
2. The National Grange supports legislation that will provide uniform care and services to nursing home patients and will protect their rights.
3. The National Grange encourages Congress to require Medicare to make timely payments to both acute care and extended care facilities to ensure that the correct level of care is maintained for all patients.
4. The National Grange urges the U.S. Health Care Financing Authority to allow elderly couples to be in the same nursing home when long term care for both becomes necessary.
5. The National Grange supports action that develops a comprehensive and economical method to treat patients requiring Palliative Care.

Deaf, Hard Of Hearing, and the Disabled

1. We strongly support legislation to protect the rights of deaf and hard of hearing persons.
2. The National Grange encourages manufacturers of machinery and stereo equipment to place warning labels, where feasible, informing consumers that permanent hearing loss could occur as a result of prolonged noise exposure above 85 decibels. We further support legislation requiring motorcycle mufflers to be designed so that the maximum decibels produced shall not be higher than 85 decibels at a distance of 50 feet.
3. The National Grange supports legislation requiring emergency warning messages to be both close captioned and delivered verbally, and all television stations provide closed captioning for news, weather, sports, and other live events.
4. The National Grange encourages telephone companies to make all public telephones hearing-aid compatible and install volume-controlled amplifiers. We further recommend that local, state, and national governments specify in their lease/purchase agreements with any telephone contractor that all instruments be hearing aid compatible.
5. The National Grange supports legislation that would require all health insurance companies to cover hearing screening, testing, surgery, and hearing aids, including mandatory regular hearing screenings and hearing aids for children.
6. The National Grange supports legislation that would establish detection and intervention programs for newborns and infants with hearing loss. We further urge Congress to pass legislation to require hearing testing of newborns prior to their release from the hospital.
7. The National Grange urges the Department of Transportation to become aware of the need for unisex handicapped restrooms and to make provisions for them at all new or remodeled rest stops.
8. The National Grange supports legislation so that any retired military service personnel with 50% or more service-related disability rating be allowed to obtain and receive needed dental treatments at the Veteran's Administration Dental Clinics at no cost.

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Controlled Substance

1. The National Grange encourages the bold, accurate labeling of household products (including carpeting and furniture that have been treated with toxic chemicals), farm chemicals, and other products containing toxic ingredients.
2. The National Grange supports the continuation of the many programs presently fighting substance addiction. The National Grange urges that funding for addiction treatment be governed by medical personnel and not by non-medical administrators of reimbursement programs. The National Grange supports legislation to end insurance discrimination against Americans living with mental illness and addiction in order to provide necessary assistance and treatment programs that will allow many of these afflicted individuals to return to a productive life in mainstream society.
3. The National Grange believes that any product containing above the acceptable FDA limit of Dioxin should display a label warning consumers of its presence.
4. We support federal legislation, which would ban the advertising and promotion of alcoholic beverages on television and radio. The National Grange supports the adoption of more prominent alcohol warning labels on all beer, wine and liquor containers.
5. The National Grange supports the effort of the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to ban cigarette and alcohol advertising that encourages children to smoke and drink alcoholic beverages.
6. The National Grange urges legislation requiring all tobacco products to carry a federal health warning label, just as cigarettes do, and that advertisements include the detrimental effects of any tobacco products as well.
7. The National Grange recommends the passage of laws making it a punishable crime to use such drugs as Rohypnol, GHB, and Ketamine on anyone for the purpose of procuring sex.
8. The use of steroid and other stimulants, unless prescribed for medical reasons, should be made illegal in all competitive sports and the National Grange supports having heavy penalties imposed upon the violators.

Prescription Drugs and Medicines

1. The National Grange supports making prescriptions and over-the-counter drugs more affordable. The National Grange strongly encourages drug companies to produce lifesaving and life enhancing medicines for a wide variety of diseases and medical conditions. We further support requiring all government and private prescription drug coverage programs to offer the widest possible selection of lifesaving and life enhancing medicines at an affordable price for those who need them.
2. The National Grange supports allowing U.S. citizens, who are visiting foreign countries, to bring back with them up to three months supplies of regulated pharmaceutical products for their own use, provided that they have valid prescriptions for those specific pharmaceutical products from their U.S. physician. The National Grange supports the current Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act provisions that generally do not allow regulated pharmaceutical products to be imported into the U.S. for sale or distribution unless those importers are also pharmacists and/or pharmaceutical wholesalers currently subject to federal and state regulation. We strongly support current law and regulations that require anyone who imports regulated pharmaceutical products for sale or distribution in the U.S. to keep accurate records tracking the origin, history and chain of custody of these products before they entered the U.S. We support legislation requiring anyone authorized to import regulated pharmaceutical products for sale or distribution in the U.S. to be financially responsible for any testing necessary to verify the authenticity and/or degradation of the pharmaceutical products they import. We support strictly limiting the importation of pharmaceutical products to drugs from licensed pharmacies and wholesalers who sell to the public in Canada. We support providing the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) with sufficient resources and authority to ensure the safety of imported drugs from Canada employing technological and other safeguards. We further support legislation requiring anyone authorized to import regulated pharmaceutical products for sale or distribution in the U.S. to be allowed to import such products only if they are shipped into the U.S. in counterfeit proof and tamper resistant packaging.
3. The National Grange supports a voluntary program, which would offer pregnant women who test HIV positive voluntary access to the drug AZT that could prevent the transfer of the HIV antibodies to the unborn child or newborn child.
4. The National Grange will work to secure legislation requiring physicians to obtain specific written approval of the patient or those legally authorized to give approval prior to prescribing experimental drugs. When the physician prescribes experimental drugs, the warning and permission form must be in clear, common layman language on a separate medical form.
5. The National Grange supports legislation that would require the pharmaceutical companies to significantly reduce the minimum dose purchase requirement for pneumonococcal vaccine. We recommend that local county Health Departments include this vaccine in required childhood immunizations.
6. The National Grange urges pharmaceutical manufacturers, pharmaceutical wholesalers and pharmaceutical retailers to work cooperatively to reduce the cost of drugs for consumers in the United States and will work to pass legislation to amend the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003 to facilitate this cooperation.
7. The National Grange urges the Food and Drug Administration to mandate that pharmaceutical producers label all products and commodities containing gluten.

 <p>Junior Grange Building for a better tomorrow!</p> <p>www.NationalJuniorGrange.org</p> <p>Contact the National Junior Grange Development Director Anne Kurburski at Akurburski@NationalGrange.org</p>	<p>So what is the Junior Grange?</p> <p>One Of America's First And Finest Youth Organizations Adopted as part of the National Grange in 1888</p> <p>For Boys And Girls Ages 5 - 14 providing opportunities for personal and community growth</p> <p>A Fraternal Organization Develops a spirit of respect, cooperation and concern for others and self</p> <p>For Future Leaders It develops Grange appreciation and trains members in Grange meaning and procedure to promote the future of the Grange.</p>
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Labor & Judiciary

Policy Statement

During the current economic crisis, the Grange urges the President of the United States and the Congress to carefully review and oversee any economic bailouts of banking institutions and corporations and make transparent the actions of the Federal Reserve in these bailouts. Investigation and possible prosecution of individuals involved in the collapse of the banking and credit industry should also be pursued. This crisis will affect citizens in every walk of life from the farmer, factory worker, office worker and CEO alike. The Government should extend regulation and oversight of the banking and credit industries to ensure protections for the American Taxpayer.

The credit crisis has spilled into the manufacturing and retail sectors of the economy. Companies unable to get credit are closing operations and selling off assets and the American worker is caught in the crunch. Consumer credit during this economic crisis will also be affected. With the looming possibilities of large scale personal bankruptcies, the Grange urges lawmakers to regulate credit card issuers, to make terms in easy to understand language and in large print on credit card terms and agreements and restrict interest rates to not more than five percent above the prime lending interest rate.

The Grange, in addressing the needs of laborers and employers, seeks an equitable balance between the two, fostering economic growth and prosperity for all. The Grange has long supported an individual's right to work for a reasonable wage in a safe environment. The Grange would implore businesses to make provisions to secure employees' pension benefits and all moneys paid into retirement plans to prevent them from being lost by beneficiaries in the event of a future merger or liquidation of the company. The Grange calls for the shift of private pension responsibility to the Federal Pension Benefit Guarantee Plan only when the retirees are affected by a total closure of the business. The Grange will continue to seek workplace safety regulations, which protect workers while not placing excessive financial burden on employers.

While free trade agreements have opened markets to United States products, some U.S. companies have found the cost of labor and operations to be more favorable in other countries. The Grange encourages the state and federal governments to provide incentives to companies to retain domestic jobs.

The Grange supports the efforts of the federal gov-

ernment to increase border security to stem the tide of illegal immigration, drug trafficking and the potential for foreign terrorist attack, while streamlining the process for legal immigration to allow employers in agriculture and other business sectors to secure workers. The National Grange encourages balancing the needs of employers versus the security of the United States. The Grange urges federal authorities to make tools to check the authenticity of immigrant worker documents more available to employers. Since tools to determine status are somewhat limited due to recent court rulings, employers (especially in agriculture) who unknowingly hire illegal workers should not be fined. However those who knowingly hire illegal workers should be punished and required to pay all associated medical care costs of those illegal workers using medical services instead of hospitals having to write off these expenses. When streamlining the immigration process, those here illegally regardless of nationality should not be given amnesty or given an advantage over those immigrating by proper channels. The Grange urges Congress to reform immigration laws to provide for an orderly, well regulated flow of immigrants to meet the needs of our country and insure a stable workforce.

The Grange supports testing to meet United States Consumer Products Safety Commission standards for imported products. Manufacturers and distributors should have a system and resources to track their products in case of recall. However, consumers should also remember the old adage of "Buyer Beware."

Our American way of life continues to be threatened on a number of fronts. Rural law enforcement agencies are confronted with crimes heretofore associated only with urban areas. Organized gang activities, identity theft and the manufacturing of illegal drugs, especially methamphetamine, are all now a part of the rural crime landscape.

The Grange encourages creating new ways of dealing with the methamphetamine problem, such as the development and approval of new over-the-counter cold remedies, which are not adaptable to the manufacture of illegal drugs. The Grange supports efforts to restrict access to over-the-counter, non-prescription drugs such as pseudoephedrine, which has been used as a component in the manufacture of methamphetamine. However, we support the consumer's right to choose the product that best meets their needs.

The nation's law enforcement agencies face the challenge of dealing with crimes as diverse and far reaching

as domestic and environmental terrorism, corporate and consumer fraud and electronic and Internet crimes. The Internet has made it easier for child predators to contact children. The Grange supports maximum penalties for those convicted in child predator cases. The Grange supports victim advocacy programs in rural communities, many of which are ill prepared to address complex issues such as domestic violence and the rights of victims of violent crimes.

With the pervasive news coverage of some these violent crimes, the criminal gains celebrity status for their crime. The Grange urges news media to report the crimes and not give the criminal credibility and celebrity status by interviewing and giving suspects and those charged with the crime a public forum rather than allowing them make their case in the court system and not the court of public opinion.

Our judicial system continues to be overburdened. The Grange supports efforts to restore fairness to the civil judicial system at both the state and federal levels through reform of tort, liability, and malpractice law. The Grange encourages the use of alternative dispute resolution such as arbitration to reduce the judicial caseload. The Grange urges the U.S. Supreme Court Justices to base decisions on a strict interpretation of the Constitution.

Many federal, state, and local laws and regulations enacted in the past have become outdated, thereby creating a hindrance to development. The Grange urges legislative bodies and regulatory agencies at all levels of government to periodically review and purge outdated laws and regulations.

Progress, in technology and transportation, has linked nations more closely than ever before, with global trade and migration. The Grange encourages Congress to seek a fair and level playing field in global trading when entering into international trade agreements and treaties. Global treaties need to be carefully overseen by Congress to ensure that the sovereignty of the United States is not diminished or surrendered. The United States must not cede the property rights guaranteed its citizens under the Constitution to a global authority or world organization.

Conflicts in the Mid-East and other regions of the world continue to affect the lives of Americans on a daily basis. The Grange encourages United States Government to fully support in the establishment of a self-governing Iraq and future negotiations with them for repayment of the cost to reconstruct the Iraqi infrastructure. The Grange urges the United States government to maintain a strong, effective military to protect the interests of American citizens at home and abroad.

