



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Contact: Katie Sulau, 513-886-0403 or [katie@michiganlcv.org](mailto:katie@michiganlcv.org)

## **Farm Bill Connects Conservation to Crop Production, Invests in Clean Energy and Local Food Economies**

LANSING --- After President Obama's visit to Michigan State University to sign the 2014 Farm Bill into law today, Michigan LCV applauded US Senator Debbie Stabenow (D - MI) for her leadership on bipartisan legislation that stands to grow local economies, improve public health, invest in renewable energy, and better protect Michigan's natural resources. The 2014 Farm Bill institutes a firm link between agricultural practices and conservation, and invests in new programs to make healthy, homegrown food more accessible to Michiganders.

"The farm bill calls for some of the most significant federal investments in conservation programs, and we are proud to see those put into law in Michigan today," said Lisa Wozniak, Executive Director for Michigan LCV. "Farmers are on the front lines of stewardship for our state's incredible natural resources. Thanks to Senator Stabenow's leadership, we have a policy in place that values preservation alongside production."

For the first time in 18 years, the farm bill requires farmers to comply with conservation provisions, such as preserving native wetlands or controlling soil erosion, in order to receive subsidies for crop insurance. It underscores the importance of transitioning to clean energy sources, by providing nearly \$900 million for renewable energy and biofuels programs. In addition, the farm bill invests more than \$1.2 billion over the next five years in innovative programs to grow and strengthen local food systems, such as "Double Up Food Bucks," which was created, piloted and successfully implemented in Michigan. "Double Up Food Bucks" matches Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits at local farmers markets and participating grocery stores, creating access to healthy food and growing local food economies.

"We are encouraged to see the federal government recognizing the importance of strong local food economies," said Patty Birkholz, West Michigan Director for Michigan LCV. "The farm bill reinforces Michigan LCV's work to preserve farmland, celebrate fresh, local foods and protect our state's natural resources."

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*Michigan League of Conservation Voters is the leading non-partisan political voice for protecting Michigan's land, air and water. Visit our website: <http://www.michiganlcv.org>.*