

April 27, 2021

Debbie Stabenow, Chairwoman
U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee

John Boozman, Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee

David Scott, Chairman
U.S. House Agriculture Committee

Glenn Thompson, Ranking Member
U.S. House Agriculture Committee

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow, Chairman Scott, Ranking Member Boozman, and Ranking Member Thompson:

Thank you for your ongoing bipartisan efforts to ensure that agriculture is part of the solution to climate change. As you consider the role of agriculture in the upcoming infrastructure conversations in Congress, the undersigned groups urge you to support a robust investment into USDA agriculture conservation programs and conservation technical assistance in the next climate and infrastructure package.

We were pleased to see that President Biden's American Jobs Plan places a priority on "positioning the U.S. agricultural sector to lead the shift to net-zero emissions while providing new economic opportunities for farmers." Increasing funding for USDA's popular and effective Farm Bill conservation programs is one of the quickest and most practical ways to directly equip farmers and ranchers, energize rural economies, improve climate resilience, and ensure that agriculture is part of the solution to climate change. The full suite of voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs administered by USDA enables farmers, ranchers, and forest owners to adopt practices that build soil health, sequester carbon, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, while also improving surface and ground water quality, increasing water efficiency, and creating habitat for fish and wildlife.

Unfortunately, however, Farm Bill conservation programs are routinely oversubscribed. Demand for conservation on 13.8 million acres goes unmet because of inadequate funding every year. Additionally, our current programs meet only a fraction of the need for voluntary conservation on the landscape. That's why we are urging Congress to double the investment in Farm Bill conservation programs and to ramp up conservation technical assistance funding in a corresponding manner. As funds for conservation programs increase, it is vital for conservation technical assistance to keep pace. This assistance is essential for the delivery of conservation funding and provides on the ground support for farmers, ranchers, and forest owners as they adopt conservation practices on their lands.

Increasing baseline funding for the Farm Bill conservation programs and ramping up conservation technical assistance on the ground will enable landowners to mitigate the impacts of drought and flood, improve habitat, improve soil health and long-term food security, create new job opportunities for rural economies, and galvanize the agriculture sector to lead the charge in our fight against climate change. We believe farmers, ranchers, and foresters are ready to move agriculture toward net zero emissions if they are provided the tools and resources to make that goal a reality. Action this year on the climate and

infrastructure bill represents the best opportunity in decades to meet farmer demand for conservation programs.

We look forward to working with your committee to build out these priorities that will energize the American economy and put Americans back to work.

Sincerely,

National and Regional Groups:

American Farmland Trust
American Fisheries Society
American Grassfed Association
Appalachian Trail Conservancy
Association of State Floodplain Managers
Carbon180
Center for Rural Affairs
Defenders of Wildlife
Delta Waterfowl
E2 (Environmental Entrepreneurs)
Earthjustice
Environmental Defense Fund
Environmental Working Group
Food Animal Concerns Trust
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Izaak Walton League of America
Land Trust Alliance
League of Conservation Voters
National Association of Conservation Districts
National Audubon Society
National Center for Appropriate Technology
National Deer Association
National Farmers Union
National Organic Coalition
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
National Wildlife Federation
National Young Farmers Coalition
NatureServe
North American Grouse Partnership
Natural Resources Defense Council
Organic Farmers Association
Organic Farming Research Foundation

Pesticide Action Network
Pollinator Partnership
Rural Coalition
Sierra Club
Slow Food USA
Soil and Water Conservation Society
The Conservation Fund
The Nature Conservancy
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Trout Unlimited
Union of Concerned Scientists
Western Landowners Alliance
Wild Farm Alliance
Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation

Regional, State and Local Groups:

Alliance for the Great Lakes
Arkansas Wildlife Federation
Bird Conservancy of the Rockies
Blue Ridge Land Conservancy
California Climate and Agriculture Network
California Farmers Union
Capital Region Land Conservancy
Carolina Farm Stewardship Association
Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Chesapeake Conservancy
Clean Fairfax
Climate Land Leaders
Coastal Enterprises, LLC
Colorado Wildlife Federation
Conservation Coalition of Oklahoma
Delaware Nature Society
Delaware Valley Ornithological Club
Environmental Law & Policy Center
Florida Wildlife Federation, Inc.
Food and Agriculture Committee, Sierra Club, Atlantic Chapter
Foodshed Capital
Friends of the Mississippi River
Gallatin Valley Land Trust
Georgia Wildlife Federation
Goose Creek Association
Harpeth Conservancy
Hawaii Farmers Union United
Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association

Healthy Gulf
Heart of the Rockies Initiative
Idaho Wildlife Federation
Illinois Council of Trout Unlimited
Indiana Wildlife Federation
Iowa Environmental Council
Iowa Wildlife Federation
Kalmiopsis Audubon Society
Kansas Wildlife Federation
Land For Good
Louisiana Wildlife Federation
Maine Farmland Trust
Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association
Maryland Bird Conservation Partnership
Maryland Ornithological Society
Mass Audubon
Michael Fields Agricultural Institute
Michigan Farmers Union
Minnesota Conservation Federation
Minnesota Farmers Union
Mississippi River Trust
Mississippi Wildlife Federation
Missouri Farmers Union
Montana Organic Association
Montana Wildlife Federation
Nebraska Farmers Union
Nebraska Wildlife Federation
Neighboring Food Co-op Association
Nevada Wildlife Federation
New England Farmers Union
North Dakota Farmers Union
North Dakota Wildlife Federation
Northeast Organic Farming Association-Interstate Council
Northern Virginia Conservation Trust
Northwest Farmers Union
Ohio Conservation Federation
Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association
Oregon Climate and Agriculture Network
Pasa Sustainable Agriculture
PennFuture
Prairie Rivers Network
Quivira Coalition
Rockbridge Area Conservation Council
Rocky Mountain Farmers Union

Salem Audubon Society
Savanna Institute
Saving Birds Thru Habitat
Sociedad Ornitologica Puertorriquena
South Carolina Wildlife Federation
South Dakota Wildlife Federation
Texas Conservation Alliance
Unitarian Universalist Church of Roanoke
Utah Wildlife Federation
Virginia Association for Biological Farming
Virginia Conservation Network
Waterkeepers Chesapeake
Wildlife Mississippi
Wisconsin Farmers Union
Wyoming Wildlife Federation