

**Washington, DC** - 12th District Georgia Congressman John Barrow (D-Savannah) today joined fellow members of the House Agriculture Committee, including Committee Chairman Collin Peterson of Minnesota, for a press conference to kick off the drafting process for the 2007 Farm Bill.

"I'd like to thank Chairman Peterson and Subcommittee Chairs McIntyre and Cardoza for the leadership they've already shown in laying the groundwork for the upcoming Farm Bill," Barrow said. "I look forward to working with them, and with the local farmers in my district, to help make sure that growers in Georgia are heard loud and clear in these negotiations."

The Committee's work to draft the 2007 Farm Bill is expected to last into the summer before a bill is considered by the full Congress. At today's press conference, Chairman Peterson praised the 2002 Farm Bill, and described the steps that each Agriculture subcommittee will take to author and pass each of the Farm Bill's 10 titles.

After the press conference, Barrow outlined the priorities he'd like to see the committee address in the 2007 Farm Bill. These include greater support for peanuts and cotton, specialty and vegetable crop growers, agricultural research, renewable energy initiatives, conservation programs, and rural development.

"The Rural Development mission in the Farm Bill is very important," Barrow added. "America simply can't afford to lose another generation of farmers and ranchers. Our rural communities are where we grow the farmers who grow our food and fiber. That means making real investments in our rural communities, and that's why this farm bill has to aim at improving rural infrastructure and community facilities. We also have to expand agricultural research at our nation's colleges and universities, and invest in new business development, rural broadband deployment, and healthcare."

The only member of the House of Representatives to serve on both the Agriculture Committee and the Energy and Commerce Committee, Barrow also reinforced his commitment to making renewable energy development and production a vital component of the 2007 Farm Bill.

"Our farmers and ranchers are going to play a vital role in growing the feedstocks that make renewable fuels possible," Barrow said. "Both of the committees I serve on recognize the role that farmers will play in providing reliable and affordable sources of feedstocks for the production of renewable transportation fuels, whether it's grain ethanol or cellulosic ethanol. I intend to work with both committees and both sides of the aisle to help us meet America's domestic energy needs."

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Contact: Harper Lawson, (202) 225-2823