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**Trout Unlimited Applauds Passage of Key Conservation Provisions of Senate Farm Bill**

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Trout Unlimited commended the U.S. Senate for approving a Conservation Title of the Farm Bill reauthorization last Friday that will help trout and salmon resource conservation efforts across the nation.

The Conservation Title of S. 2302, The Food and Energy Security Act of 2007 includes the following provisions:

- A Water Savings provision which will help ensure that Environmental Quality Improvement Program (EQIP) funds spent to improve irrigation systems in the western U.S. will save water, aid in state's drought response efforts, and not exacerbate water scarcity conflicts.
- A new Regional Water Enhancement Program that will catalyze growing community restoration efforts across the country to improve water quality, quantity, and fish habitat in key watersheds.
- Reauthorization of the EQIP and Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) programs, including increased funding for EQIP and stable funding for WHIP. Trout Unlimited (TU) uses both of these programs in conjunction with farmers and landowners to fund watershed improvements on their properties. Through these programs, TU protects and restores some of the nation's great trout fisheries. The Driftless Area of the Midwest (in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa and Illinois), the South Fork of the Snake River in Idaho and the Blackfoot River in Montana have all benefited from these programs.
- A new \$20 million voluntary access program that will allow states and Tribes to receive grants to be used to encourage farmers and ranchers to make their lands available to hunting and angling.

- A reconfigured Conservation Security Program, named the “Conservation Stewardship Program,” that will increase the program’s budget to \$2 billion over five years. It will protect and restore habitat on 13 million acres of working farmlands per year.

“We commend Chairman Harkin, Ranking Minority Member Chambliss, and the Committee for their good work on the Conservation Title,” said Steve Moyer, Vice President for Government Affairs. “Landowners are requesting the use of WHIP and other conservation program funding in far greater amounts than the current Farm Bill funding levels can deliver. TU has also advocated for higher funding levels for conservation programs in the House bill, especially for WHIP. But in boosting conservation funding and in creating new and useful programs such as those highlighted above, we believe that the Committee did a good job under the severe financial and political constraints which they worked,” said Moyer.

The next step in the legislative process will occur when a conference committee of key House and Senate leaders meets to reconcile the differences between this bill and the House version passed in the summer.

Trout Unlimited is the nation’s oldest and largest coldwater fisheries conservation group. It boasts over 150,000 members from coast to coast.

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