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The Sugar Policy Alliance Applauds Senate Leaders For Introducing Legislation to Reform the Sugar Program

Washington, D.C. – January 27, 2011 – The Sugar Policy Alliance thanked Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Sen. Mark Kirk (R-IL) and Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL) for leading the fight to reform the sugar program in the new 112th Congress. This week they introduced S. 25, the “Stop Unfair Giveaways and Restrictions” (SUGAR) Act. S. 25 phases out many of the job-killing features of the current sugar program, including marketing allotments that restrict domestic sugar production and import restraints that make it extremely difficult for food and beverage manufacturers to make use of much-needed international supplies of sugar.

“The sugar program has hurt Americans through higher consumer prices and lost jobs. It needs dramatic change, and we commend the Senators for their bipartisan effort to reform an out-dated big-government policy,” said Sugar Policy Alliance Chairman Larry Graham. “The SUGAR Act fits squarely within Sugar Policy Alliance goals of making U.S. sugar policy market-oriented, less reliant on government regulation of supply, and more in step with the nation's foreign trade obligations.”

Current sugar policy, which relies on government-regulated price floors, marketing quotas, and import restrictions, prevents the sugar market from operating efficiently. According to Promar International, the sugar program is now costing consumers and food manufacturers an additional \$4 billion annually.

Because this country does not produce as much sugar as it consumes, users need ready access to reliable supplies of imported sugar, as well as domestically produced sugar. The current sugar program hurts American workers by driving good jobs overseas and it hurts American consumers by increasing the price of products made with sugar.

For decades the sugar program has also harmed the environment in the Florida Everglades. While state and federal governments are pouring huge amounts of money into an effort to save America's Everglades, the outdated sugar program enables some 500,000 acres of sugarcane to divert water and release tons of pollution into this precious ecosystem. “I support phasing out the sugar program that guarantees profits to polluters in Florida and that makes sugar consumers pay billions more for food than they should,” said Everglades Trust President Mary Barley.

The Sugar Policy Alliance (SPA) represents consumer and trade groups, confectioners, bakers, cereal manufacturers, beverage makers and dairy food companies that use sugar, as well as the trade associations for these industries. SPA supports a healthy domestic sugar-producing and sugar-processing industry that can deliver an ample supply to refiners, industrial users, and consumers, but believes sugar policy should support producer incomes without distorting the market.

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