

Oct. 13, 2011

Washington, D.C. – Today, Congressman McNerney sent a letter to the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction, demanding that California’s agricultural community gets its fair share of federal resources. The Committee, established by the budget deal passed in August, is charged with recommending ways to trim the federal deficit, and Rep. McNerney’s letter seeks to protect the interests of California’s agricultural businesses.

“The growers and producers in California provide a large portion of our country’s products that are distributed throughout the U.S. and around the world. That contribution must not be ignored by the federal government,” said Rep. McNerney.

“At a time of persistently high unemployment, the hundreds of thousands of jobs in California’s agriculture sector will be at risk without sufficient federal investment. There are approximately 80,000 farms and ranches in California that rely on federal support in order to continue the production of the goods that are a huge part of this country’s agricultural output,” said Rep. McNerney.

As the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction examines ways to trim the federal budget, Rep. McNerney chose to proactively advocate for the needs of the California agricultural industry. McNerney highlighted three program types that are essential to California agriculture, and which must be preserved:

- Programs that assist specialty crop producers. California is the top producer of fruit and tree nuts and has strong floriculture, greenhouse, and nursery crop industries. These are specific programs that exist for farmers whose crops are not eligible for direct support through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).
- Research initiatives that provide educational services to farmers. Continued research and innovation is vital to California’s agricultural community, especially as farmers develop emerging conservation practices that will keep California’s farms competitive in an ever-evolving industry.
- Funding for pest detection and eradication efforts. Due to its size and number of ports, California is particularly susceptible to damage from invasive pests. Just last month, farms in the Stockton area were challenged by an invasion of the Oriental Fruit Fly.

“For too long, California’s massive agricultural contributions have been shortchanged by the federal government. As we make tough decisions to rein in our country’s debt, those contributions must finally be given fair treatment,” said Rep. McNerney.

Several Members of Congress from California joined Congressman McNerney in his appeal to the Committee on Deficit Reduction:

Rep. Lois Capps
Rep. Judy Chu
Rep. Laura Richardson
Rep. Lynn Woolsey