



DOYLE CONNER
COMMISSIONER

STATE OF FLORIDA
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AND
CONSUMER SERVICES

THE CAPITOL
TALLAHASSEE 32301

Bill
p 406

September 3, 1987

Honorable William Lehman
U. S. Congressman
2347 Rayburn Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Bill:

Agriculture in Florida and in our nation remains under serious financial stress on several economic fronts. A current proposal before Congress would, in my opinion, have a significant adverse economic impact on all segments of Florida agriculture.

On August 27, the Florida Agricultural Advisory Council, whose members represent all segments of Florida agriculture, by unanimous vote, passed a resolution deploring the continuation of the CBI until 2007. I know you are vitally interested in the economic advancement of the State of Florida which of course certainly includes our great agricultural industry.

I certainly agree and concur with the aforementioned resolution and it is my considered opinion that the CBI has been and will continue to be under the proposed legislation, a strong competitor for our state's agriculture. We have enough problems over which we have little control and certainly do not need to legislate additional hardship.

While certain economists offer the theory that strengthening the economy of neighboring countries provides markets for our agricultural products, history documents the fact that instead of market development, this program has provided economic competition to Florida agriculture. In order that we may help assure a strong and viable agricultural industry in Florida, it is imperative that we work together to identify and offer solutions that move us in the right direction.

I appreciate your interest and support for our state and its future and look forward to working with you at every opportunity.

With warm personal regards, I am

Sincerely,

Doyle
Doyle Conner
Commissioner

DC:pe
Enclosures

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ORLANDO, Fla., August 28--The Florida Agricultural Advisory Council, meeting at the annual business conference of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services unanimously adopted a resolution opposing the Caribbean Basin Initiative Economic Recovery Act of 1987.

The legislation has been introduced into the U. S. Senate and House of Representatives as an effort to extend the current CBI program which is designed to provide economic relief to underdeveloped Caribbean Basin countries.

An amendment, submitted by Council Member Frank Ray, underscores the opinion among Florida agriculturists that the current CBI has a major adverse economic impact on important commodities produced in the state, as well as Florida's general economical well-being.

The amended resolution states that, "It is unfair to continue to sacrifice Florida agriculture which has a substantial investment and positive economic impact on the state."

The CBI, initially adopted during President Ronald Reagan's first term, would extend economic support to Caribbean countries until 1995. The proposed expansion measure would extend the life of the CBI program until 2007, and liberalize the terms of duty-free imports to the U.S. from CBI beneficiary nations.

The Florida Agricultural Advisory Council is a statutorily created body appointed by the Florida Commissioner of Agriculture.

In his address to the council, Commissioner of Agriculture Doyle Conner

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stressed the need for agricultural development to boost the economy within the state.

Conner said the Florida legislature has indicated that agriculture may have the answers to achieve a turn-around in economically depressed areas of the state.

"They are sending us the message to take what we have and do more with it," said Conner, as he explained the department's role as lead agency in combining various state agencies' attempts to stimulate agricultural economic development throughout Florida.