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**NCBA Applauds Passage of Senate Resolution for International Year of Cooperatives**

*"Cooperative enterprise creates jobs and strengthens communities," says NCBA CEO Hazen.*

Washington, D.C. —July 22, 2011 — The National Cooperative Business Association applauds the unanimous passage of Senate Resolution 87, which designates 2012 as the International Year of Cooperatives. The bi-partisan Resolution was introduced by Tim Johnson (D-SD) and Thad Cochran (R-Miss.) and 29 additional co-sponsors. It recognizes the vital role cooperatives play in the economic and social well-being of the United States; urges the establishment of a National Committee for the 2012 International Year of Cooperatives to be comprised of representatives from Federal agencies, all cooperative sectors and key stakeholders; and encourages highlighting the positive impact of cooperatives and developing new programs for domestic and international cooperative development.

NCBA President and CEO Paul Hazen said, "Cooperative enterprise knows no party. The unanimous support and significant bi-partisan sponsorship demonstrates that clearly. Co-ops operate in every state and congressional district, bringing jobs, strengthening the economy and anchoring local communities. Cooperative enterprise builds a better world here and around the world by fostering democracy and providing social and economic development opportunities. I thank all of the NCBA members who wrote to their Senators as well as the national organizations that worked with NCBA in support of the Resolution."

The United Nations has designated 2012 as the International Year of Cooperatives in order to recognize the contribution cooperatives make to social and economic development. The theme of IYC—"Cooperative Enterprise Builds a Better World"—reflects the contribution of cooperatives to the communities they serve.

“Cooperative enterprise has a long and strong history in this country, beginning when Ben Franklin organized the Philadelphia Contributionship, a mutual insurance company still in operation today,” Hazen said. “It’s the best business model in the world because it is guided by a set of principles and values, innovates to meet member needs and puts people first. Americans have formed cooperatives to provide for themselves services that no investor-owned company would offer, such as bringing electricity and telecommunications services to rural areas. Food cooperatives were some of the first businesses to offer organic foods—because their members asked for it,” he continued.

Several organizations that serve cooperatives in the United States worked with NCBA in support of this Resolution, including American Farm Bureau Federation, Credit Union National Association,

Farm Credit Council, National Association of Federal Credit Unions, National Association of Housing Cooperatives, National Council of Farmer Cooperatives , National Cooperative Grocers Association, The National Farmers Union, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, National Telecommunications Cooperative Association, North American Students of Cooperation, South Dakota Association of Cooperatives, Parent Cooperative PreSchools International and US Federation of Worker Cooperatives. In addition, members of NCBA wrote to their Senators in support of the Resolution.

A cooperative is a member-owned and controlled business that operates for the benefit of its members. More than 29,000 cooperatives operate in every sector of the economy and in every congressional district; Americans hold over 350 million co-op memberships. US cooperatives generate 2 million jobs and make a substantial contribution to the economy with annual sales of \$652 billion and possessing assets of \$3 trillion.

Senate Resolution 87 had 31 co-sponsors, which are listed below (by state and party affiliation):

- Democrats 1. AR-Pryor 2. CA-Boxer 3. CA-Feinstein 4. CO-Bennet 5. CO-Udall 6. MI-Stabenow
7. MN-Franken
8. MN-Klobuchar

9. MO-McCaskill

10. MT-Tester

12. MT-Baucus

12. ND-Conrad

13. NE-Nelson

14. NY-Schumer

15. OH-Brown

16. SD-Johnson

17. WA-Murray

18. WA-Cantwell

19. WI-Kohl

#### Republicans

1. GA-Chambliss

2. IA-Grassley

3. IN-Lugar

4. KS-Roberts

5. KS-Moran

6. MO-Blunt

7. MS-Cochran

8. MS-Wicker

9. ME-Collins

10. NE-Johanns

11. SD-Thune

12. WY-Enzi

Several co-sponsors of Senate Resolution 87 provided comments on cooperatives, which are provided below:

Saxby Chambliss (R-GA): "Cooperatives play a crucial role in communities across Georgia and throughout the United States. In some areas they are the only providers of basic essentials and should be commended for their tireless work. Designating 2012 as the International Year of Cooperatives will serve to highlight the significant contributions cooperatives make to our economy and society."

