



# A message from 39 associations

on behalf of the Washington Agricultural Community

December 14, 2011

The Honorable Dan Newhouse  
Washington State Department of Agriculture  
PO Box 42560  
Olympia, WA 98504-2560

Dear Director Newhouse,

We appreciate the historical support of agriculture that has enabled our industry to be an ongoing, stable part of the Washington economy during these times of economic distress. We thank you for this support and look forward to working with you to craft solutions that will address our state's budget crisis.

As a major economic driver for communities across our state, small and large, east and west of the Cascades, **our \$40 billion agriculture and food processing industry** makes up 12 percent of the state's economy and **employs 160,000 people**. Nearly **\$13 billion in food and agricultural products were exported** through Washington ports in 2010. All of which benefits Washington consumers.

In addition to the unique risks agriculture faces such as ever-changing pest and disease threats, our farmers and ranchers are not exempt from increased input costs, regulatory burdens, and intense pressure to compete in the global economy faced by many businesses in Washington. To guarantee Washington's recovery we are asking you to **recognize agriculture's role in the economic recovery by ensuring a tax, fee and regulatory climate that promotes economic growth.**

The agricultural community has developed the following list of key issues for the 2012 legislative session.

### Key issues for 2012

- **Develop a focused budget based on the key priorities of government.**
- **Implement all efficiencies and program reforms prior to considering revenue modifications.**
- **Support agricultural research, extension, and commodity-specific programs funded through the state universities and Department of Agriculture.**
- **Ensure that our transportation system provides an efficient farm-to-market product distribution network through adequate and equitable project prioritization and funding.**

Thank you for your leadership and interest on these issues.

Sincerely,

*Cattle Producers of Washington  
Columbia-Snake River Irrigators Association  
Hop Growers of Washington  
Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers  
Washington Asparagus Council*

*Columbia Basin Development League  
Far West Agribusiness Association  
Northwest Food Processors Association  
Pacific Northwest Christmas Tree Association  
Washington Asparagus Commission*

*Washington Association of Conservation Districts*  
*Washington Association of Wine Grape Growers*  
*Washington Blueberry Commission*  
*Washington Cattlemen's Association*  
*Washington Farm Bureau*  
*Washington Friends of Farms and Forests*  
*Washington Growers Clearing House Association*  
*Washington Potato and Onion Association*  
*Washington State Dairy Federation*  
*Washington State Hay Growers Association*  
*Washington State Nursery and Landscape Assoc.*  
*Washington State Sheep Producers*  
*Washington State Water Resources Association*  
*Western Washington Agricultural Association*  
*Yakima Valley Growers-Shippers Association*

*Washington Association of Landscape Professionals*  
*Washington Association of Wheat Growers*  
*Washington Cattle Feeders Association*  
*Washington Christmas Tree Growers*  
*Washington Fish Growers Association*  
*Washington Fryer Commission*  
*Washington-North Idaho Seed Association*  
*Washington State Council of Farmer Cooperatives*  
*Washington State Grange*  
*Washington State Horticultural Association*  
*Washington State Potato Commission*  
*Washington State Turfgrass Seed Commission*  
*Wenatchee Valley Traffic Association*  
*Willapa-Grays Harbor Oyster Grower Association*

cc: Governor Christine Gregoire  
WSDA Director Dan Newhouse  
Senate Members  
House of Representatives Members