



# News Release

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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## U.S. Growers to Stand Up for Potatoes on Capitol Hill

*Registration open for NPC's Potato D.C. Fly-In, Feb. 27 – March 1, 2012*

**Washington, D.C.** – Potato growers from across the country will descend upon the nation's capital as part of the National Potato Council's (NPC) annual Potato D.C. Fly-In, designed to advance the industry's most pressing federal policy priorities. During this year's Fly-In, February 27 through March 1, growers and industry partners will meet with members of Congress and Administration officials from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Food and Drug Administration, as well as hear from prominent political pundits and key public policy decision makers.



The Potato D.C. Fly-In is open to all growers who wish to make a difference in the policy debates impacting the industry. “Personally I think that everybody should go to Washington, D.C. just to see how our government works,” [commented Randy Mullen](#), NPC's Vice President of Legislative and Government Affairs and owner of Mullen Farms, Inc., in Pasco, Wash. “I've been back several times now on the Potato Fly-In, and it's really exciting to me to see that when we go up on the Hill, that they're more interested in our stories as a potato farmer or as a farmer than they are in the people who are paid to be there.”

During meetings with decision makers, growers will discuss key industry priorities, such as:

- Ensuring the continuation of long-term research and pest and disease funding levels in the 2012 Farm Bill;
- Increasing allowable truck weights on federal highways to 97,000 lbs;
- Shielding growers from burdensome environmental regulations; and
- Expanding foreign trade opportunities for U.S. fresh, seed and process potatoes.

Steve Crane, NPC's 2012 President and co-owner of Crane Brothers, Inc. in Exeter, Maine, said the 2012 Farm Bill will be a particular focus of the Fly-In. “We're watching that closely. We don't know how that's going to unfold, but we're hearing that there's going to be a higher push [for] less direct and countercyclical payments and more emphasis on crop insurance coming up for this next year,” [Crane said](#).



“The D.C. Fly-In is a great opportunity for family farmers, like myself, to go to Washington, D.C. and tell their story to their members of Congress. The members of Congress appreciate hearing what's going on on our family farms,

the issues that we are facing, and [the Fly-In] is a great opportunity for growers to make those visits,” [said Justin Dagen](#), NPC’s Immediate Past President and owner of Dagen Heritage Farms in Karlstad, Minn.

Registration and more information about NPC’s Potato D.C. Fly-In can be found online at [www.nationalpotatocouncil.org](http://www.nationalpotatocouncil.org). Registration includes the welcome reception, all scheduled breakfasts and lunches, grassroots training sessions, and the Congressional Potato Luncheon on Capitol Hill. Early bird registration and discounted hotel room rates end Thursday, February 2.

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*The National Potato Council is the advocate for the economic well-being of U.S. potato growers on federal legislative, regulatory, environmental, and trade issues. Potato growers, along with the U.S. potato industry as a whole, directly benefit from involvement in the National Potato Council. NPC supports the U.S. potato industry by monitoring issues affecting the strength and viability of the potato industry, influencing regulators and legislators on issues crucial to the industry's long term success, ensuring fair market access for potatoes and potato products, and bringing the unique issues and interests of diverse growing regions in the U.S. together on a national level. The National Potato Council is a voluntary organization supported by quota assessments from state organizations, allied industry memberships and sponsorships, and directly by potato growers through membership dues.*