

VIRGINIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Eddie Hannah, Chair
Hunter Richardson, Vice-Chair

October 24, 2008

Dear Unit ELC Chair:

We are proud of our excellent Extension and research programs that make such a difference in the lives of Virginians. Unfortunately pending state budget cuts threaten the continued maintenance and future of our current programs.

The General Assembly will address the budget shortfall at its January session. It is extremely important that Assembly members understand how vital Cooperative Extension and the Agricultural Experiment Station are to the health of the Virginia economy and the productivity and wellbeing of its residents.

To this end, the VCELC asks that one or more volunteer members of your Unit ELC meet with each State Senator and Delegate who represents any portion of the county/city served by your Extension Unit. **These visits should be face-to-face meetings and completed before Thanksgiving.** If a face-to-face meeting is unrealistic due to distance in the more sparsely populated parts of the commonwealth, a telephone call or letter will suffice.

In these meetings you should discuss why Extension is important and of great value to you and how budget reductions would impact Extension programs and agent positions. Having reduced budgets for FY08, additional reductions for FY09 and FY10 are very likely to result in program and staffing reductions. Unlike other divisions of the university, Extension and research CANNOT offset funding losses with tuition increases.

These meetings will also provide an opportunity to share your unit's annual report or "Solutions" with legislators and to glean input for your situation analysis about emerging issues that Extension might address.

Enclosed find talking points and program impacts that may be helpful in preparing for your visit. Your Planning District VCELC Representative is also available to assist you if you have questions. Senators' and Delegates' phone numbers, addresses, committees and counties/cities represented are available by clicking on the member's name for Delegates at: <http://dela.state.va.us/dela/MemBios.nsf/MWebsiteTL> and for Senators at [http://sov.state.va.us/SenatorDB.nsf/\\$\\$Viewtemplate+for+WMembershipHome?OpenForm](http://sov.state.va.us/SenatorDB.nsf/$$Viewtemplate+for+WMembershipHome?OpenForm)

Each Friday, until all of your Senators and Delegates have been contacted, please report to your PD Representative the legislators who have been contacted, issues and concerns they raised, and the degree to which they understand, value, and support Extension and research programs.

We greatly appreciate your efforts in making these contacts. They are critical for the continued success of our Extension and research programs and the economic and social wellbeing of the people of the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,



Eddie Hannah
Chair, VCELC

c: VCELC Membership