Wages, Employment, and Unions

1. The National Grange supports the repeal of the Davis-Bacon Act of 193. Until that time, the threshold exemption level of the Act should be indexed to the rate of inflation.
2. The Grange opposes the establishment of a commission to draft a Farm Worker Bill of Rights. We believe any future legislation that would impose a 40-hour workweek, that places a limitation on hours that can be worked in a single day, or that requires time and a half pay for overtime on a farming operation would be counter productive and against the best interests of farm workers and farm employers.
3. The National Grange supports realistic OSHA work place safety regulations. We believe it should be both the employer and employee's responsibility to follow safe work practices. Any employer who is cited by OSHA for violating work place safety regulations should be allowed a reasonable period of time in which to correct that violation before being penalized. The National Grange believes that any OSHA reform legislation should exempt farms having fewer than 10 full-time employees. We further support any exemption from new health and safety standards for farms having fewer than 10 full-time employees.
4. The National Grange favors lifting the bans in the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1943, which outlaws work that is done in the home in embroidery, gloves and mittens, handkerchiefs, buttons and buckles, jewelry and clothing.
5. The National Grange supports allowing individuals who are collecting unemployment compensation to decline offers of employment without losing their unemployment benefits so long as they are enrolled in an accredited job training or vocational education program provided that enrollment in these programs in no way extends the time that an individual can collect these benefits.
6. The National Grange supports legislation that requires all employers to pay at least the minimum wage regardless of whether the employees are tipped. However we also support legislation to allow younger teens (ages 13-15) to be given the privilege of working a maximum of ten hours a week for less than the minimum wage. After a probationary period, established by the employer, the younger teen should be paid the minimum wage.
7. The National Grange is in agreement with the concept of the proposed legislation that would establish

the “Living Wage Responsibility Act” to provide a living wage above the poverty level for all eligible employees working on federal contracts.

8. We favor binding arbitration clauses in labor contracts covering public sector employees.
9. We support the right of individuals to join any union and collectively bargain in good faith, as long as employees are not required to join or contribute money to any union or organization that claims to represent their interests in the work place. We further support mandatory restrictions on the use of compulsory union dues for political, charitable or social causes without the paying members consent.
10. The National Grange supports any legislation that allows employers to hire replacement workers during a strike.

Sentencing

1. The National Grange supports imposing stiff mandatory sentences in criminal cases. We believe using plea-bargaining should be restrained. We further believe that convicted criminals should be responsible for restitution to their victims and society. The National Grange believes that persons who are convicted of rape, murder, or any three-felony offenses should serve their full sentence without benefit of parole or furlough. We support the death penalty for premeditated crimes ending in death. We further support the death penalty for all citizens who are convicted of military espionage in either peacetime or war.
2. The National Grange favors classifying the importing, manufacturing, cultivation, or distribution of all illegal drugs as felonies under state and federal statutes. A mandatory prison sentence should be imposed upon conviction for any felony drug offense. Upon a second conviction for any felony drug offense, the penalty shall be a 30-year minimum sentence without the possibility of parole.

Protection for Victims and Jurors

1. We support increased protection for those who serve on juries. We strongly believe all jury deliberations should remain confidential without any publication or disclosure. The National Grange also supports legislation to forbid public disclosure of information about criminal investigations that could be detrimental to the case of either the prosecution or the defense

until after the case’s final disposition.

2. The National Grange supports legislation to assure that victims and witnesses of violent crimes must be notified in writing at least 60 days before any and all hearings in which the person who has been convicted of that crime seeks release or a change in release status from either a prison or a mental institution.
3. The National Grange supports legislation to protect the language interpreter with an interpreter/client privilege just as lawyers have attorney/client privileges.

General Law

1. The National Grange opposes unreasonable federal regulations that would force the closing of jails or that would require excessive expenditures of state funds.
2. The National Grange supports legislation that would make the unauthorized entry or use of a computer facility or illegal tapping of phones a felony.
3. The National Grange recommends that manufacturers of goods and machinery be exempt from all lawsuits, fines, liabilities and other civil penalties if they meet all the state and federal regulations that were in effect at the time the product was built or produced. The National Grange also supports the Personal Responsibility in Food Consumption Act or similar legislation which prohibits civil actions against a manufacturer or seller of food or a trade association for any injury resulting from a person’s consumption of food including weight gain, obesity, or any associated health condition.
4. The National Grange supports federal legislation to prohibit gambling on the Internet. We further support legislation to make the unsolicited e-mailing or posting of advertisements for pornographic websites and materials both a criminal and civil offense in order to control the availability of pornographic material to children.
5. The National Grange recommends that there be no changes in the laws that currently ban the production and sale of marijuana in the United States.
6. The National Grange actively promotes and supports legislation, which will create a new Twelfth Circuit Court of Appeals to meet the needs to the Pacific Northwest, Alaska, Hawaii and the Pacific Territories.
7. The National Grange believes that state law, not federal law, should have jurisdiction over “hate crimes” and state law should be responsible for assigning

specific punishment for these crimes.

8. The National Grange believes that cell phone use by inmates should be banned at all state and federal correctional facilities. Additionally, prison visitors should be required to surrender all cell phones at the facility entrance until their departure.

Firearms and the Second Amendment

1. The National Grange believes that the United States does not need any more gun control laws until the present laws are strictly enforced. We oppose legislation restricting the rights of citizens to bear arms for protection of their families, property and common defense, with the exception of assault weapons manufactured and designed specifically for military use. We favor severe and mandatory sentences, including incarceration, for anyone using firearms while committing a crime.
2. The National Grange supports laws prohibiting the sale of stun guns to the general public.
3. The National Grange supports legislation that would prohibit the manufacture and sale of toy guns that are replicas of real guns.

Bankruptcy

1. The National Grange favors tightening bankruptcy rules, including additional stiff penalties for bankruptcy fraud to combat planned bankruptcies and other abuses of the law.
2. The National Grange supports legislation that will require companies or businesses that file for bankruptcy to ensure that the employees who are owed compensation are the first secured creditors.
3. The National Grange supports legislation, which would classify producers having an ownership interest in agricultural products as secured creditors in bankruptcy cases.

Civil Law

1. The National Grange supports efforts to restore fairness to the civil judicial system at the state and federal levels through reform of tort, liability, and malpractice law. We favor a civil law system in which the plaintiff, if they lose, will be responsible to pay the defendant's legal and court costs when the court rules the lawsuit was frivolous or superfluous. We

further support limiting the amount of contingency fees that are paid to lawyers as well as putting caps on excessive jury awards for economic and non economic damages, such as pain, suffering, and bad faith. We support placing limits on the findings of joint and several liability and clearly established standards of bad faith action. We support incentives for alternative dispute resolutions, such as arbitration.

2. The National Grange believes that Legal Services Corporations and local legal aid bureaus should not receive any federal funding for nuisance or harassment suits against farmers. Correspondingly, the National Grange believes individuals should be prohibited from initiating so called "citizen suits" civil litigation against farmers and others for environmental violations without demonstrating any direct loss or damage to initiate such a suit.

Children and Family Law

1. The National Grange supports revising federal regulations so that the parent/child relationship created by court action is recognized for the purpose of receiving government assistance.
2. The National Grange supports all efforts to increase the public's awareness and sensitivity to child abuse and the existence of child predators in our society. The Grange strongly advocates that all child abuse laws and child predator laws be reviewed, revised, and enforced so as to secure the safety and well being of all children to the fullest extent of the law while remaining aware and protective of the rights of innocent families and individuals. The National Grange supports legislation that seeks to equalize sentencing of perpetrators of sexual abuse without regard of the familial relationship of perpetrator to the child or children. We further support legislation that imposes greater notification requirements on convicted child predators including immediate notification to authorities of address changes, community notification of the presence of a convicted child predator, a national child predator registry on the internet listing the current address of all convicted child predators and substantially increased penalties for failure of convicted sex offenders to comply.
3. The National Grange favors adoption reforms that would consider the best interests of the child in all proceedings, investigations, or rulings by the courts.
4. The National Grange supports requiring that the biological father's name, if known and proven, be

included on the child's birth certificate for purposes of determining the father's identification, the child's right to Social Security, and other support, which should be provided by the father.

5. We believe that in the situation of a broken home, both parents should be required to support their children.
6. The National Grange supports policies that grant legal surrogate decision-making authority to grandparent caregivers in the absence of responsible parents or stepparents. We support legislation to provide financial, social and legal supports as needed to grandparent caregivers raising grandchildren. We further support legislation to protect the visitation rights of grandparents. In the case of a child who is legally removed from the parents, the grandparents should be considered first as custodian of that child.

Consumer Protection Law

1. The National Grange supports legislation that would entitle consumers to a free annual credit report and allow the consumer more control over who has access to credit reports.
2. The National Grange favors a law requiring identification of all products that are foreign-made or assembled.
3. The National Grange urges Congress to enact laws protecting an individual's right to privacy and to protect the confidentiality of all personal records from fraudulent use. The National Grange supports a federally funded public service program to educate individual consumers regarding privacy geared toward reporting how to report suspected identity theft activities. We also support stronger penalties for those convicted of identity theft including full restitution to all victims.
4. The National Grange supports allowing nonprofit organizations to make continued "incidental use" of copyrighted music.
5. The National Grange seeks legislation requiring any private company not associated with government programs to disclose that information in large print, or verbal explanation during the application process.
6. Regulations should be enacted that require companies to give consumers the option of mailed billings or statements without surcharges.
7. The National Grange encourages companies to print product expiration dates in the mm/dd/yyyy format.

Banking and Consumer Credit Law

1. The Grange supports legislation to enable the family farmer or the family farm cooperative to borrow money at low interest rates.
2. The National Grange supports strong independent banks in lieu of further concentration of banking and financial powers in interstate and nationwide firms. Banks should be prohibited from purchasing insurance companies, selling securities, and entering the field of general commerce. We believe that any banks allowed to write and sell insurance must be subject to all applicable state insurance resolutions and laws as administered by State Insurance Commissions. We also believe that any banks that are allowed to offer or underwrite securities must be subject to regulation by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.
3. The National Grange supports legislation requiring credit card companies to discontinue the use of "pre-approved" in their solicitations.
4. The National Grange supports the continued independence of the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA) and opposes the merger of the NCUA with any other government financial institution insurance fund.
5. The National Grange urges state and federal banking regulators to better monitor fees charged by banks, reduce and eliminate those that are unfair, and provide customers with protection against aggressive banking business practices. We seek passage of legislation to eliminate unreasonable delays in the availability of the funds from a deposited check. We support banking regulations that will require all banks to honor government checks that are presented to them for payment.

Insurance Law

1. The National Grange supports the efforts of the National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies to strengthen and improve the insurance guarantee funds.
2. The National Grange supports the current McCarran-Ferguson Act. We support state jurisdiction over the insurance industry. We support the establishment of a federally funded terrorist reinsurance program.
3. The National Grange believes that the National Flood Insurance Program should operate on an actuarially

sound basis. Furthermore, Natural Flood Insurance Programs should not be available for properties that have suffered multiple losses where steps were not taken to better protect the property from further damage.

4. The National Grange urges state and federal regulators working with the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC) to establish the necessary safeguards that will make it possible for the viatical industry to serve viators and investors in a responsible way.
5. The National Grange opposes legislation that would require insurance companies to comply with “The Community Reinvestment Act, 12 U.S.C. 2901, commonly known as “CRA”, or any other legislation which would attempt to accomplish the same.

Immigration, Aliens, and Migrant Workers

1. The National Grange supports the strict enforcement of the immigration laws of the United States and further supports regular review of these laws to be sure they are meeting the needs of the United States. We support increased efforts by the U.S. government to patrol our borders preventing the illegal entry of aliens into our nation, including the assignment of military forces to assist civilian agencies in enforcing our border control policies. We support a prohibition on general amnesty for all illegal aliens of any nationality. We suggest that proof of citizenship and/or legal registered immigration be required for receiving government benefits. We also recommend that federal authorities be allowed to detain illegal immigrants and foreigners with expired visas for the duration of their investigation and processing, and be deported if immigration status is determined to be illegal.
2. The National Grange supports continuation of the legal program to bring guest workers into the United States on a temporary basis for the harvesting of seasonal crops. We support reform of current foreign guest worker programs to allow for expedited processing of foreign guest workers employed in the agricultural sector as well as reform of the H2A program so that the wage costs to farmers when hiring under the H2A program more closely reflects the prevailing local wage. We further support an amendment to the Migratory and Seasonal Agricultural Workers Protection Act recognizing that a crew chief is an independent contractor who is respon-

sible for the general care of his crew when it does not conflict with the requirements that are assigned to the landowners.

3. Agricultural employers should not be responsible for checking the authenticity of migrant and seasonal worker documentation at the time of employment. Employers who unknowingly hire illegal aliens should not be taxed or fined.
4. The National Grange supports legislation or a Constitutional amendment to require that children born in the United States must have one parent who is already a United States citizen in order to automatically receive citizenship and government benefits.
5. The National Grange recommends that current immigration laws be revised to establish a practical and enforceable guest worker visa program. The National Grange also supports the expansion of the H1B visa program for professionals to enter the United States in order to provide services in sectors where there is a documented need.

Commercial Trade Policies

1. The National Grange believes that opening trade between nations is a far better way to increase international understanding than limiting trade because of differences in ideologies. We will actively support programs to increase the competitive position of U.S. companies in world markets.
2. The National Grange supports actions to assure that the Panama Canal remain open to U.S. shipping.
3. The National Grange encourages purchasing American-made products and recommends that all levels of government be required to buy American made products whenever feasible.
4. The National Grange supports a fair and equitable textile import policy that would provide assistance to the domestic industry, would be beneficial to the producers of fibers and would not be price inflationary to the United States’ consumers.
5. The National Grange supports policy to remove trade, financial, and travel restrictions to Cuba.
6. The Congress of the United States should take steps to preclude the sale or lease of properties and/or businesses within the limits of the United States or any of its possessions to any foreign purchaser or leasor whose country prohibits the sale or lease of properties and/or businesses to any U.S. business or citizen.
7. The National Grange calls upon the U.S. government to adopt coordinated policies combating trade

distorting practices instituted by foreign governments, such as currency manipulation and unilateral repudiation of sovereign debt, especially in those cases where it becomes more difficult for U.S. farmers and manufacturers to sell their products in overseas markets. The National Grange also urges the U.S. Treasury Department to reverse its previous position and support domestic investors and bond holders of Argentine sovereign debt in all U.S. court cases brought by those bondholders.

