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September 6, 2011

VIA U.S. MAIL

Honorable Jack Conway
Capitol Suite 118
700 Capitol Avenue
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601-3449

RE: Request for Investigation of Agriculture Commissioner Richie Farmer and
Department of Agriculture

Dear Attorney General Conway:

I write to request an immediate investigation of the inappropriate spending by Agriculture Commissioner Richie Farmer.

Over the past year, it has come to light that Mr. Farmer has repeatedly and irresponsibly used state resources for personal purposes. As outlined below, Mr. Farmer uses taxpayer dollars to enrich himself. These abuses of taxpayer dollars have been well-chronicled in the media.

However, a new abuse has been revealed, one that I believe constitutes an illegal use of taxpayer dollars for a blatant personal use. In the past week, it has been revealed, first through an anonymous email and later confirmed by Mr. Farmer's own office, that Mr. Farmer, in a telephone call at 8 p.m., ordered an employee to use a taxpayer-funded credit card to purchase a refrigerator and immediately deliver it to Mr. Farmer's home. Mr. Farmer's office has not only confirmed this purchase, but admitted it was for Mr. Farmer's home. In addition, his office made a separate purchase of another refrigerator for Commissioner Farmer. His office has only been able to locate one of these refrigerators. Here are the facts:

Refrigerator Purchased for Commissioner's Home. The August 27, 2011 *Courier Journal* article entitled "Ky.-bought fridge was in Farmer's home," reported that the state Department of Agriculture bought a refrigerator in February, 2010 that was delivered to Richie Farmer's personal residence where it remained for 16 months "until May of this year, when Farmer moved his belongings from that house after his wife filed for divorce." See 8/27/11 Article, attached as Exh. 1.

State Employee Ordered to Make Purchase with State Credit Card. According to an August 13, 2011 article in the *Herald Leader*, an email that was recently submitted to the Personnel Board explained how Farmer personally called state employee David Flint at 8 p.m. one night. Farmer ordered Mr. Flint to "go to Lowe's here in Frankfort and purchase a refrigerator for him on his procard and to bring it to his house that evening." See 8/13/11 Article, attached as Exh. 2. The email also claims Mr. Flint put up political signs on state time.

State Employee Made Second Fridge Purchase for Commissioner. According to an August 31, 2011 Courier Journal article, a second refrigerator was purchased on August 11, 2010 for the Commissioner's Office. See 8/31/11 Article, attached as Exh. 3.

Farmer Office Unable to Locate Fridge. According to an August 31, 2011 Courier Journal article, despite a search by his employees, Farmer's office has only been able to locate one of the refrigerators. See 8/31/11 Article, attached as Exh. 4.

In this case, a constitutional officer specifically ordered a state employee to purchase a fridge for his home on a state credit card. Such blatant disregard for the law requires an immediate investigation of Farmer's spending state tax dollars for personal use.

Commissioner's past abuse of taxpayer dollars include:

- Mr. Farmer failed to report personal miles on his state vehicle for eight years. [Herald Leader, 5/4/11]
- Mr. Farmer wasted more than \$1,600 of taxpayer funds staying in a hotel suite 24 miles from his home. [Courier Journal, 4/22/11]
- Mr. Farmer took three aides and their families on an eight-day Caribbean vacation costing taxpayers nearly \$10,000. [Herald-Leader, 10/17/10]
 - Mr. Farmer's purchase of \$32 plates of Yellowfin Tuna and \$10 slices of banana cheesecake. [Herald-Leader, 10/17/10]
 - Mr. Farmer's charge of \$100 for spa treatment, plus a \$20 tip. [AP, 10/17/10]
 - Mr. Farmer's large tips for drivers, bellhops and attendants, and paid \$50 baggage fees. [AP, 10/17/10]
- Mr. Farmer purchased new vehicles for his Department, including a \$35,340 Chevy Suburban for his own use. [Herald Leader, [8/26/10](#)]
- Mr. Farmer gave close employees raises while the rest of government cut back. [Herald Leader, 12/3/10]

CONCLUSION

Both Mr. Farmer and the Department of Agriculture have spiraled out of control. They are intentionally misusing taxpayer dollars to personally benefit Mr. Farmer and his employees. An immediate investigation is both necessary and warranted.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D - 2', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Daniel Logsdon