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**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Natural Resources**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

November 13, 2013

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The Honorable Tom Vilsack  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

The Committee on Natural Resources (“Committee”) invites you, as Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (“USDA”), to testify at an oversight hearing regarding (1) the Obama Administration’s decision to sequester money paid to states under the Secure Rural Schools program (“SRS”) and (2) your compliance with a subpoena served September 4, 2013, on you, as Secretary, for documents related to that decision. The hearing will be held on Wednesday, November 20, 2013, at 10:00 a.m. in 1324 Longworth House Office Building.

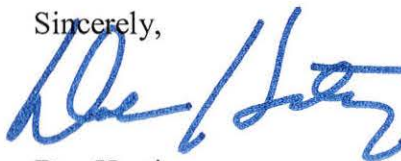
A letter was sent to you on November 5, 2013, indicating that this hearing was being planned for November 20<sup>th</sup> and requesting the USDA promptly advise the Committee about any scheduling conflicts. The USDA’s November 8, 2013, and November 12, 2013, letters do not identify any scheduling conflicts with that date, as was requested.

The internal documents provided to date in response to the September 4<sup>th</sup> subpoenas to you, as Secretary of the USDA, and to the Director of the White House Office of Management and Budget (“OMB”) suggest the decision was made at the highest levels of the USDA and OMB to sequester the SRS money already paid to states, contrary to advice from USDA lawyers that money already paid out was not subject to sequestration. As Secretary, you are the legal custodian for USDA records and, as the person who was served, you have ultimate responsibility for complying with the Committee’s subpoena.

In preparing for your testimony and appearance, you should be prepared to discuss and answer questions about your personal involvement in responding to the Committee’s subpoena and in deciding to sequester SRS money already paid to states, including any legal authority provided to you, alternatives considered by you, communications between you and others within the Executive Branch, and other relevant matters.

Enclosed with this letter are the parameters regarding written and oral testimony. Should you have any questions or need additional information, please have your staff contact Byron Brown at the Natural Resources Committee at (202) 225-2761.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Doc Hastings", written in a cursive style.

Doc Hastings  
Chairman

Enclosure

## COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

1324 Longworth House Office Building

Washington, D.C. 20515

(202) 225-2761

### Written Testimony, Disclosure Form and Attachments Format Requirements

These requirements apply to materials you submit to the Committee for inclusion in the official hearing record. These materials will be posted on the Committee website as provided in House and Committee rules. Materials include a written statement of testimony, witness disclosure form and any supporting materials. During the hearing, you may also submit additional statements and exhibits or supplementary material solely for distribution to the Members of the Committee. All materials must be received by the Committee at least 48 hours before the day of the hearing. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in the exclusion of the written testimony from the hearing record and/or the barring of an oral presentation of the testimony under Committee Rule 4(a).

**TESTIMONY AND SUPPORTING MATERIALS:** Each statement of testimony and any supporting materials must conform to the guidelines listed below. The Committee may not print materials not in compliance with these requirements; however, the Committee will retain such materials in the official files for review and use by the Committee.

Please use typed single space letter-size (8½ x 11) white paper not to exceed a total of 12 pages. Except in limited cases, electronic copies of your testimony must also be provided to the Committee in Microsoft Word (with no tracking) or PDF. No cover page is needed, although your name and, if you are representing an organization, your title and the name of your organization, and the date and title of the hearing must be listed at the beginning of your written testimony:

If you submit supporting materials with your testimony please include them as separate items at the end. If attachments are more than 10 pages (in addition to your original testimony) or on paper larger than 8½ x 11, the Committee may not accept them. Instead, you should paraphrase or quote as needed. If including charts, tables, maps, or photographs, they should be included on separate pages, not within the text of a page. As with your testimony, a copy of all attachments in electronic form must also be provided. Copyrighted material will not be duplicated by the Committee. Underlining, footnotes, capitalization of the whole document or solid blocks of text should be avoided.

Oral testimony should not exceed 5 minutes and should summarize your written remarks. You may introduce into the record any other supporting documentation you wish to present in conjunction with your testimony.

**TRUTH IN TESTIMONY/DISCLOSURE FORMS:** Please include with your testimony a completed witness disclosure form. For witnesses representing tax-exempt or non-profit organizations, direct web links to the three most recent IRS Form 990s may be provided, or witnesses can provide copies of the relevant forms, either in hard copy or PDF format. If you have any questions regarding the form, please contact the main office of the Committee at (202) 225-2761.