Foreign Aid

1. The National Grange urges the U.S. government to extend foreign aid only after careful investigation, or in cases of natural disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes, droughts, or floods. We further support: a) basing the amount of foreign aid given on the humanitarian need and a greater use of agricultural products in lieu of cash transfers; b) closer monitoring of International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans and encourage making loans to Third World countries that are designed to provide self-help; c) taking into consideration the recipient countries' present foreign debt, repayment schedule, and record before providing them with new financial assistance; d) keeping in mind the food and financial needs of domestic programs when Congress considers the appropriate amount of foreign aid. We recommend that countries needing financial assistance should apply to the United Nations so that all countries would share in the economic assistance to developing countries. The National Grange supports legislation requiring any country receiving U. S. foreign aid purchase products made or grown in the United States.
2. The National Grange favors canceling all U.S. aid and supplies to foreign countries that take, hold, or kill American citizens, refuse to recognize international law, willingly permit the production and shipment of illegal drugs into our country, or allow the takeover of U.S. embassies or any property belonging to the U.S. government.
3. The National Grange supports permitting Third World countries to reduce their foreign debt in exchange for the establishment of permanent rain forest preserves.
4. The National Grange encourages agricultural research and development in and for Third World nations.

International Relations and the United Nations

1. The National Grange supports a friendly relationship with the Republic of China (Taiwan).
2. The National Grange supports a positive non-military program promoting the democratic form of government as a means to roll back or contain dictatorial forms of government
3. The National Grange supports actions by our government and other governments in condemning terrorist acts and supports efforts to secure the release of all hostages.
4. The National Grange supports a U.S. foreign policy that outlines a clear-cut position that only allows American troops to be committed to foreign countries in turmoil when it is in the strategic interest of the United States and adequate safeguards are provided. We support the United States' involvement in United Nations' military operations including funding such military operations only with the approval of Congress.
5. The National Grange urges that the United Nations be used as a forum to keep the issue of chemical warfare before the international community until a treaty is signed by all nations that look to the effective banning of this type of warfare.
6. The National Grange strongly supports extending and maintaining the protections of U.S. Constitutionally guaranteed individual rights under all international law. We urge the United States government not to ratify or sign agreements or treaties with the United Nations or any other international body that rights restrict or limit individual rights guaranteed under the U.S. Constitution or Bill of Rights or that impose taxation on the citizens of the United States.
7. The National Grange supports legislation to formally rescind the President's signature approving the Statute of the International Criminal Court made on behalf of the United States and to take necessary steps to prevent the International Criminal Court's establishment and prohibit the use of appropriated funds for the establishment or operation of the Court. We further urge the U.S. government to use all of its diplomatic and political influence to protect U.S. Service persons or U.S. citizens and nationals from being subject to the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court.
8. The National Grange supports legislation that rejects any merger, treaty, or agreement with any country that infringes on the sovereignty of the U.S. Constitution.

National Defense

1. The National Grange supports international agreements leading toward a balanced reduction and eventual elimination of all nuclear weapons. To complement this objective, we further support the development of strategic and civil defense systems.
2. The National Grange recommends that the federal government negotiate with foreign countries for compensation for the military defenses that we provide to their countries.
3. The National Grange supports a strong effective military. We urge Congress to appropriate sufficient funding including adequate pay for all branches of the military. We support policies which will re-establish effective security and intelligence capabilities.
4. The National Grange supports the continued presence of United States Armed Forces in South Korea.

There are many ways to stay connected with the National Grange:



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Exaction & Transportation

Policy Statement - Taxation

The Grange supports taxing policies that levy both personal and business taxes based on ability to pay. We believe in and support a graduated income tax because we believe that most citizens have a greater understanding and respect for government when they have a part in providing revenue for the programs of government. Taxes should not be punitive or excessive. We feel that the tax deduction for sales tax in states that do not have a state income tax should continue beyond the proposed 2009 sunset provision.

The Grange has a long and consistent history in support of sound fiscal policy. We believe budgets should be balanced. We recognize there are times or circumstances to support deficit spending and the creation of debt, but that must be the result of a careful evaluation of the need and what delay will cost in the future, or how the delay will impact the current need.

We seek a simpler set of tax regulations. Previous federal tax reform efforts have resulted in more confusion. Many millions of dollars and hundreds of thousands of hours are spent each year to file tax returns. This is an often overlooked cost of our tax collection system.

We believe companies who engage in irresponsible or fraudulent business practices should not be rewarded with tax refunds, as a result of their practices.

For most farmers, and small business owners, their farms and businesses are their largest retirement assets. New tax policies are required to assure that our current generation of family farmers and business owners are allowed to retire with dignity and that their productive resources are transferred to a new generation of family farmers and small business owners. Tax incentives and government backed Venture Capital Funds should be used to attract new residents and businesses to rural areas suffering from high out-migration.

We support user taxes with revenue used for the intended program. We support oversight/review of programs to eliminate spending on programs that have lost their value. Programs, once authorized, should receive adequate appropriations. We oppose non-funded mandates and using government funding to force compliance of a program that is not the result of a legislative support.

In all our dealings with government, and in our own fiscal policy actions, Grangers must follow and advocate for sound principles of fiscal policy.

Policy Statement - Transportation

Throughout our history, the Grange has had a vested interest in transportation issues. Although there are many different modes of transportation in existence today, the Grange supports the continued improvement of all of our existing transportation systems. This has to occur if we are to efficiently and economically improve our current standard of living. The National Grange supports increased funding and training at all levels of pertinent governmental agencies to detect and deal with potential acts and devices of terrorism in all methods of transportation.

The National Grange continues to support federal surface transportation legislation, now known as the SAFETEA-LU Act, covering highways, highway safety and mass transportation. The adoption of transportation legislation that would benefit rural America is part of the National Grange's landmark Blue Print for Rural America. The SAFETEA-LU Act is the largest public works legislation in American history.

Each and every area of the country, including rural areas, will receive an appropriate balance of transportation funding due to the fact that all states will receive more money under the current program than under the previous program. This increase in funding is possible because for the first time in two decades all federal fuel tax revenues deposited into the Highway Trust Fund will be spent on transportation programs.

The building of new interstate highways often affects rural areas. The National Grange should continue to monitor projects such as the Northeast Corridor Highway to ensure that public input is solicited before the construction process begins.

This legislation also provides incentives to promote the use of agriculturally derived fuels such as ethanol and biodiesel, within the highway and urban transit programs. These incentives will help ensure that rural Americans can continue to enjoy their freedom of mobility well into the 21st Century. We also encourage the development of increased refining capacity to avoid extreme price increases for fuel during natural disasters.

We have grave concerns regarding the health and competitive position of our nation's railroads. Consolidation of railroad companies has resulted in tremendous concentration of railroad resources in the hands of a very few companies.

It is encouraging that the railroads recognize their

responsibilities to serve the public interest by providing reliable and cost competitive bulk commodity transportation. However, talk is not enough. The Grange became involved at the national level more than a century ago in response to the need for a more effective public/private partnership between the railroads, their customers, and society as a whole.

The National Grange realizes the United States has the best postal service in the world, however we urge the postal service to vigorously pursue ways to keep the same quality service and to institute procedures to maintain the highest level of safety for the employees and patrons throughout the entire system. We also urge that all post offices be handicap accessible.

The crucial link in providing universal postal service throughout rural America is our nation's rural mail carriers. We pledge our support to fight to maintain rural free delivery and to defend the interest of the dedicated mail carriers that make rural free delivery a fact of life for millions of rural Americans.

The Grange believes that personal watercraft safety can best be enhanced through a combination of increased personal watercraft operator education programs and the implementation of personal watercraft operator certification requirements administered by the states.

The National Grange encourages the manufacturers and remanufacturers of vehicles to consider the safety interests of approaching vehicles when designing, positioning and aiming the headlights. Each Grange should be encouraged to provide periodic regional child restraint seat safety checks or checkpoints.

The National Grange encourages the development of fuel-efficient vehicles to reduce our dependency on foreign oil suppliers. High-efficiency diesel engines are available now and should be offered to U.S. consumers as they are in other countries (covers #809 CA). Hybrid vehicles present a potential danger to emergency responders. Special training should be provided to avoid the potential dangers. Automobile manufacturers should be encouraged to minimize hazards from hybrid vehicles to emergency responders.

The profits generated by the oil companies can and should be used to find new sources of energy for the country, therefore the National Grange opposes any attempt to impose a windfall profits tax.

The National Grange supports efforts to improve highway traffic safety by urging stronger penalties for serious violations such as excessive speeding and DUI.

Exaction

Personal Income Tax

1. The National Grange supports developing a simpler and fairer federal income tax, written in precise, plain, and understandable language. We further support simplifying the language that is used in the government's instruction pamphlets for filing individual income taxes.
2. The National Grange favors a restoration of the full income averaging procedure. We especially favor continuing five and 10-year averaging of personal pension funds for income tax purposes.
3. The National Grange favors continuing income indexing.
4. The National Grange supports preferential income tax deductions for two-wage earner families by thus removing the "Marriage Penalty" from the U.S. tax code.
5. The National Grange supports deducting state sales tax from federal income tax returns.
6. The National Grange supports a 100 percent tax deduction for all qualified charitable contributions for all federal taxpayers.
7. The National Grange supports equalizing the mileage rates for volunteer services and medical transportation with mileage rates permitted for businesses for tax purposes.
8. The National Grange favors income tax credits for those families who care for their elderly or handicapped relatives who otherwise would become residents of a nursing home. We support legislation to allow a tax deduction for all federal taxpayers for Long Term Care Insurance premiums. We further support exempting all benefits paid under Long Term Care insurance policies from all income taxes.
9. The National Grange favors making Social Security benefits completely exempt from personal income taxes. The National Grange further supports legislation that would prohibit any state from imposing an income tax on the pension income of any individual who is not a resident of that state.
10. The National Grange strongly supports the continuation of all current tax deductions allowed on real estate mortgages.
11. The National Grange supports legislation to allow voluntary contributions of \$00 to be solicited on all federal income tax forms to fund our national parks. The Grange supports permitting an individual to designate \$00 on his/her federal income tax return

for the USA Olympic Program.

12. The National Grange supports a 100% federal income tax credit to law enforcement officers for purchasing their own bulletproof vests.
13. The National Grange supports allowing a total of \$500.00 in income tax credits for political contributions.
14. The National Grange supports expanding medical flexible spending accounts to allow employees or retirees to set aside part of their pre tax pay or pension. We further recommend that any unspent medical flexible spending account balance be rolled into the next year's account or refunded to the employee or retiree as taxable income.
15. The National Grange supports a 100 percent federal income tax deduction for all medical insurance.
16. The National Grange supports the elimination of the cap on Social Security taxable wages.

Business, Investment, Capital Gains, and Inheritance Taxation

1. The National Grange supports legislation to permit farmers the method of depreciation that is most suitable to the uncertainties of their businesses. We support depreciation schedules for agricultural capital assets that accurately reflect the useful life of those assets. In particular, we support a depreciation schedule of 15 years for single purpose farm structures (confinement houses, etc.). Other real property should have a depreciable usable life of no more than 25 years. We further urge Congress and the IRS to revise codes to eliminate the reporting of government funded environmental and conservation mandated cost-share monies as income to the recipients.
2. The National Grange supports the reinstatement of the Investment Tax Credit or accelerated depreciation with a \$100,000 value eligibility limit.
3. The National Grange supports preferential treatment for capital gains income. We support the abolishment of the capital gains tax. Until then, we support the concept of indexing the basic value of an asset, so that only the real gain and not the inflation value is subject to the capital gains tax. We further support excluding capital gains up to \$500,000 from sale of agricultural lands from taxable income. We further support excluding all of the proceeds on the sale or exchange of qualified farmland development rights to a tax-exempt conservation organization from all capital gains taxes. We further support allowing farmers to invest any un-excluded capital gains from the sale of real and personal property into tax-deferred accounts, such as IRAs.
4. The National Grange strongly believes that employees should not be liable for un-remitted income or FICA taxes if the employer properly withheld those taxes from the employee's pay but then failed to make the proper payments to the IRS or the state.
5. We oppose the use of income tax write-offs from farming to reduce the amount of taxes that are owed on the earnings of non-farm businesses or professions.
6. The National Grange opposes the enactment of any federal tax on securities transactions.
7. The National Grange supports the uniform application of all timber depletion allowances in the tax code to all timberland owners regardless of the size of their timberland holdings.
8. The National Grange supports legislation abolishing the federal estate tax, especially for small business and agriculture. We support retaining current provisions for a full stepped up basis on inheritances. Until the federal estate tax is repealed we favor using the current use value as the basis for the property for estate tax purposes. The National Grange further supports a personal exemption from federal estate taxes of five million dollars per person until the federal estate tax is repealed.
9. The National Grange supports federal tax credits or tax deductions to growers or grower co-operatives that build or own ethanol production facilities.
10. The National Grange supports any legislation prohibiting employers from borrowing from an employee's pension fund. The National Grange supports legislation that would place employees or former employees who had invested in their employers stock as a part of their retirement plan to be placed ahead of payments to other creditors.
11. The National Grange supports action by the U.S. Department of Justice and State Attorneys General to actively prosecute and imprison cooperative executives and others suspected of illegal actions resulting in a cooperative declaring bankruptcy. Any illegal gains obtained via these prosecutions should be returned to the assets of the cooperative, along with criminal fines imposed on cooperative executives as punishment.

