

DEBBIE STABENOW TO CHAIR AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

✖ Finally, some good news coming out of November's election.

Debbie Stabenow has been selected to replace the outgoing Blanche Lincoln as Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee. (There had been some concern that Big Ag would oppose someone like Stabenow and instead push Kent Conrad to take the position.)

As I've explained before, this means that a Senator from a state with diverse, smaller-scale agriculture will take over and preside over 2012's Agriculture Bill. Hopefully, this will present an opportunity to refocus our Ag policy on smaller scale, more healthy agriculture.

She's got some statements from leaders of MI's Ag community posted; they describe some of her past focus on specialty crops, food safety, and research.

"Senator Stabenow and her staff worked very hard on the 2008 farm bill to make sure there were new provisions that are specific to specialty crop farmers in Michigan and throughout the United States. She has been a champion for food safety programs, conservation, energy and research. We need an elected official like Senator Stabenow who is interested in Michigan agriculture, and working to grow and expand the economic engine in the state that creates jobs and keeps our food supply safe." – Phillip J. Korson II, President of The Cherry Marketing Institute.

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"Sen. Debbie Stabenow has been a friend of agriculture and farms, large and

small, serving the Michigan State House, U.S. House, and U.S. Senate Agriculture Committees and been an advocate for strong Michigan food systems. She really listens to farmers, both commodity crop and specialty crop growers, regarding their concerns about federal policy.” – Elaine Brown, Executive Director of the Michigan Food and Farming Systems.

“We are very appreciative of Senator Stabenow’s tireless efforts in support of the International Food Protection Training Institute’s mission to improve food safety nationwide. As Chairwoman, we expect that Senator Stabenow will continue to build on her strong track record in agriculture and food safety.” – Gerald Wojtala, Executive Director of the International Food Protection Training Institute.

“Senator Stabenow filled a leading role in the writing and passage of the 2008 Farm Bill. Senator Stabenow authored the first ever Specialty Crops title, which recognized the importance of these crops to our country’s agriculture. She also helped in many other provisions of the bill, particularly support for agricultural research and conservation programs.”- Dave Smith, Executive Director of the Michigan Vegetable Council.

Congratulations Senator Stabenow.