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For Immediate Release

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Washington D.C. - Congressman John P. Murtha announced today that the House of Representatives has passed a Farm Bill that focuses on providing vital benefits to family farmers, stimulating rural economies, and securing renewable energy resources. The Farm, Nutrition and Bioenergy Act of 2007 was passed by a vote of 231-191.

The bill imposes limits that will, for the first time, prevent affluent farmers who don't need assistance from receiving farm subsidy benefits, and redirects those funds to working family farmers who do need them. It provides a safety net for dairy farmers by extending the Milk Income Loss Contract Program until 2012, helping our local daily farmers when milk prices drop.

The measure also expands nutrition programs that help 35 million low-income families, including nearly doubling the funding for the Emergency Food Assistance Program, so that food banks, soup kitchens, and other emergency feeding sites have the resources they need. It extends the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, on which many older fixed income residents in Pennsylvania rely for their meals. It also expands the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program, which helps schools provide healthy snacks to students during after-school activities, to all 50 states.

The bill allows full implementation of the Mandatory Country of Origin labeling for meat, which is extremely important to consumers concerned about food safety. It also contains incentives to promote safe food handling practices to reduce food-borne illness. It places greater emphasis on organic farming and improves the process for organic certification and it expands opportunities for creating local community farmers' markets.

To help reduce our dependence on foreign oil, the bill provides \$2 billion in loan guarantees for the development of refineries that process renewable fuels, as well as \$1.5 billion for production incentives for ethanol and biodiesel fuels.

"The 2007 Farm Bill is responsive to the needs of America from farm to table," said Murtha. "It gives family farmers the support they need, it helps reduce our nation's dependence on foreign oil by investing in renewable energy, emphasizes food safety and helps millions of low-income families who rely on food assistance programs."