Sales, Excise Taxes and Internet

1. The National Grange opposes the enactment of any national sales tax or any form of value added tax.
2. The National Grange supports the current federal law prohibiting any charges or taxes on e-mail or the use of the Internet and supports legislation to make prohibition of Internet or e-mail taxation permanent. The National Grange supports legislation that would prohibit mail order houses or Internet retailers from being forced to collect state sales taxes on mail order or Internet purchases from out of state purchasers. We further support legislation prohibiting a federal sales or use tax being imposed on mail order or Internet sales.
3. The National Grange supports the current levels of taxation of tobacco products at the federal, state and local level.

Taxes – General

1. We support the present tax treatment of agricultural cooperatives.
2. The National Grange supports a federal prohibition on the imposition of any tax or fee on water that is drawn from private wells, lakes, and irrigation ponds.
3. The National Grange urges Congress to maintain tax policies that will preserve the ability of this nation to find and produce domestic oil and gas resources. We support the current oil import fee and the domestic crude oil fee.
4. The National Grange seeks a permanent tax exemption for income that is raised by non-profit organizations such as the Grange. Until then, we oppose IRS guidelines that classify corporate sponsorships as advertising revenue, and thus, unrelated business income for non-profit organizations. We further support legislation to raise the minimum gross income filing requirements for non-profit organizations.
5. We support a further strengthening of the “Taxpayers’ Bill of Rights”. We support placing the burden of proof on the IRS - not the taxpayer - under due process of law and providing a course of action in which the taxpayer could defend himself and recover his costs and attorney fees should the IRS fail to prove its case. We support giving the taxpayer the right to record all interviews with IRS people and to set a reasonable time and place for the meeting. We sup-

port prohibiting the IRS from sending out bills that are in excess of owed taxes, except for interest and penalties.

6. The National Grange supports the rights of local governments to use tax-exempt municipal financing without further limitations being imposed by Congress.
7. The National Grange supports requiring a two-thirds vote of each House of Congress to increase taxes. We further support federal legislation to deny jurisdiction or explicitly limit the authority of the U.S. Supreme Court or any lower courts of the United States to instruct or order a state or political subdivision to levy or increase taxes as a remedy for any civil litigation.
8. The National Grange opposes any sale of information from individual tax returns to any agency or individual.

Transportation

Highway Policy, Interstate System, and Federal Highway Trust Fund (HTF)

1. The National Grange strongly supports the continuation and reauthorization of the Highway Trust Fund. We support removing the Highway Trust Fund from the federal budget. The National Grange also supports the creation of a Federal Mass Transportation Trust Fund from user tax revenues separate from the Highway Trust Fund and highway user taxes. The National Grange opposes increasing the federal gasoline tax for purposes other than the Highway Trust Fund. We further support federal legislation to remove federal fuel tax from fuel used to operate farm trucks. The National Grange will oppose any proposal that would change the concept of dedicating all federal motor fuel taxes to the HTF to be used for highway and highway related purposes, including legislation that would use a federal motor fuel tax increase to reduce federal budget deficits. We oppose impounding HTF monies as a means of enforcement of federal laws.
2. The National Grange favors full compensation for homes, farming operations and businesses when displaced by eminent domain for highway right-of-ways.
3. The National Grange will lobby for additional federal

funds to be allocated to affected states for increased maintenance of the NAFTA roadways. Additionally, the National Grange calls for increased border surveillance to ensure that commercial vehicles and drivers based in Canada and Mexico are in full compliance with the United States' motor vehicle equipment standards and requirements.

4. The National Grange supports reauthorization of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA) in 200 We particularly support including the following provisions:
 - a. Additional funding for core safety programs that are properly directed to lifesaving roadway safety projects.
 - b. Provisions to reduce administrative delays at federal and state agencies responsible for approving highway planning.
 - c. New financial incentives for States to obligate new congestion relief funding for projects that reduce highway bottlenecks.
 - d. Full funding by the Congress for all "guaranteed" highway funds in future Transportation Appropriations bills.
 - e. Full enforcement of additional new fuel tax fraud provisions and additional credit for the Highway Trust Fund for revenue enhancements related to the new tax collection on ethanol.
5. The National Grange supports streamlining environmental requirements to expedite the completion of transportation congestion-relief projects in order to reduce pollution while promoting efficient land use and road capacity in areas designated for growth. We also support redirecting the federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality program (CMAQ) to fund new passenger and freight inter-modal hubs in highly congested areas to serve trains, trucking companies and bus companies. Grants should be provided to improve intercity Amtrak stations and/or to construct public freight transfer stations that combine bus service, rapid transit and other transportation services, which operate on flexible schedules as a way of reducing traffic congestion and improving the environment.
6. The National Grange recommends that the interstate highway system adopt the use of a uniform transponder system for all-open road tolling nationwide.
7. The National Grange opposes the sale of any toll roads or bridges
8. The National Grange supports legislation standardizing the numbering of highway exits to correspond with the mile markers on all interstate highways.

Highways – Non-Interstate

1. The National Grange urges government agencies to give a high priority to conserving land for agricultural purposes when considering the location and design of highways including planting trees and shrubs along highways in places where such growth could stop soil erosion and aid in snow control.
2. The federal-aid system of highways should be continued as a federal-state partnership with more flexibility in the states' use of money for safety, construction, and maintenance of state highways, including construction of local bridges that are built to the community's needs as determined by county and local road commissions. The National Grange will cooperate with the American Highway Users Alliance and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials in urging Congress to ensure adequate resources and attention for rural roads and bridges.
3. To promote driver safety the National Grange recommends that the Highway Safety Administration require surface highway reflectors on the center lane divider of all two-way highways on the federal-aid highway system and that the federal Department of Transportation adopt standards to ensure a better and more durable road surface.
4. The National Grange supports expansion of rural intercity bus, air and rail services.
5. The National Grange supports funding to construct adequate parking or rest areas to allow commercial and other drivers to stop and rest. Funding should also be provided for adequate policing and/or better lighting for the present and future parking areas for the safety of those who use these facilities.

Highway Safety

1. The National Grange supports the enforcement of weight limits on vehicles operating on our highways
2. The National Grange will work with the federal Department of Transportation and the National Safety Council to develop truck regulations requiring the use of brushes and/or flaps that will channel the water down reducing the spray, and prohibiting the use of triple trailer trucks on all federal highways.
3. Railroad crossings in rural areas should have ripple strips installed in road surfaces on approaches to crossings, be clear of brush and other vision-inhib-

iting material and be equipped with flashing warning lights.

4. The National Grange supports standards requiring that all motorcycle, bicycle, and moped riders wear protective helmets, and wear clothing or have an apparatus to make them more visible to other motorists. We further recommend that federal standards for motorcycle helmets be raised to provide the best protection and visibility.
5. The Grange supports adequate government resources for an effective federal Highway Safety Program.
6. The National Grange supports requiring all motor vehicles to have a rear bumper or undercarriage guard coming within 16 inches of the ground.
7. The National Grange urges automobile manufacturers to include the following modifications on their new models by 2010: uniformly located door latches; louder and more visible interior direction signal indicators; spare tires of equal quality and size as the regular tires; uniform tow points; light sensitive sensors that would automatically turn on automobile headlights at a certain degree of darkness; daytime running lights; at least one mirror on the right side of a vehicle to reflect an undistorted view of images and a curvature type mirror to pick up blind spots; and headlights that turn on automatically with the windshield wipers.
8. The National Grange supports standardizing the cellular emergency numbers for the interstate highway systems throughout the country to just one number, Star 9
9. The National Grange supports legislation that would penalize a driver for using a cell phone when it is a proven cause of reckless or unsafe driving or is the cause of an accident.
10. The National Grange supports regulations that would strengthen the safety standards for smaller cars and opposes any weakening of the safety standards of sport utility vehicles (SUVs).
11. The National Grange strongly supports the development of state and national laws that would require reflective tape on all existing and new trucks to help reduce under-ride accidents.
12. The National Grange supports legislation banning high intensity discharge (HID) headlights and/or driving lights and/or Xenon lights.
13. The National Grange urges the U.S. Department of Transportation to encourage all states to use the same laws pertaining to school bus operations and traffic control around school buses. We support legislation requiring all newly manufactured

school buses to be equipped with strobe lights that are highly visible in all types of weather. The National Grange further requests that all school buses be required to have a sign on the back stating "Stay Back 50 Feet". The National Grange supports the present U.S. Department of Transportation requirement for random drug and alcohol testing for school bus drivers. We consider any proposed requirement for installed school bus driver monitoring devices on school buses to be unnecessary, expensive and counterproductive.

14. The National Grange supports legislation restricting the placement of any visual entertainment device within the driver's area of vision within a motor vehicle.
15. The National Grange urges automobile manufacturers to standardize the placement of air bag components and furnish a book on their operations to Fire/Rescue and EMS personnel for the safety of everyone.

Impaired Driving

1. We support a nationwide enactment of the "per se" law, which makes driving with a blood alcohol content in excess of .08 percent a violation and believe the dangers of drinking and driving should be included in the anti-drug campaign of the federal government's information and education programs.
2. The National Grange supports federal legislation to maintain the minimum age for the consumption of alcoholic beverages at 21.
3. The National Grange recommends that transportation authorities, both government and privately owned, be vested with the authority to randomly test employees for illegal drug and alcohol use.

Truck Transportation Policy

1. The National Grange will support legislation and regulatory policies that enhance stability and competition in truck operations for cost-effective and dependable service.
2. The National Grange supports new regulations requiring brake lights to be activated on commercial motor vehicles when a Jake Brake is used.
3. The National Grange supports legislation that would require reporting of positive drug tests for drivers with any commercial license to the Department of Motor Vehicles of the issuing state. The

report of a positive drug test should remain in the driver's file for a period of two years. We further support provisions to appeal positive drug testing results and mandate a second test by a different facility to eliminate false positive tests.

4. The National Grange supports Department of Transportation (DOT) reclassifying light-, medium-, and heavy-duty utility vehicles separate from on-highway (cross-country) trucks. However, we recommend that logbooks not be required on light-, medium-, and heavy-duty utility vehicles.

Water Transportation

1. The National Grange supports a moratorium on user fee increases for agricultural products transported on coastal and inland waterways. If user fees are increased, such fees should be based on the percentage of federal expenditures attributable to opening said waterways to barge traffic. These fees should be placed in an Inland Waterways Trust Fund and used only for construction and maintenance of inland waterways.
2. The National Grange supports maintaining the current United States Corps of Engineers' season for transporting grain on the Missouri River.
3. The National Grange supports the immediate implementation of "Alternative H in the Upper Mississippi Study" which encourages upgrades to the locks on the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers, facilitating greater barge traffic and providing an economic engine to fuel growth and prosperity in the entire Midwest.
4. The National Grange recommends that the Jones Act, which requires all freight moved between American ports being carried in American ships, be repealed.
5. The National Grange supports legislation to prevent any company controlled by a foreign government from taking over U.S. port facilities.
6. The National Grange supports legislation that would require all U.S. cruise ships have emergency personnel as members of their crews.

Railroad Transportation

1. The National Grange recommends that the Department of Transportation (DOT) consider scheduling more commuter trains on their lines to offer better service to the public.
2. The National Grange urges the U.S. Department of

Transportation, the Surface Transportation Board (STB), the Interstate Commerce Commission and similar transportation agencies to consider economic impact and public interests when undertaking transportation planning with regard to the impact of rail line abandonment. We support integration of rail and highway system planning in advance of possible abandonment to maximize economies to the public and private sectors as well as federal assistance to states for this purpose and to assist in rail takeovers by states where maintenance of service is cost effective to local or state governments and to local shippers. We support economic and social impact statements from railroads to the ICC and state governments as well as meaningful local public hearings in the areas affected as a part of the abandonment process.

