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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 20, 2018

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**Plains Cotton Growers Applauds Passage and Completion of
H.R. 2, the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018**

Plains Cotton Growers today expressed their deep appreciation to all who had a part in creating and passing H.R. 2, the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018, also known as the 2018 Farm Bill.

The bill easily cleared the Senate and the House last week by votes of 87-13 and 369-47, respectively. President Trump signed the bill into law on Thursday, December 20.

“The 2018 Farm Bill gives us as cotton growers the assurances we need to stay competitive and helps preserve our family farms,” PCG President Stacy Smith said. “We greatly appreciate all who have been involved in creating this policy package that gives us much-needed stability so we can continue to produce fiber, food, and fuel for the future.”

A few highlights of the bill that will positively impact growers are as follows:

- Beginning with the 2019 crop year, growers will be able to make a new election into the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs and beginning with the 2021 crop year, growers will be able to choose each year between ARC and PLC on a crop-by-crop and farm-by-farm basis, allowing for additional flexibility.
- An “escalator provision” allows for PLC Reference Prices to adjust if the five-year Olympic average price increases significantly.
- The definition of a “family farm” has been expanded within Actively Engaged in Farming regulations to include nieces, nephews, and first cousins, which allows for continuation of lineal descent among farming operations.
- Landowners/growers will have a one-time opportunity to update payment yields for PLC, based on 2013-2017 history, on a covered commodity by covered commodity basis.
- Crop insurance is protected and maintained, with modest enhancements to the program.
- Conservation Reserve Program acres are expanded, and Environmental Quality Incentives Program funding is increased.

More information, including full text and a summary of the bill, is at <https://agriculture.house.gov/farmbill/>.

PCG recognizes the steadfast, tireless efforts of House Agriculture Committee Chairman Mike Conaway, Ranking Member Collin Peterson, Senate Ag Committee Chairman Pat Roberts, Ranking Member Debbie Stabenow and all members and staff of both committees, including U.S. Rep. Jodey Arrington of Lubbock, for working diligently to complete the bill. PCG thanks every Senator and Representative who voted in support of the bill, including Senator John Cornyn, Senator Ted Cruz, and PCG-area representative Mac Thornberry, and is grateful to President Trump for his support of agriculture by signing the bill into law.

“We look forward to continuing our work on behalf of cotton growers across the PCG service area as we move into the implementation phase,” Smith said.