

December 3, 2010

**A message from 37 associations
on behalf of the Washington
agricultural community**

The Honorable Christine Gregoire
Office of the Governor
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Governor Gregoire,

The future of Washington's economic recovery depends on the strength and vitality of Washington agriculture and food processing. Although the farm-gate value of Washington agriculture declined 8% in 2009, the industry has continued to remain steady in employment and exports. Washington's agriculture and food industry is the 3rd largest exporter in the United States. It contributes 12% of the state's economy and employs approximately 160,000 people. With global and local economies continuing to struggle in a deep recession, now is the time to keep the agricultural industry in position to help lead Washington into a thriving future.

To guarantee Washington's recovery it is vital that producers, growers, academic researchers, retailers and consumers benefit from policies that will promote long-term success of Washington agriculture at home and abroad. The agricultural community has worked together to identify the following key issues for the 2011 legislative session. We are asking you to partner with us and lead Washington into a successful future.

We would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss items that will act to preserve and enhance the economy through the support of working family farms across our state.

Key issues for agriculture in the 2011 legislative session.

- **Support agricultural research, extension, and commodity-specific programs funded through the state universities and Department of Agriculture.**
- **Promote agriculture's role in the economic recovery by not increasing taxes, fees, or regulations that hinder producer profitability. Instead, allow for voluntary programs to keep Washington's farmers and ranchers viable.**
- **Ensure that our transportation system provides an efficient farm-to-market product distribution network.**

Thank you for your leadership and your interest in assisting agriculture.

Sincerely,

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

*Columbia Basin Development League
Far West Agribusiness Association
Northwest Food Processors Association
Pacific Northwest Christmas Tree Association
Washington Asparagus Commission
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 Growers Clearing House Association
Washington Potato and Onion Association
Washington State Dairy Federation
Washington State Horticultural Association
Washington State Potato Commission
Washington State Turfgrass Seed Commission
Wenatchee Valley Traffic Association
Yakima Valley Growers-Shippers Association

Washington-North Idaho Seed Association
Washington State Council of Farmer Cooperatives
Washington State Grange
Washington State Nursery and Landscape Assoc.
Washington State Sheep Producers
Washington State Water Resources Association
Western Washington Agricultural Association

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