

Testimony on behalf of the Coalition for Sugar Reform to the Commission on 21st Century Production Agriculture.

In testimony before the Commission on 21st Century Production Agriculture, the Coalition for Sugar Reform had harsh words for the US sugar program. The Coalition for Sugar Reform strongly opposes continuation of the current program - it increases consumer prices without justification; it increases costs to manufacturers and processors of food products; it is an inefficient and inequitable use of government resources; the program is environmentally irresponsible; the program reduces employment; and the sugar program places limits on the ability of the US to open world markets for its agriculture and food exports.

The Coalition for Sugar Reform was organized in early 1997 because there were so few changes made to the sugar program in the 1996 FAIR Act (Farm Bill). As the name implies, the coalition's objective is to bring about reform and change to the government sugar program.

Twenty-one organizations and associations are members of the coalition. These organizations represent consumers, businesses, environmentalists, think-tanks, responsible government advocates, and other interests. Their philosophic views cover the political spectrum from the liberal left to the conservative right.

Sugar policy needs to be changed now as much as ever. Here are just a few reasons why:

- Consumers foot the bill for the \$1.4 billion annual cost to continue this outdated government farm program that benefits less than 1% of America's farmers. This is a hidden food tax!
- America will lose jobs and business; highly competitive industries are being faced with moving their plants to other countries where they can buy sugar at one quarter of our domestic price.
- America's trade will suffer as other countries continue to point to our protectionist sugar policy as the basis to justify and continue their own protectionist policies.
- In 1995, sugar program benefits per acre to the grower were 12 times those for cotton, corn, and wheat farmers; by the final year of the farm bill in 2002, sugar benefits per acre will be over 20 times more than cotton, corn, and wheat, as other commodity supports are phased down.
- Sugar is still big trouble for the environment.

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Members

American Bakers Association

Americans for Tax Reform

Chocolate Manufacturers Association

Citizens for a Sound Economy

Consumer Federation of America
Consumers for World Trade
Council for Citizens Against Government Waste
Everglades Trust
Friends of the Earth
Food Marketing Institute
Grocery Manufacturers of America
Independent Bakers Association
International Dairy Foods Association
National Audobon Society
National Confectioners Association
National Soft Drink Association
Public Voice for Food & Health Policy
Taxpayers for Common Sense
United States Cane Sugar Refiners' Association
U.S. Public Interest Research Group
World Wildlife Fund