Thad Cochran (R-MS): "This resolution highlights the usefulness of cooperative business models in creating opportunities for groups of people, especially those living in rural areas. Cooperatives give groups that might otherwise be left at a disadvantage a chance to be more competitive in marketing goods or securing basic services," Cochran said. "I'm proud of the accomplishments of cooperatives in Mississippi and elsewhere. I look forward to cooperatives continuing to expand and prosper in an increasingly global marketplace."

Michael B. Enzi (R-WY): "All across Wyoming, cooperatives provide local markets for Wyoming goods and secure a better future for farmers and ranchers by giving them an opportunity to take ownership in a business that buys and sells their goods," said Senator Mike Enzi. "Co-ops contribute to the American economy and to the lives of those they employ."

Mike Johanns (R-NE): "Cooperatives play a unique and valuable role for our farmers, ranchers and business owners," Johanns said. "As our economy grows more complex, cooperatives help to ensure rural America remains prosperous and competitive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century."

Tim Johnson (D-SD): "At a time of great partisan gridlock, I am glad the Senate could come together to adopt the resolution I introduced to support cooperatives," Johnson said. "As a member of the Congressional Farmer Cooperative Caucus, I have consistently supported

cooperative businesses because I understand how important they are to South Dakota's economy," said Johnson.

Herb Kohl (D-WI): "Wisconsin is home to more than 640 cooperatives that operate in all sectors of the economy. These member owned and operated cooperatives play a critical role in building local wealth, creating jobs and improving competition in the marketplace. The University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives estimates that cooperatives are responsible for \$7 billion in gross sales and employ 23,000 people in our state," Kohl said.

Dick Lugar (R-IN): "I am pleased to support SRes. 87 and all of the cooperatives in Indiana," said Senator Dick Lugar. "The economic impact of cooperatives throughout Indiana is important to our economy. These unique ventures offer thousands of jobs and millions of dollars in wages and revenue for our state. I appreciate all their work throughout Indiana."

Ben Nelson (D-NE): "I am proud to be an original sponsor of Resolution 87, designating 2012 as the International Year of Cooperatives because cooperatives are a major economic engine in the United States and Nebraska," Nelson said. "Nebraska cooperatives enable our farmers to strengthen their marketing and processing opportunities enhancing their crop and livestock production. Nebraska agriculture and marketing cooperatives invested more than \$78 million in 2009 alone in new facilities and equipment. They employ thousands of Nebraskans, and pay millions in both dividends and taxes, helping keep Nebraska's economy robust and thriving."

Mark Pryor (D-AR): "Cooperatives are a vital resource in Arkansas, bringing economic development and services to many of our rural communities," Pryor said. "This resolution will ensure that we continue to recognize the positive contributions co-ops make to our local and global economies."

Pat Roberts (R-KS): "Cooperatives have a long history in Kansas, starting even before former Kansas Senator Arthur Capper helped pass the Capper-Volstead Act in Congress in 1922, giving individuals producing agriculture based products certain exemptions from antitrust laws," said Roberts. "Today cooperatives continue to play an important role in our economy and in the lives of Kansans, from farmer's local cooperative elevators to electric cooperatives. I'm very pleased to support 2012 as the International Year of Cooperatives."

Roger Wicker (R-MS): “Cooperatives help many of Mississippi’s rural communities immensely, and today’s resolution highlights the good work they do,” said Wicker. “The broad support this resolution received is a testament to the benefit of co-ops across the country.”

## **ABOUT NCBA**

*Headquartered in Washington, DC, the [National Cooperative Business Association](#) creates cooperative o*