

DRAFT 4.12.13 – reduced to one page at the request of ECOP Exec; the next steps are to seek approval by ECOP Exec and ECOP in May; encourage regional discussion in June with report back to ECOP during face-to-face meeting in July

Dear Cooperative Extension Section Colleagues:

What value do you place on being part of a national Cooperative Extension System? As your representative leadership and governing body, ECOP is deeply concerned about proposed actions related to nonpayment of assessments that we, as a system, have approved by national vote. While ECOP maintains four accounts for its national functions, recent discussions focus primarily on the assessment in support of eXtension.

In March 2011, ECOP voted to put out a ballot to the 75 universities in the Section to assess ourselves for eXtension from 2012 through 2015 with a resulting favorable vote. Today, there are different points of view regarding the fulfillment of goals for eXtension. This is not to discount concerns, rather to point out the existence of our national structure that unites us into a national system.

Each region has appointed representatives to the eXtension Governing Committee, which reports to ECOP. It is up to our regions to see that these individuals represent the MAJORITY interests of the region and that decisions are made in the best interest of the national system. Until changes are voted upon by the Section, which can occur at any time, paying assessments for various approved initiatives is a responsibility of each institution as part of our national system.

When states or regions refuse to pay agreed upon assessments that were determined by a national vote, it undermines our ability to function as a system and suggests the work of the eXtension Governing Committee and ECOP is not relevant. This violates a collegial responsibility we have to our representatives on governing structures, makes it impossible to represent ourselves to partners, and destroys our ability to operate as a national system. Said another way, it sends a clear message that MY individual belief is more important than the actions taken within the structures, protocols, and operational guidelines we set up collectively.

This is a call to action! When we have strong differences of opinion midway through assessment periods for which we have agreed upon, fully engaging through ECOP is essential. Please continue regional discussions and equip your representatives to ECOP to reflect your opinions and recommended solutions at the July 24-25, 2013 face-to-face ECOP. As we are about to celebrate the centennial of the national educational system called Cooperative Extension, your voice is critical to position us for excellence in the next century. Thank you.

Sincerely,

/s/ Daryl Buchholz on behalf of ECOP (approved ???)