



National Barley Improvement Committee

March 1, 2010

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

FROM: Dr. Mike Davis, Executive Secretary 
National Barley Improvement Committee
740 N. Plankinton Ave. Suite 830
Milwaukee, WI 53203
(414) 272-4640; (414) 218-8806 [cell]
mpdavis.amba@sbcglobal.net

**RE: FY2011 Appropriation Request
\$800,000 USDA-NIFA Regional Barley Gene Mapping Project
Special Research Grant**

Dear Representative Peterson:

The National Barley Improvement Committee (NBIC), with the support of the Minnesota Barley Growers Association, American Malting Barley Association, and University of Minnesota, St. Paul, barley scientists, request your support of continued funding of the USDA-NIFA Regional Barley Gene Mapping Project Special Research Grant, with funding of \$800,000 for FY2011. The National Barley Improvement Committee represents the entire US barley community - growers, researchers, and malting, brewing, and cereal food end-users, including those in Minnesota. Barley is a \$21 million crop in Minnesota, is used by its food industry, for livestock feed, and is a critical raw material for its three malt plants and 43 brewers. 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 and federal, state, and local tax revenue.

Barley researchers in Minnesota, North Dakota, Washington, Oregon, and Wisconsin have developed a coordinated research plan, Enhancing Barley Through Genomics (EBTG), to apply genomics tools to research areas that have the greatest potential for success to increase barley production – winter hardiness; disease resistance; and quality. EBTG is funded via the Regional Barley Gene Mapping Project special research grant. The barley research community needs continued funding for this special research grant in order to apply the knowledge gained, and tools developed to address the barley production crisis. Federal investment in barley research is needed because barley is

primarily a public sector crop. Most barley variety development and research is conducted at state universities and USDA-ARS facilities. The private sector has limited interest in barley research and variety development because of its limited seed sale potential. Without federal investment, this research will not be conducted.

The \$800,000 in funds will be distributed by USDA-NIFA to Oregon State University (OSU), the lead institution, with \$160,000 being retained by OSU and the remainder, at \$160,000/each, being distributed from Oregon State University to University of Minnesota, Wisconsin (USDA-ARS & University of Wisconsin), Washington State University, and North Dakota State University. An overall coordinated project will be developed by all scientists involved, under the direction of the US Barley Genome Project Steering Committee, with funding used for salaries of graduate students, postdoctoral research associates, and other short term technical employees; genomic analysis supplies; and greenhouse and field costs, that will vary by institution. The final plan will be submitted to USDA NIFA to meet their accountability requirements.

Congress provided funding of \$471,000 in both FY09 and FY10; \$502,458 in FY08; \$0 in FY07; and \$675,180 in FY06 for the USDA-NIFA Regional Barley Gene Mapping Project Special Research Grant, which is greatly appreciated.

We greatly appreciate your past support of this NIFA Special Research Grant and your consideration of this request for FY2011.

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. Ruth Dill-Macky, University of Minnesota & NBIC Member
Dr. Kevin Smith, University of Minnesota
Dr. Gary Muehlbauer, University of Minnesota