3. The National Grange urges that abandoned railroad crossings be returned to a smooth surface. All railroad crossing signals or signs should be removed within sixty (60) days following abandonment.
4. The National Grange encourages all levels of government to support the development and maintenance of a strong and effective rail network to enhance competition among and between rail carriers in order to ensure efficient rail service and reasonable rates, and for other purposes.
5. The National Grange supports legislation requiring warning reflectors to be placed on both sides of all railroad cars in the United States.
6. The National Grange supports legislation that would require railroads to reveal to each landowner, before abandonment, the full and complete legal basis on which the railroad has claimed its right to occupy the corridor. If the railroad's right is less than fee simple ownership, the railroad should disclose to each landowner that its occupancy right would be extinguished upon abandonment. We believe that the right-of-way of an abandoned land grant railroad should revert to the last payer of taxes on the property, or by right of adverse possession or grant titles as well as the possible use of railroad right-of-ways, determined to be economically unfeasible, by adjacent landowners.
7. The National Grange will lobby for the discontinuation of remote controlled locomotives operated in the switch yards, or over a public or private highway rail crossing without an Engineer occupying the cab of the locomotive who has the required skills to stop the locomotive and its attached equipment nationwide.

Air Travel

1. The National Grange supports strengthening the English language certification for foreign pilots operating a commercial aircraft in the United States.
2. The National Grange supports repeal of the “Jim Wright Law” that requires passengers with flights originating or terminating at Dallas’ Love Field to or from destinations beyond Texas, or the four states contiguous to Texas, to land, disembark, retrieve their luggage and recheck in before they may continue their flight.
3. The National Grange will urge the continuing utilization of Air Marshals on random flights.
4. The National Grange urges the United States Department of Homeland Security to scrutinize their passenger screening/security contractors to appropriately provide adequate safe airport screening/security during hours of operation.
5. The National Grange opposes legislation authorizing the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to establish fees for air traffic control and related activities, services, facilities, and equipment that initially increases user fees and taxes for general aviation such as crop dusting, pipeline patrol, power line patrol, forest fire patrol, and commuting to rural communities. We also oppose legislation turning all major commercial airlines into full partners with the FAA on matters of decision making by creating a board dominated by airline representatives who would help the FAA establish user fee pricing schedules.

General Transportation Policy

1. The Grange believes that it is in the best interest of farmers and consumers to continue efforts toward achieving a balanced transportation system at the lowest cost consistent with adequate and efficient service. However, we oppose efforts by State governments to toll expanses of the Interstate Highway System built and operating as toll free.
2. The National Grange urges federal and state weed control agencies to control noxious weeds on their highway right-of-ways and to work with the railroads in an effort to control noxious weeds along railroad right-of-ways but always respecting the landowners’ property rights and preferences.
3. The National Grange supports inter-modal ownership of transportation carriers only if the acquiring carrier establishes that inter-modal ownership

is consistent with the public interest; will enable the acquiring carrier to use the other mode to public advantage in its transportation operations; will not unreasonably restrain competition and will not result in segments of agriculture and rural areas being held by captive shippers.

4. The National Grange supports creating a national uniform vehicle identification system to be used by disabled drivers. Legislation should be enacted to include blindness as a provision for issuance of a disabled parking permit.
5. We oppose efforts to replace current highway signs with multilingual signs.
6. The National Grange strongly supports a simple public announcement procedure for special needs citizens in intercity bus transportation systems.
7. The National Grange supports legislation that would expand the Lemon Law for all vehicles in all states. We further support legislation that allows independent vehicle maintenance facilities or car dealership garages to have access to the technology/programming needed to repair all makes of vehicles so that the consumer has a choice of where to take his/her vehicle for maintenance and repair.

U.S. Postal Service

1. The National Grange supports efforts by the Postal Service to eliminate waste, hold down operating costs and increase services and reliability. We make the following recommendations to the U. S. Postal Service:
 - a. We urge that any future postal rate increases be no greater than the rate of inflation.
 - b. We will also support stable rates or eligibility requirements for nonprofit organizations’ postal rates. We support the retention of the third class bulk mail rate for not-for-profit-organizations at a reasonable rate.
 - c. We support reorganization of the Postal Rate Commission to include representation of the interests of mail users.
 - d. We recommend that the U.S. Postal service be returned to a service branch of the federal government.
2. The National Grange continues to support Rural Free Mail Delivery Service as an essential part of universal mail service. We support the continuation of rural Saturday mail delivery and all other mail services to rural areas. Patrons of rural post offices must be given six (6) months notice before their

post office is closed and must be provided with an opportunity to express their viewpoint at a public hearing.

3. The National Grange will promote the proportional payment of retirement funds from the U.S. Post Office and the U.S. government in relation to the number of year's retirees worked for each entity. We strongly oppose any change in the current postal employee retirement programs that would adversely affect the retirement of any postal employ-

ees, limit the retirement options of current postal employees or result in a reduction of retirement benefits for current or future postal employee.

4. The National Grange recommends that federal postal regulations require all future installation of cluster boxes be on the same side of the road as the residence or business.
5. The National Grange encourages the Postal Service to make their patrons aware that handicapped persons may apply for mail delivery to their door.



Grand Rapids 2009

143rd National Grange Convention

Hosted by the Midwest Region

November 17-21, 2009

Amway Grand Plaza Hotel

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Questions?

Contact Jessie Cope at 1-888-4-GRANGE, ext. 113 or
jcope@nationalgrange.org



ACTION 2009!

Grassroots Training Manual
for Subordinate, Pomona
and State Grange Legislative
Committees for the Year 2009

Prepared by
the National Grange
Legislative Department

National Grange Session circa 1930.

ACTION 2009!

Grassroots Training Manual For Subordinate, Pomona And State Grange Legislative Committees For The Year 2009

This Grassroots Training Manual is designed to provide guidance to volunteer Grange members who are interested in developing Grange policy and Grange legislative advocacy activities. By taking action, and using the information provided in this handbook, you are improving your community as well as helping your Grange. Legislative advocacy at the local, state and federal level allows you to be involved in the decision making process that affects your life.

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“Celebrating the Responsibilities of Citizenship”

Since 1867, Grange members have banded together to advocate for rural communities all across tional Grange has become a vital force in preserving and expanding American democracy through direct civic participation in the political process. “Celebrating the Responsibilities of Citizenship” is the theme of the National Grange Legislative Department. It is used to describe the National Grange’s non-partisan, issue-oriented, grassroots legislative program. Strengthening the role of civic participation in our society has been a goal of the National Grange for 140 years.

Legislative advocacy is the process of citizens communicating their views and concerns regarding policy issues with their legislators and government officials. As constituents, policy makers pay close attention to your interests. They often refer to the phone calls, letters, faxes and e-mails they have received on specific issues when deciding their positions on important issues.

While grassroots activism is an important part of successful legislative advocacy, grassroots involvement is also a vital part of the Grange experience. Grassroots opportunities to participate in worthwhile legislative programs add value to Grange membership. Successful legislative activities help drive increase membership, increase community awareness about the Grange, and grassroots participation. Today, grassroots participation, rather than membership numbers, is the most accurate measure of political influence.

I. Non-Partisan Advocacy Since 1867

The National Grange was founded as a non-partisan organization. The Grange does not endorse any specific political parties or individual candidates for elective public office. But it does not mean that the Grange cannot be actively involved in the political arena. Most common political activities, such as inviting a candidate to speak at a Grange meeting, or informing an elected official or a candidate of Grange-supported positions on legislation, are not partisan activities. Non-partisan political activities allow elected and appointed government officials to become familiar with the Grange and its members, thus creating a better working relationship regarding our mutual policy interests. The key is common sense and fairness. The goal is to focus on issues, not individuals or political parties.

Examples of Partisan Activities

- Provide resources to individuals seeking public office at any level, including money, gifts, or free use of facilities, equipment, publications, etc.
- Endorse or promote the candidacy of an individual or political party for public office.
- Negotiate the support or opposition of the Grange on any issue that is contingent on the election or defeat of a particular candidate.
- Publish, quote, distribute or use candidate specific campaign literature to influence the outcome of an election.
- Support a party caucus within Congress, state legislature, or local government.
- Attempt to direct or influence the vote of any Grange member for an elective office.

Examples of Non-Partisan Activities

- Work with elected officials to pass or defeat legislation or regulations in line with Grange policy.
- Work to support or oppose passage of a referendum or ballot measure.
- Publicly acknowledge efforts by elected officials who support or oppose legislation that is in line with Grange policy.
- Publish voting records of elected officials.
- Appear before committees or public bodies, to provide testimony on Grange policy.
- Present “Friend of the Grange” awards to elected officials who have supported Grange positions on issues in the past.
- Quote a statement by a candidate for public office regarding issues favored or opposed by the Grange as long as it is not used to influence the outcome of the election. (All candidates should be offered a chance to comment on the same issues.)
- Host a candidate’s forum at a Grange meeting. (All candidates must be invited, even if all will not attend.)
- Welcome Grange members who are also candidates for public office or office holders who attend your Grange meeting. Candidates or office holders who are also Grange members do not forfeit their right to attend regular Grange meetings because of their partisan political status. These guests should be offered the same hospitality that would normally be extended to a visiting or regular member of your Grange.
- Provide candidates or partisan organizations with copies of Grange positions on legislative issues so long as all candidates or partisan organizations are eligible to receive the same materials.
- Prepare voter education materials with the Grange’s positions on legislative issues to distribute prior to an election so long as there are no references to individual candidates or political parties.
- Organize “Get Out The Vote” drives in your community.

SUCCESS STORY

Legislative Program Recognition Success Story

In early 2005, educational textbook publisher McGraw Hill contacted the National Grange to ask permission to use excerpts from the *National Grange Blueprint for Rural America* as well as references to the National Grange Legislative Program in the 2005/2006 edition of their high school social studies textbook on American government entitled *United States Government: Democracy in Action* by Richard Remy. McGraw Hill selected the National Grange as the nation’s “...model nonpartisan grassroots political organization” in order to teach high school students about grassroots politics as well as explain the advocacy role of private, volunteer, civic organizations in American society in the early 21st Century.

II. Shaping Your Issues

Grassroots legislative advocacy starts with selecting the right issue for your Grange.

1. **Understand your Grange policy.** The Grange is an organization that bases its legislative programs on the policy adopted by its grassroots members and delegates. Before selecting an issue to advocate, please be sure that you clearly understand your Grange’s current public policy. Refer to your State Legislative Policy Book for state issues. If you are interested in national issues, please refer to the National Grange Legislative Policy Book or the National Grange’s “Blue Print for Rural America 2009.”
2. **Have timely information.** Visit the National Grange web site (www.nationalgrange.org) or your State Grange web site to find issues that your State or National Grange are currently working on. Also, check daily printed or online newspapers and TV/radio news to

make yourself an information source to your Grange.

- 3. Establish a priority issue.** After browsing Grange policy materials and reviewing current issues before Congress or your state legislature, select an issue that you believe can be presented successfully to policy makers and will encourage your fellow Granges members to participate.
- 4. Know your issue.** Once you select your major issue, you need to develop expertise on that issue. Collect as much information as you can. Find Grange policy related to the issue. Write a short statement for problems and solutions. (See Appendix A) Create a one-page fact sheet or issue brief. Keep alert on the issue.

III. Developing Your Advocacy Strategy

- 1. Set your goal.** What is a realistic goal? You need to consider some compromise solutions as well as the ideal outcome. Setting your goal will help keep you on track during your advocacy efforts. (See Appendix A)
- 2. Understand dynamics of your issue.** Every issue will have positive & negative points as well as identifiable allies & foes. To have a successful advocacy strategy, you need to know where you are and what people on the other side think. Also, you need to know the legislative history and background information concerning how the issue was taken up by Congress or your state legislature, and in which direction the legislative discussion is heading. Fill out the Grange Issue Worksheet to have a sense of your issue's dynamics. (See Appendix A)
- 3. Identify your time and resources.** You will always have limited amounts of time and resources for your advocacy. It is important to decide ahead of time how to prioritize your time and resources as you are crafting a comprehensive lobbying plan. (See Appendix A)

- 4. Define your lobbying road map.** Before going to meet your Representative or writing a letter to the editor of your local newspaper, have a bigger picture of your entire lobbying activities. Review your various lobbying tactics and prioritize their use within your time and resources to best serve your goal. Fill out the Grange Action Plan (See Appendix B) and make it your road map during the course of your issue advocacy.

IV. Implementing Grassroots Lobbying Techniques

1. Direct Contact To Policy Makers

A. Writing A Letter (Or Email)

- Indicate that you are a constituent. Be sure your address is on the letter, not just on the envelope. If you write an email, put your address at the bottom. Identify yourself as a Grange member with any official position you may hold in the Grange.
- Use personal letterhead. The more personal your letter is, the more influence it has.
- Sign your name above your printed name at the end of your message. If you write an email, put your electronic signature instead.
- Keep your letter short and to the point. Limit each letter to one issue of concern.
- Be factual and use credible information. Explain the impact that the issue you are interested in is having on your life, on the members of your Grange and your community. If your position on the issue is also a matter of conscience or philosophy, make that clear as well.
- Be courteous, polite, direct and non-threatening. Respect other people who don't agree with your opinions.
- If applicable, thank the legislator or public official for supporting the Grange's position in the past.

