



National Barley Improvement Committee



March 26, 2009

TO: Honorable Collin Peterson
2211 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

FROM: Dr. Mike Davis, Executive Secretary
National Barley Improvement Committee
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**RE: FY2010 Appropriation Request
\$800,000 USDA-CSREES Enhancing Barley Through Genomics
Special Research Grant**

Dear Representative Peterson:

The National Barley Improvement Committee (NBIC), a nonprofit coalition representing all US barley interests – growers, researchers, and value-added end-users, is requesting your support for funding of \$800,000 for a USDA-CSREES Special Research Grant – “Enhancing Barley Through Genomics.”

Barley is a \$689 million/year crop as a raw agricultural commodity, with the manufacture and sale of value-added products (malt, beer, feed, livestock, fish, biosfuesl) having a substantial additional impact on the US economy, supporting millions of jobs and generating billions of dollars in business activity and tax revenue for the US and state governments. Barley acreage has declined to historically low levels and the US is in danger of conceding domestic and world markets for barley, and its value-added products (malt, beer, food), to competitors from Australia, Canada, and Europe. This would have a substantial negative impact on the US and Minnesota economies, jobs, and federal, state, and local tax revenue.

The barley research community needs a new genomics special grant to replace the currently funded Regional Barley Gene Mapping Project which supported a directed competitive grant program that funded individual projects throughout the US, but did not provide a coordinated approach to meet the production crisis being faced by barley. USDA and state university researchers in North Dakota, Minnesota, Oregon, Washington, and Wisconsin have developed a coordinated research plan to apply the genomics tools developed through the previous project to four research areas that have

the greatest potential for success to increase barley production – winter hardiness; drought tolerance; disease resistance; and quality. We propose an \$800,000 annual appropriation (\$160,000 per state) for three years to support research at University of Minnesota, North Dakota State University, Oregon State University, Washington State University, and the USDA-ARS Cereal Crops Research Unit, Madison, Wisconsin. Over half of the funding requested can be provided through an offset by using the funding from its predecessor, the Regional Barley Gene Mapping Project Special Research Grant.

Federal investment in barley research is needed because barley is primarily a public sector crop. Most barley research and variety development is conducted at state universities and USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) facilities. The private sector has limited interest in barley research and variety development because of its limited seed sale potential. Without federal investment, the research will not be conducted.

We greatly appreciate Representative Peterson's strong support of agricultural research and his consideration of this request for FY2010.

cc: MN Barley Growers Association & NBIC Reps and Stakeholders

Marv Zutz, Executive Director, Minnesota Barley Growers Association
Brian Lacey, Wendell, MN grower & NBIC Member
Dr. Brian Steffenson, University of Minnesota & NBIC Member
Dr. Kevin Smith, University of Minnesota
Dr. Gary Muehlbauer, University of Minnesota