



THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE
WASHINGTON, D.C.
20250-0100

FEB 27 2009

The Honorable Robert M. Gates
Secretary of Defense
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Mr. Secretary:

As you know, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is responsible for administering the Federal Government's BioPreferredSM program. This initiative aims to increase the purchase and use of renewable, environmentally friendly biobased products while providing "green" jobs and new markets for farmers, manufacturers, and vendors.

In support of this effort, I am writing to request your cooperation in implementing a provision of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Farm Bill) requiring Federal agencies to give procurement preference to designated biobased products. USDA is committed to the success of the program and will be pleased to support you in your efforts.

I am enclosing a factsheet on the BioPreferredSM program that you and your management team may find of interest. If you would also kindly share this information with your agency's chief acquisition officer or other senior procurement official, we would be most appreciative.

In addition, I encourage you to personally support the BioPreferredSM program and to ensure that your agency's procurement community is fully engaged in buying and using biobased products. Should you have any questions or if we may be of assistance, please let me know or have your senior procurement official contact USDA's Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration Russ Ashworth at (202) 720-3291 or russ.ashworth@osec.usda.gov. Technical questions may be addressed to Jeffrey Goodman at (202) 401-4747 or Jeffrey.goodman@da.usda.gov.

We look forward to working with you on this and other "green" initiatives of the Obama Administration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Vilsack".

Thomas J. Vilsack

Enclosure