- Include a copy of National Grange or State Grange policy on the issue, or include a copy of a resolution your Grange has adopted on this issue when available.
- Ask for a response. Request that they inform you of their views on the issue of concern raised in your letter. If the response is vague or indicates a lack of understanding of the issue, follow-up your initial letter to help clarify your position on the issue.
- Share with your Grange, at the next regular meeting, all correspondences you exchanged with public offices.
- Send a copy of your letter or email to your State Grange Legislative Department (Committee) and the National Grange's Legislative Department.

Sample Letter

July 4th, 2009

The Honorable xxxx
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative xxxx:

On behalf of the members of Your Town Grange #123, I am urging you to support federal legislation to expand access to advanced telecommunications services in underserved rural areas.

Universal access to affordable, reliable and competitive telecommunications technologies such as telephone, cellular, wireless, digital broadcast television, radio, Internet, satellite and competitive video services must be available to rural communities at affordable costs. Advanced telecommunications technologies are converging. Therefore, national, state and local laws that govern these technologies should remove the regulatory uncertainty that has deterred advanced telecommunications investment in rural America.

The members of Your Town Grange believe that the Internet delivers information, services and products efficiently, irrespective of geographic location. Rural telecommuters enjoy rewarding careers and lifestyles while conserving energy and reducing traffic congestion. Cell phones increase personal security in remote areas and offer cost effective service to rural, low income individuals. Telemedicine and tele-education both bring vital new services to rural communities. Global positioning satellites improve productivity on America's farms. Even with these benefits, Your Town Grange believes we must protect children from inappropriate materials and we must reduce incidents of spam, fraud and loss of privacy from these technologies. Expanding access to new telecommunications technologies in rural areas will spark the creation of new service providers, new innovations and new applications that will become more affordable to rural communities.

Enclosed is a copy of National Grange telecommunications reform policy. I would appreciate learning your views on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Joan Patron, Legislative Director
Your Town Grange #123
123 Grange Road
Your Town, State 12345

cc. National Grange Legislative Department
Your State Grange Legislative Director or State Grange Office

B. Making a phone call

- Direct your calls to a specific individual instead of going through the switchboard.
 - Introduce yourself as a constituent and also a Grange member. Stick to one issue and make it succinct. Before you hang up the phone, don't forget to thank them for their time and ask for a follow-up contact.
 - If your legislators or other public officials are not available, try to speak to an aide who is responsible for the issue you're concerned with. For example, if you want to talk about a health issue, ask to speak with the 'Health LA' (Legislative Aide).
 - When using a voice mail, leave your name, address, phone number, and a clear message with the person who answers the phone. You may begin by saying "I'm _____, calling from _____ Grange, and I'd like to leave a message for _____." At the end of the message, ask for a written/verbal response to your message.
- organize a small group visit with your Grange members or coalition members.
 - In most cases, you may have twenty minutes or less with a staff person, and as little as ten minutes with Members of Congress or state legislator. Use that brief time by sticking to your topic.
 - Address your legislator as "Representative" or "Senator".
 - Provide personal and local examples of the impact of the issue you are interested in.
 - Leave a one-page fact sheet on the issue.
 - Leave a copy of the 2009 National Grange Blueprint for Rural America or your state Grange Blueprint.
 - After the meeting, send a personal thank you letter and follow-ups in a timely manner with any requested materials and information.

C. Personal / Group visit

The personal / group visit is the single most effective lobbying technique. It gives to your legislators or other public officials a big impression and long lasting impression about you, your issue and your efforts as a member of Grange. It's not always necessary to travel to Washington, DC. All U.S. Representatives and Senators have local district offices that maintain regular business hours and most Representatives and many Senators return to their districts or state every weekend or every other weekend. Many state legislators and other public officials have similar satellite or district offices. Most local elected officials also maintain office hours to meet with constituents.

- Make your appointment with a written request and follow-up call. Don't forget to say that you are a constituent. Indicate the date and time you wish to visit and advise them of what specific issue you would like to discuss. You may also
- Send a request letter including a simple statement of your point of view on your issue to the Committee (or Subcommittee) Chairman for his / her review.
 - If you are selected to testify, pay careful attention to each committee's rules for submission, format and the number of copies of your prepared statement. Submitting copies of a written statement in advance of the hearing is usually a must.

D. Testimony

Any citizen can be invited to testify before Congress, their state legislature and their local government. Most of the people who are testifying are not public speakers or professionals, but just average citizens. But, to be invited to deliver testimony, you should have solid knowledge on your subject and a well-prepared statement. Legislative Committees regularly hold public hearings on proposed legislation within their jurisdiction. Check with the Committee's website to learn about upcoming Committee hearings schedules.

- DO NOT read your prepared statement. Instead, orally summarize it. (Your written statement will be placed in the hearing record.)
- Pay attention to the time limit for your oral presentation. Keep your statement short – two to three minutes.
- In your written statement, put a heading at the top that follows this general format:
 - Statement of
 - [Your Name]
 - [Your title and/or the Organization you represent, if any]
 - [The Name of the Subcommittee/Committee]
 - [The Subject of the Hearing]
 - [The Date of the Hearing]
- You must be prepared to defend or support every statement you make during questions.
- Begin and end your presentation by thanking the Chairman and the Committee for giving you the opportunity to testify.
- Find the mailing or email address of the government agency for submitting written comments and the name of the person to contact for more information in the Federal Register or comparable state government publication.
- Take note of the “comment period,” which specifies how long the agency will accept public comments. Usually, the file or docket stays open to comment for at least 60 days, though some comment periods have been as short as 10 days or as long as nine months.
- All comments should reference the docket number, the date and the page number of the issue of the Federal Register or comparable state publication.
- If you log on to www.Regulations.gov, you may use the electronic form prepared by the website to submit your comment directly to federal agencies.
- Clearly indicate if you are for or against the proposed rule or some part of it and why.
- You may attach a copy of articles, a resolution adopted by the Grange or other references that support your comments.

E. Public Comments

Government regulatory proposals are supposed to be reviewed by the general public before they become a final rule or resolution. You can participate in the rule-making process by submitting your comment or by attending public meetings that government agencies organize. When government agencies plan to issue a new regulation or revise an existing one, it places an announcement in the Federal Register at www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html. You may also want to visit www.Regulations.gov to find, review and submit comments on federal documents that are published in the Federal Register and are open for public comment. All state government agencies are also required to publish public notice of their proposed resolutions and any public hearings they are holding in a newspaper of record and/or on an official website. See Chapter V for more information.

F. Networking with Public Officials

It is important for each Grange to form effective, on-going working relationships with elected and public officials at the local, state and federal levels. These relationships will keep those officials apprised of how the Grange stands on certain issues and help the State Granges and National Grange advance our legislative priorities.

- Be a supportive partner with your elected representatives or other public officials who are helping advance Grange policy by working together to pass or defeat certain legislation or regulations. Publicize their efforts in support of Grange policy, including their voting records and let them know that you’ve conveyed their hard work to your members.

- Visiting your local, state or national elected representatives and appointed public officials at their office is a good way to maintain personal contact. Keep a personal / informal relationship by contacting each other on a regular basis.
- Invite your legislators or other public officials to a Grange meeting or event and ask them to give a brief speech. Once a year host a meeting or reception for newly elected or appointed officials from your area to welcome them to their new office.
- Present “Friend of the Grange” awards to public officials who have supported Grange positions on issues in the past.
- Remember to thank your legislators and other public officials for their efforts on behalf of your Grange. They always appreciate positive feedback.
- Send out season’s greetings messages to your public officials.
- Organize (or attend) a coalition press conference / rally / social event.
- Offer a monetary / in kind sponsorship for other organization or coalition events. Ask for a monetary / in kind sponsorship for Grange events.
- Attend (or hold) coalition meetings and use them as a way to educate other members of the coalition about the Grange’s involvement in legislative issues that affect family farmers and rural America. Learn more about a specific issue in those meetings and bring their resources to the Grange’s advocacy efforts.
- Build (or join) a master email list for a coalition in order to share timely information.

2. Coalition Efforts

Create or join a coalition to work with other organizations that have the same position on your issue to expand your lobbying power.

- Initiate (or join) a coalition letter / petition / testimony / Congressional visit / media ad.

3. Media Campaign

A. Getting Media Coverage

- Make a list of contacts at your local and state media outlets (TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, etc) and build a personal relationship with them.
- Create a newsworthy story with headlines such as: “_____ Grange Organizes State Capitol Rally for ____.”, or “_____ Discussion Hosted by ____ Grange.”

Coalition Success Story

In November 2006, residents of Cox’s Chapel in Grayson County, Virginia, were dismayed to hear that a new state prison was to be built in their scenic New River Valley community. Throughout the following months, the Cox’s Chapel Grange teamed up with non-members in Virginia and neighboring North Carolina to create the Cox’s Chapel Committee to Protect the New River. Together, those Grangers and non-Grangers spoke out at informational meetings, circulated petitions, and wrote countless editorials, and in April, it was finally announced that the preferred site for the prison would no longer be the original location along the New River.

The site, which was also saved thirty years ago from a proposed hydroelectric dam, is nothing less than a developer’s dream, but it is also in the middle of thousands of acres of other land already protected for future generations. By joining with non-Grange members, the Cox’s Chapel Grange helped to further the precedent of non-development and was able to protect their most valued natural resource.

- Send your press release to the appropriate media from your updated list. Send a fact sheet on your issue, biographies of people involved in your story, or any further information to reporters who request supplemental background.
- Make several follow-up calls within a week to make sure they have received the materials and if they have any further questions.
- Invite reporters to your Grange events such as press conferences, Grange forums, meetings, rallies, etc. Send them an invitation that includes an event schedule, highlighting speakers and special activities that will occur. Send a reminder a few days before the event with any updates. Follow-up with phone calls to encourage their attendance. Offer journalists complimentary registration or meals, if appropriate.
- Find out if your local and state media outlets accept Public Service Announcements (PSAs) and send your Grange's PSAs to them.

B. Using Ads for Radio, TV, Print, Internet, Etc.

- Remember, advertising messages can be controlled, while public relations messages often cannot. With advertising, you can say what you want and how you want because you are paying for the message to be displayed or heard. Establishing a paid advertising relationship with your local media outlet can also improve your Grange's coverage for non-paid news articles. Media outlets in your community are for profit businesses. Media organizations appreciate and are more likely to support local organizations that show financial support for their business through even modest advertising programs.
- Use the "AIDA" formula when creating your advertisement message: A – get the audience's ATTENTION, I – arouse the audience's INTEREST, D – create a DESIRE and A – stimulate ACTION.
- Consider your budget, timing and expected impact before you choose your advertisement format.
- Contact your targeted media outlet and request

to speak with their advertisement salesperson. Their in-house production team will help you organize your message, arrange for production and recommend air times within your budget. Remember to ask for the nonprofit rates.

- You can also find independent ad consultants by looking through your yellow pages, searching the Internet, etc. or contact design / fine arts or mass communications schools at your local colleges or universities to locate a designer or producer for a reasonable price.
- Ask for written materials that explain the prices and take some time to compare prices before making a decision. Remember that peak times and days are more expensive but offer the most audience attention.

C. Writing a Letter to the Editor

- Write your letter in response to a specific article or column. Be sure to mention the title and date in your opening statement.
- State your support or opposition to the article in the opening sentence. Explain your reasons for support or opposition, backed up with examples or supporting statistics, as well as who will be affected by this issue.
- Explain why you have particular knowledge about this issue or why you are qualified to speak on this subject.
- End with a summary of your position, followed with any action you may ask of readers.
- Limit your letter to 400 words, preferably 200 words because long letters may be either drastically edited or not used at all.
- Always include your name, address and daytime phone number.
- You can mail, fax or e-mail your letter. The sooner you get it there, the more likely they will be able to use it.
- Start reading the letters in your newspaper to see what kinds of letters they use. Check the published guidelines for submission of letters.

4. Grassroots Campaign

A. Establishing a Regular Communication Program for Your Members

- If you want to educate your Grange members and urge them to take action, you should have an effective communication tool between you and your members.
- Give a report of your activities at every local Grange meeting
- Create your Grange website.
- Build an email distribution list as well as mailing list in your Grange.
- Send your information such as news updates or action alerts to your members by email and/or mail on a regular basis and post it on the website.

B. Organizing An Email/Letter/Postcard/Petition Writing Campaign

- Send out an action alert by email (and/or mail) and post it on your Grange website.
- In the alert, put a sample email/letter/postcard/petition and distribute it to your members through email (and /or mail) and your website.
- Provide the name and address the letter needs to be sent to either in Washington, D.C., in your state or in your local community. At the federal level, you can obtain information on how to identify and/or contact your elected member to the U.S. House of Representatives by simply visiting www.house.gov. For contact information for your U.S. Senators, visit www.senate.gov. All congressional web pages also have a direct e-mail program.
- Provide Grange policy and updated background information on the issue. Provide members with important information such as the bill's number and title and its summary.

- Remind each individual to include their name, address and indicate that they are a Grange member in their letter.
- If possible, set up legislative action software on your website which allows your member to find their lawmakers and send their message directly to them by typing their zip code.
- You can also organize a letter-to-the-editor campaign with your local or state Granger members to a particular newspaper and magazine.
- Writing campaigns can be organized at any public Grange meeting or event, as well.

