



National Association of Conservation Districts

August 20, 2008

Chief Arlen Lancaster
Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Room 5105-S
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Chief Lancaster:

Conservation Districts and NRCS share a partnership that allows great benefits to both organizations and especially to the land users that we collectively serve. The ability to communicate, transfer data, access information and report progress are just a few of the important functions that allow our partnership to effectively serve the conservation needs of our cooperators. Recent changes, as well as discussions of future possible changes in security, information access and sharing of the USDA network have caused some conservation districts to consider other options for internet service, potentially minimizing some benefits of partnership. NACD recognizes that USDA's information technology infrastructure is now under the management and decision-making of the Information Technology Service and not NRCS; however, we trust that NRCS will continue to provide support within the department for the needs of conservation districts.

NACD's Board of Directors recently approved recommendations from its Computer Management Task Force (see attached) to begin to address some of the concerns from our member conservation districts and to open dialogue within the partnership concerning some of the security issues that USDA must address. We hope these recommendations will continue to guide the development of systems which provide access to and sharing of information, communications, and security that are effective and affordable for our conservation districts. We have placed information on NACD's website which attempts to address many of the issues through a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) page (www.nacdnet.org/resources/computers/faq.phtml).

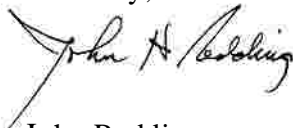
We appreciate the participation and advice of USDA-NRCS staff in our discussions as we try to better understand the changing IT environment that we are all working in and continue to provide guidance to our member conservation districts. We look forward to an agency response to these recommendations if that would be possible so that we can continue to keep

Chief Arlen Lancaster
August 20, 2008
Page 2

our members informed and so that we can continue to cooperate in serving our joint customers. If you or your staff have questions concerning our recommendations, please feel free to contact Krysta Harden, Brad Ross, or Rich Duesterhaus at the NACD office or email contact points.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John H. Redding". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "R".

John Redding
President

Cc: Dana York, NRCS
Kathy Gugulis, NRCS
Krysta Harden, NACD