C. Legislative Day

- Set up an annual, one-day, legislative event called "Legislative Day" as part of your Grange's legislative program.
- Announce your Legislative Day program and registration information at least two months prior to the event.
- Invite speakers such as policy experts or lawmakers. Invitations for speakers should be sent in writing at least one-month prior to the event. A follow-up telephone call should be made a week in advance of the event.
- Make an appointment to help participants visit lawmakers' offices. Help them prepare their visits by giving a meeting checklist and a brief instruction. Ask them to stick to one issue and provide their local / state points of view to their legislators.
- If possible, use the event as an advocacy opportunity for a specific issue. Invite local / state media reporters and announce your policy position on the issue.
- Organize a postcard / petition / letter writing campaign during the event.
- Have an educational seminar about how to become an effective policy advocate.
- Provide legislative information packets introducing your Grange's legislative activities and event giveaways to participants.

D. Public Grassroots Forum

- Hold a “Public Grassroots Forum” at your Grange to create additional support for your issue and publicize the legislative efforts of the Grange. Organize your Forum around a single issue of importance to your Grange and your community.
- Invite elected officials, representatives from organizations that support the issue, community leaders and the local media.
- Contact appropriate speakers to address the Forum. Invitations for speakers should be sent in writing at least one-month prior to the meeting. A follow-up telephone call should be made a week in advance of the meeting
- Prior to the meeting, prepare a written agenda for the Forum that explains when the event starts, who will introduce the speakers, who will be speaking, in what order they will speak, when the breaks (if any) will occur and when the Forum is scheduled to adjourn. Share this information with the local press. Tell the speakers exactly what will be expected of them at the Forum, including the length of their statements or comments and an opportunity to answer questions from the audience.
- Your Grange should provide a setting that will enable everyone to hear and be heard. A moderator should introduce the participants, distribute and review the written program agenda with the entire group and monitor the time allotted to each speaker so that the discussion will move along and everyone will have a chance to participate.
- Remember to provide ample time for questions and answers from the audience. Especially encourage members of the media who are present to participate in the question and answer portion of your program.
- Prepare membership applications and information concerning the Grange available to non-members who are attending the Forum. Invite non-members to participate in your Grange’s legislative advocacy activities. If they represent another organization, propose a coalition to address the issues together.

Legislative Banquet Success Story

On April 17, 2009 the Lycoming County Pomona Grange celebrated Grange Month 2009 by holding its 56th Annual Legislative Banquet at the Hughesville Volunteer Fire Company Social Hall in Hughesville, PA. More than 150 Grange members and invited guests filled the hall for a full program of food, fellowship and legislative programming. The program featured a reception that highlighted several of the prominent agricultural products of Lycoming County: dairy, honey and maple syrup, presented by local youth volunteer ambassador “Princesses” representing local dairy and honey producers. A delicious home style meal prepared and served by the volunteer fire company assured that the attendees were well fed.

The evening’s program included a virtual “who’s who” of local, state and national political leaders representing Lycoming County. The three county commissioners Rebecca Burke, Ernie Lorson and Jeff Wheeland of Lycoming County, the county’s elected judges and several other county officials attended the banquet and were recognized for their public service by the Grange. The two State Representatives, Hon. Garth Everett and Hon. Richard Mirabito as well as State Senator Gene Yaw, who represent Lycoming County in the Pennsylvania State Legislature were introduced and given a chance to speak about their experiences in Harrisburg. National Grange Legislative Director Leroy Watson was the keynote speaker and brought a report from Washington, DC and the National Grange. The Hon. Glen Thompson, U.S. Representative for the 5th District of Pennsylvania also provided remarks about the status of current legislation in Washington DC.

The evening’s events, concluded with the award of door prizes and closing remarks that reflected the Grange’s deepest gratitude toward our nation’s active duty military personnel and their families for their continued sacrifices to assure our freedoms. After the event, Lycoming County Pomona Grange Legislative Chairman Gordon Hiller was asked how he was able to get so many local, state and national leaders to attend the Pomona Grange’s Legislative Banquet. “Well, we asked them to attend,” was Brother Hiller’s response.

V. How to Find Legislative / Regulatory Information

1. Federal Legislative Information

For federal legislative information, please visit THOMAS at <http://thomas.gov>. THOMAS was launched in 1995 when the leadership of the 104th Congress directed the Library of Congress to make federal legislative information freely available to the public. Major information you can find on THOMAS includes:

- Bill text, summary, and status
- Public laws by law number
- House / Senate Roll Call Votes
- Activity in Congress

2. Federal Regulatory Information

For federal regulatory information, please visit Federal Register at www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html. The Federal Register is the official daily publication for rules, proposed rules, and notices of federal agencies and organizations, as well as executive orders and other presidential documents. Also visit www.Regulations.gov and find, review and submit comments on federal documents that are published in the Federal Register and open for public comment.

3. State Legislative / Regulatory Information

Please note that each state has its own information system for legislation and regulations.

Alabama

Alabama Legislature - www.legislature.state.al.us
Alabama Administrative Monthly
www.alabamaadministrativecode.state.al.us/monthly.html

Alaska

Alaska Legislature - <http://w3.legis.state.ak.us/home.htm>
Alaska Administrative Code
www.legis.state.ak.us/cgi-bin/folioisa.dll/aac
Alaska Public Notices <http://notes5.state.ak.us/pn/pubnotic.nsf>

Arizona

Arizona Legislature - www.azleg.state.az.us
Arizona Administrative Code
www.azsos.gov/public_services/rules.htm

Arkansas

Arkansas Legislature - www.arkleg.state.ar.us
Arkansas Register
http://www.sos.arkansas.gov/elections/elections_pdfs/register/august_03/august-03.pdf

California

California Legislature - www.leginfo.ca.gov
California Code of Regulations - www.calregs.com

Colorado

Colorado Legislature - www.leg.state.co.us
Colorado Rules & Regulations
<http://www.sos.state.co.us/CCR/Welcome.do>

Connecticut

Connecticut Legislature - www.cga.ct.gov

Delaware

Delaware Legislature - <http://legis.delaware.gov/>
Delaware Register of Regulations
<http://regulations.delaware.gov/>

Florida

Florida Legislature - www.leg.state.fl.us
Florida Administrative Code - <https://www.flrules.org>

Georgia

Georgia Legislature - www.legis.state.ga.us

Hawaii

Hawaii Legislature - www.capitol.hawaii.gov
Hawaii Administrative Rules by Agency
www.hawaii.gov/portal/government/agencies.html

Idaho

Idaho Legislature - www.legislature.idaho.gov
Idaho Administrative Rules - <http://adm.idaho.gov>

Illinois

Illinois Legislature - www.ilga.gov
Illinois Administrative Code
www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/index/home.html

Indiana

Indiana Legislature - www.ai.org/legislative
Indiana Administrative Code - www.ai.org/legislative/iac

Iowa

Iowa Legislature - www.legis.state.ia.us
Iowa Administrative Code - www.legis.state.ia.us/IAC.html

Kansas

Kansas Legislature
www.kslegislature.org/legsrv-legisportal/index.do

Kentucky

Kentucky Legislature - www.lrc.state.ky.us/home.htm
Kentucky Administrative Regulations
www.lrc.state.ky.us/KAR/frntpage.htm

Louisiana

Louisiana Legislature - www.legis.state.la.us
Louisiana Administrative Code
www.doa.state.la.us/osr/lac/lac.htm

Maine

Maine Legislature - <http://janus.state.me.us/legis>
Maine State Agency Rules
www.maine.gov/sos/cec/rules/index.html

Maryland

Maryland Legislature - <http://mlis.state.md.us>
Maryland Regulations - www.dsd.state.md.us/comar

Massachusetts

Massachusetts Legislature - www.mass.gov/legis/legis.htm

Michigan

Michigan Legislature - www.legislature.mi.gov
Michigan Administrative Code - www.michigan.gov

Minnesota

Minnesota Legislature - www.leg.state.mn.us
Minnesota State Register
www.comm.media.state.mn.us/bookstore/state_register.asp

Mississippi

Mississippi Legislature - <http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/>

Missouri

Missouri Legislature - www.moga.state.mo.us
Missouri Administrative Rules
<http://www.sos.mo.gov/adrules/>

Montana

Montana Legislature - <http://leg.state.mt.us/css/default.asp>
Montana Administrative Rules
<http://sos.mt.gov/ARM/index.asp>

Nebraska

Nebraska Legislature - <http://nebraskalegislature.gov>
Nebraska Administrative Code
<http://www.deq.state.ne.us/RuleandR.nsf/Pages/Rules>

Nevada

Nevada Legislature - www.leg.state.nv.us

New Hampshire

New Hampshire Legislature - <http://gencourt.state.nh.us/ie>
New Hampshire Administrative Rules
<http://gencourt.state.nh.us/rules/index.html>

New Jersey

New Jersey Legislature - www.njleg.state.nj.us

New Mexico

New Mexico Legislature - <http://legis.state.nm.us/lcs>
New Mexico Register - www.nmcpr.state.nm.us/nmregister
New Mexico Administrative Code
www.nmcpr.state.nm.us/nmac

New York

New York Legislature
www.nysl.nysed.gov/ils/legislature/legis.html
New York Register - www.dos.state.ny.us/info/register.htm

North Carolina

North Carolina Legislature - www.ncga.state.nc.us
North Carolina Register - www.oah.state.nc.us/rules/register
North Carolina Administrative Code
<http://reports.oah.state.nc.us/ncac.asp>

North Dakota

North Dakota Legislature - www.legis.nd.gov

Ohio

Ohio Legislature - www.legislature.state.oh.us/search.cfm
Ohio Administrative Code - <http://codes.ohio.gov/>

Oklahoma

Oklahoma Legislature - www.lsb.state.ok.us
Oklahoma Administrative Code & Register
www.sos.state.ok.us/oar/oar_welcome.htm

Oregon

Oregon Legislature - www.leg.state.or.us
Oregon Administrative Rules
<http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/banners/rules.htm>

Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Legislature - www.legis.state.pa.us
Pennsylvania Administrative Code - www.pacode.com

Rhode Island

Rhode Island Legislature - www.rilin.state.ri.us

South Carolina

South Carolina Legislature - www.scstatehouse.net
South Carolina Code of Regulations
www.scstatehouse.net/coderegs/toc.htm

South Dakota

South Dakota Legislature - <http://legis.state.sd.us/index.aspx>
South Dakota Administrative Rules
<http://legis.state.sd.us/rules/index.aspx>

Tennessee

Tennessee Legislature - www.legislature.state.tn.us
Tennessee Rules and Regulations
www.state.tn.us/sos/rules/index.htm

Texas

Texas Legislature - www.capitol.state.tx.us
Texas Register - www.sos.state.tx.us/texreg/trtext.html
Texas Administrative Code
[http://info.sos.state.tx.us/pls/pub/readtac\\$ext.viewtac](http://info.sos.state.tx.us/pls/pub/readtac$ext.viewtac)

Utah

Utah Legislature - www.le.state.ut.us
Utah Administrative Rules - www.rules.utah.gov

Vermont

Vermont Legislature - www.leg.state.vt.us

Virginia

Virginia Legislature - <http://legis.state.va.us>
Virginia Register
<http://legis.state.va.us/codecomm/register/regindex.htm>
Code of Virginia - <http://leg1.state.va.us/000/src.htm>

Washington

Washington Legislature - www1.leg.wa.gov/legislature
Washington Register - www.leg.wa.gov/CodeReviser
Washington Administrative Code - <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac>

West Virginia

West Virginia Legislature - www.legis.state.wv.us
West Virginia Administrative Law
www.wvsos.com/adlaw/main.htm

Wisconsin

Wisconsin Legislature - www.legis.state.wi.us
Wisconsin Administrative Code & Register
www.legis.state.wi.us/rsb/code.htm

Wyoming

Wyoming Legislature - <http://legisweb.state.wy.us>
Wyoming Rules & Regulations
http://soswy.state.wy.us/Rule_Search_Main.asp

VI. Useful Contact Information

- **The National Grange
Legislative Affairs Department**
1616 H Street, NW
Washington D.C. 20006
Phone: (202)-628-3507 & 1-(888)-4-GRANGE
Fax: (202)-347-1091

Leroy Watson, Legislative Director
lwatson@nationalgrange.org
(202) 628-3507 x114

Molly Thompson, Legislative Program Asst.
mthompson@nationalgrange.org
(202) 628-3507 x107
- **U.S. Senate**
www.senate.gov
(202) 224-3121 *Operator Assistance*
- **U.S. House of Representatives**
www.house.gov
(202) 225-3121 *Operator Assistance*
- **House & Senate Bill Status**
thomas.gov
(202) 225-1772
- **The White House**
www.whitehouse.gov
(202) 456-1414 *Operator Assistance*
- **U.S. Government Official Web Portal**
www.firstgov.gov
- **State & Local Government on the Net**
www.statelocalgov.net
- **The Federal Register**
www.gpoaccess.gov
- **Regulations Comments Service**
www.Regulations.gov

How a Law / Regulation is Created

Grange members can participate in advocacy activities in both the legislative and regulatory processes. The legislative process is implemented under the direction of Congress or a state legislature, generally consisting of a House of Representatives and a Senate, who are elected by constituents and entitled to make laws. It has several stages where Grange members can get involved to urge Congress or their state legislatures to support or oppose specific legislation.

The Federal Government's regulatory process is simple and open to public comments by law. Similar provisions exist in most states. Grange members can express their support or opposition to a proposed regulation by submitting comments and attending hearings.

THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

The following outline explains how a bill becomes law. Key terms in the legislative process are presented in italics. Understanding this process will make your lobbying efforts more effective.

1. Bill Introduction

Members of the House/Senate introduce a bill. A bill is introduced when the sponsors or co-sponsors agree on the specific wording they want to propose to become new law. The bill is then assigned its legislative number. (For example in the U.S. Congress, H.R. signifies a U.S. House bill and S. signifies a U.S. Senate bill)

2. Referral to Committee

A bill is referred, or assigned, to the appropriate committee. Most legislative committees have areas of jurisdiction, or specific subject matters that are usually considered by those committees. Committee areas of jurisdiction allow legislators serving on committees to develop expertise regarding complex legislative and policy issues.

3. Subcommittee

A bill may be further referred to a subcommittee for hearings, mark up and reporting. A subcommittee is generally the first stage of a legislative process to consider a bill. A hearing is held to collect information about the bill, its benefits, and any

consequences that may ensue from passage, in order to create a record to justify a decision to support or oppose the bill. A mark up is the formal procedure used to make changes and amendments to the bill. Hearings or mark ups may take place at either the subcommittee level or the full committee level, or both. Reporting a bill occurs when a formal vote is taken to pass bill and send it on to the next stage of the legislative process.

4. Committee

The process at the subcommittee is repeated at the level of the full committee, the next stage of the process to consider a bill. Full committees generally have more members than subcommittees. Full committees bring a wider variety of opinions, knowledge and experiences from individual legislators to consideration of the merits of the bill. If the full committee votes to report a bill, the committee report is written. A committee report provides a public explanation the primary reasons that a majority of the legislators serving on the committee decided to report the bill. The committee report may cite hearings, testimony from the public, information from government sources as well as personal statements and opinions of individual legislators as justification for the decision. The committee report will also often contain dissenting views of legislators who serve on the committee and who disagree with the decision of the majority to report the bill.

5. Consideration by the Full Legislative Chamber

After a bill is reported from the committee it is referred to the full chamber (House or Senate) for consideration. This is known in legislative jargon as the floor. All of the legislators serving in that chamber may participate in the debate and vote on the bill. The full chamber does not hold hearings on a bill but relies on the committee report and the debate of the legislators to further influence the final decision on the bill. The full chamber may amend the language of the bill before it is voted on for passage by a majority of the chamber's legislators present and voting.

6. Referral to the Other Chamber

After a bill is passed by one legislative chamber, it is referred to the other chamber, where the legislative process starting with committee and subcommittee referral begins all over again. The legislative process in the second legislative chamber may add or delete language to the bill as passed by the first chamber. However in order for a bill to become law, it must eventually pass both chambers in the same form.

7. Conference Committee

A conference committee is appointed when both chambers' versions of a bill differ on the final language. The presiding officers of each chamber generally appoint the committee. Knowledgeable legislators from both legislative chambers are appointed to a joint committee to seek compromise language for the final version of the bill. If the conference committee resolves the differences between the two versions of the bill, they report the identical bill containing the exact same language back to both chambers for a final vote. The language of the bill as reported by the conference committee may not be amended further by either chamber. A final vote is taken by each chamber on the bill. Both chambers must pass the bill for it to go to the President or governor for their signature

8. President/governor

After both the House and Senate have passed a bill in identical form, it is sent to the President or governor who may sign the measure into law. The President or governor may not change the language of the bill. However, the President or governor may decide to veto the bill, thus preventing its enactment into law. The word veto is Latin meaning "I forbid."

9. Overriding a Veto

If a bill is vetoed by the President or governor, it is returned to the legislature for consideration of a veto override. The legislature may override the veto of a President or governor if both chambers vote to pass the bill again by a 2/3 majority. Each legislative chamber must vote to pass the bill by a 2/3 majority to override a veto. If both chambers do vote to override a veto, the bill then becomes law

THE REGULATORY PROCESS

Government regulatory agencies are empowered by legislation to create and enforce regulations. Regulations are detailed directions that implement the laws passed by Congress and signed by the President. Executing laws through regulation is a duty of the Executive branch of government. Government agencies that create and enforce regulations may be directly responsible to the President via officials who are appointed and serve at the pleasure of the President, such as members of the President's cabinet. Other government regulatory agencies have been established by law to be independent agencies. Officials in charge of independent agencies are appointed by the President for a specific term and may not be removed from office except for cause, usually criminal action. Regulations carry the full force of a law. The following material explains the federal rulemaking process. Most states have similar procedures. Your participation is also needed in this process.

1. Authority to Adopt Regulations Under Law

The basis of all regulatory authority is public laws that have been passed by Congress and signed by the President. The text of the law will describe the specific authority of the appropriate government regulatory agency to draft and promulgate (adopt) regulations that implement the intended purpose of the law. While Congress may consider and pass laws on any subject, regulatory agencies may only promulgate regulations on the subject areas that have been assigned to them by Congress under law. Regulatory agencies can also only promulgate regulations that correspond with and carry out the intentions of Congress in writing and passing the law.

2. Federal Register

The Federal Register is an official publication of the federal government. It is published daily, except for weekends and federal holidays. The Federal Register is the official means by which information about new, proposed or revised regulations is conveyed to the public. Printed copies of the Federal Register are available at major libraries and universities. The Federal Register is also available on line at www.gpoaccess.gov/ft/index

3. Unified Agenda

Twice each year, every government agency that is working on new regulations or proposals to amend existing regulations must publish a summary of their intended actions in the Federal Register. This summary of all new and proposed regulations is known as the Unified Agenda.

Government agencies that write the regulations are generally the same agencies that enforce the regulations. Often, unless the subject matter of the agencies will publish a proposal for regulations known

4. Public Review

Government agencies must publish the text of all proposed new regulations in the Federal Register at least 30 days before they take effect. They must also provide an opportunity for

interested parties to comment, offer amendments, or to object to the regulation. Some regulations go through several public comments or drafting sessions before they take final form. These early drafts of the regulation published in the Federal Register are usually known as a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking. Later drafts of the new regulation are published as a Proposed Rule. The final text of a regulation is published as a Final Rule. Sometimes agencies will also hold public hearings regarding their new regulations. Notices of these hearings are also published in the Federal Register. The notices published in the Federal Register include information on how to submit comments, how to participate in public hearings and who is the contact person within the agency if you have any additional questions on the proposed rules. Individual government agencies also often publish the information regarding their regulations on their official agency website as well. Deadlines for submitting comments that are published as part of the notices about proposed rules are important. Agencies are not required to consider comments that are submitted after the official deadline.

5. Final Rule

Executive agencies must by law review and respond in writing in the Federal Register to all public comments before a final rule takes effect. If a regulation is later challenged in court, the public comment record is automatically considered evidence that an agency knew of any problems or concerns contained in the comment record prior to making a final decision to move forward with the regulation. Once a final rule takes effect it becomes a regulation and is printed in the Federal Register, the Code of Federal Regulations and usually posted on the web site of the regulatory agency.

6. Review By President and Congress

Federal regulations created by the regulatory agencies are subject to review by both the President and Congress under Executive Order 12866 and the Congressional Review Act of 1966.

ACTION 2009!

Grange Action Plan

On the following pages are worksheets that will serve as tools to help you clarify and organize your Grange's legislative activities. There is a single copy of each worksheet that you can photocopy and use for specific issues. These worksheets enable you to keep a record of each issue, develop a plan of action and better determine how you will advocate your Grange's position on various legislative issues.

The Grange Issue Worksheet (Appendix A) was developed to enable you to determine your Grange's position on an issue, identify your advocacy goal and understand major segments of the issue and the situation that surrounds it. It can also be used in drafting resolutions, determining potential allies for the purposes of coalition development and can be shared with other Grange members as a way to educate them on the functioning of legislative process.

The Grange Action Plan (Appendix B) provides a checklist of activities dedicated to each issue and a guide for your actions including vital contact information.

GRANGE ACTION PLAN

Issue: _____

Contact Policy Makers

(Congressman, Senator, Governor, State Legislator, etc.)

Name: _____ Title: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: (____) _____ Fax: (____) _____
Email: _____
Action Plan: _____

Name: _____ Title: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: (____) _____ Fax: (____) _____
Email: _____
Action Plan: _____

Name: _____ Title: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: (____) _____ Fax: (____) _____
Email: _____
Action Plan: _____

Coalition
Coalition Name: _____
Contact Person: _____
Phone: (____) _____ Fax: (____) _____
Email: _____
Action Plan: _____

Media Coverage
Media Name: _____
Contact Person: _____
Phone: (____) _____ Fax: (____) _____
Email: _____
Action Plan: _____

Grassroots Campaign
Action Plan: _____

WRITING GRANGE RESOLUTIONS

One of the basic precepts of the Grange is its adherence to grassroots policy development. Nearly every policy statement issued by the National or State Granges begins with a local resolution originally written and adopted at a Subordinate Grange meeting. It is therefore important that Grange members understand the correct procedure for drafting resolutions. The following guidelines can help your Grange write and adopt successful Grange resolutions.

- A resolution is a statement of policy or position on an issue.
- Each resolution should have a clear and concise title.
- Each resolution should address only one issue.
- The goal of the resolution is to inform and educate the reader. To do this, a successful resolution must do two things:
 - 1) Identify and explain the problem that needs to be addressed (the WHEREAS portion), and;
 - 2) propose a solution that will address the problem as identified (the RESOLVED portion).

The first portion of a resolution identifies and states the problem that needs to be addressed. The problem should be stated in factual terms. Opinions are not expressed in this portion of the resolution. Each fact should be listed as a separate sentence or paragraph that begins with WHEREAS and is followed by a semi-colon. The final WHEREAS ends with a semi-colon followed by “therefore be it.”

The RESOLVED portion of the resolution states the action that you propose to address the problem identified in the WHEREAS portion of the resolution. If there is more than one solution, link them together with the phrase “and be it further.” When properly written this section clearly restates the problem in summary form and explains the action necessary to address it.

Once a resolution has been written and submitted to the Grange, it may be referred to a Resolutions Committee for consideration and action before being presented to the entire Grange. All actions reported by the committee should be by majority vote in the Committee. The Resolution Committee can take any of the following actions: 1) recommend approval of the resolution as written; 2) recommend rejection of the resolution; 3) amend the resolution or redraft it as they so decide; or 4) recommend that the resolution be transferred to another committee, be tabled, or referred for further study to avoid action on it directly.

SAMPLE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, each resolution should address only one issue or problem; and

WHEREAS, this is the part of the resolution that explains the issue or problem; and

WHEREAS, each “Whereas” statement should address only one fact, idea or supporting argument related to the issue or problem; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that this is the part of the resolution that restates the basic issue or problem and proposes a solution to the issue or problem identified in the “Whereas” statements; and be it further

RESOLVED, that each “Resolved” statement should address a separate action to be taken or solution proposed to resolve the issue or problem; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the “Resolved” statement should stand alone and the action proposed therein should be clearly understood by the reader without having to refer back to the “Whereas” statements.

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Take Action. Join the Grange!

Since 1867, the National Grange, formally known as the National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry, has worked tirelessly for America's families and rural communities. Families and Rural communities are the backbone of our nation and a key part of our national self-identity. Today, families and rural communities face serious social and economic challenges. That's why the National Grange is fighting to preserve family values, rural communities and the lifestyles they represent, for generations to come!

Principles and Values the Grange Promotes in Our Local Communities:

- Family farmers and ranchers and the natural resources they faithfully nurture.
- The quality of life that comes from living in a community where your neighbors are also your friends and your primary support network.
- Responsive public officials who genuinely care about the concerns of local citizens because they live and work among them every day.
- The knowledge of traditional rural folk art, handicraft and homemaking skills.
- Local education with low student/teacher ratios and high parent involvement.
- Locally driven economic development opportunities for entrepreneurs.
- The "Can Do" tradition of rural community problem solving and volunteerism.



The Contributions of Vibrant Rural Communities are Irreplaceable!

You can make a difference. With your support, we can all help our communities to be a place where people want to live, work and raise their families in the 21st Century.

Join the National Grange Today to Defend Family Values, Help Sustain Rural Communities and Protect Our Nation's Rich Cultural Heritage!

Your membership will help the National Grange continue programs that fight for our local communities in Congress and in our state legislatures; support local farms; preserve heirloom skills and crafts; provide local activities for children and young adults and promote volunteer community service projects across the nation.

Don't Wait Any Longer! Join the National Grange as a Member Today!

Visit www.nationalgrange.org/newmember

P.S. Already a Grange member? Check out our website at www.nationalgrange.org to find out more information about all the benefits of Grange membership.



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