

October 7, 2021

The Honorable Chuck Schumer, Majority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives

Dear Leader Schumer and Speaker Pelosi,

Thank you for your ongoing efforts to pass a Build Back Better Act that includes robust funding for climate-smart agriculture. As you continue to consider this important legislation, the undersigned groups write in strong support of the proposed \$28 billion investment into USDA agriculture conservation programs and conservation technical assistance and urge you to ensure that it remains in the final budget reconciliation package. This would be the largest investment into agriculture conservation in decades and would be transformative for farms, ranches, and forests across the country.

Increasing funding for USDA's popular and effective Farm Bill conservation programs is one of the quickest and most practical ways to energize rural economies, improve climate resilience, and ensure that our nation's farmers, ranchers, and foresters are part of the solution to climate change. USDA's voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs enable 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, creating habitat for fish and wildlife, and protecting agricultural lands for future generations.

Unfortunately, Farm Bill conservation programs are critically oversubscribed and meet only a fraction of the need for voluntary conservation on the landscape. Demand for conservation on 13.8 million acres goes unmet because of inadequate funding every year. That's why last month, over 215 groups announced their support for doubling of the Farm Bill conservation program funding. A \$28 billion investment in Farm Bill conservation programs, conservation technical assistance, and climate-smart agriculture would go a long way towards that goal. Hundreds of farm, food and conservation advocates, companies, and private citizens have weighed in with input during the budget reconciliation process, and they confirmed that the climate-smart agriculture provisions of the Build Back Better Budget will make a historic impact on conservation efforts.

Increasing funding for the Farm Bill conservation programs and climate-smart agriculture and ramping up conservation technical assistance on the ground will enable landowners to mitigate the impacts of drought and flood, restore wildlife 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. Farmers, ranchers, and foresters are ready adopt practices that sequester carbon and reduce emissions if they are provided the tools and resources to make that goal a reality. Action this year on a reconciliation bill with robust funding for climate-smart agriculture represents the best opportunity in decades to meet farmer demand for conservation programs.

Thank you for all of your work on the Build Back Better Act and climate-smart agriculture funding. We look forward to working with you in the future to continue to build out these priorities that will energize the American economy and put Americans back to work.

Sincerely,

National Groups and Companies:

Alter Eco
American Bird Conservancy
American Farmland Trust
American Fisheries Society
Appalachian Trail Conservancy
Carbon180
Ceres
Clif Bar & Co
Climate Positive Consulting
Defenders of Wildlife
Dr. Bronner's
Earthjustice
Eleni Toubanos, LLC
Environment America
Environmental Defense Fund
Environmental Working Group
Farm Aid
GreenStep Solutions Inc.
Hazon
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Impossible Foods Inc.
Izaak Walton League of America
Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future
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 Parks Conservation Association
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
National Wildlife Federation
National Young Farmers Coalition
Natural Resources Defense Council
North American Grouse Partnership
Organic Farmers Association
Organic Farming Research Foundation
Oregon Tilth
Pesticide Action Network
Plant Based Foods Association
Pollinator Partnership
Queenan Productions
River Network
Save the Dunes
Sierra Club
Sierra Nevada Brewing Co.
Soil and Water Conservation Society
Tentree
The Bee Girl Organization (BGO)
The Conservation Fund
The Nature Conservancy
The Tofurky Company
The Trust for Public Land
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
U.S. PIRG
Union of Concerned Scientists
Wild Farm Alliance
Wildlife Management Institute
World Wildlife Fund
Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation

Regional, State, and Local Groups:

Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley
Anacostia Watershed Society
Arizona Wildlife Federation
Audubon Western Everglades
Bird Conservancy of the Rockies
Bread Riot
California Climate & Agriculture Network
Cacapon Institute
Capital Region Land Conservancy
Carolina Farm Stewardship Association (CFSA)
Carteret Food and Health Council - NC
Center for Rural Affairs

Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Chesapeake Conservancy
Chesapeake Legal Alliance
Coastal Enterprises, Inc.
Community Farm Alliance
Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture
(CISA)
Conservation Federation of Missouri
Conservation Northwest
Conservation Voters of Pennsylvania
Delaware Valley Ornithological Club
Environmental Law & Policy Center

Faith Community Church
Farm to Table - New Mexico
Florida Wildlife Federation, Inc.
Foodshed Capital
Friends of Family Farmers
Friends of St. Clements Bay
Friends of the Mississippi River
Friends of the Rappahannock
Georgia Organics
Green Lands Blue Waters
Green State Solutions
Guilford Urban Farming Initiative
Harpeth Conservancy
Healthy Gulf
Hendry-Glades Audubon Society
Hoosier Environmental Council
Idaho Wildlife Federation
Illinois Stewardship Alliance
Indiana Sportsmens Roundtable
Iowa Wildlife Federation
Izaak Walton League - Illinois Division
Izaak Walton League of America - Cypress
Chapter (Florida)
Izaak Walton League of America - Dwight Lydell
Chapter (Michigan)
Izaak Walton League of America - Florida
Division
Izaak Walton League of America - Florida Keys
Chapter
Izaak Walton League of America - Minnesota
Division
Izaak Walton League of America - Oregon
Division
Izaak Walton League of America - Porter County
Chapter (Indiana)
Izaak Walton League of America - W. J. McCabe
Chapter (Minnesota)
Izaak Walton League of America - Will Dilg
Chapter (Minnesota)
Izaak Walton League of America - Wisconsin
Division
Kansas Rural Center
Lancaster Clean Water Partners
Lancaster Farmland Trust
Land For Good
Land Stewardship Project
League of Rural Voters

Maine Farmland Trust
Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners
Association
MD Campaign for Environmental Human Rights
Michael Fields Agricultural Institute
Milwaukee Riverkeeper
Mississippi River Network
Mississippi Wildlife Federation
Missouri Coalition for the Environment
Missouri River Bird Observatory
Montana Organic Association
Montana Wildlife Federation
Narrative Food
National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative
Nebraska Wildlife Federation
Neighboring Food Co-op Association
Nevada Wildlife Federation
New Mexico Wildlife Federation
North Dakota Wildlife Federation
Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance
Northeast Organic Farming Association -
Massachusetts
Northeast Organic Farming Association - New
York
Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association
Oregon Climate and Agriculture Network
Pasa Sustainable Agriculture
PennFuture
Pennsylvania Council of Churches
Potomac Conservancy
Rivertown Coalition for Clean Air & Water
Rowan Food and Farm Network
Salem Audubon Society
Scenic Hudson
South Dakota Wildlife Federation
Southern Vision Alliance
Sustainable Food Center
The Alliance for the Great Lakes
The Piedmont Environmental Council
Trout Unlimited - Illinois Council
Virginia Association for Biological Farming
Virginia Conservation Network
Western Landowners Alliance
Wildlife Mississippi
Wisconsin Farmers Union
Wisconsin Wildlife Federation

cc: The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the United States; The Honorable Debbie Stabenow, Chairwoman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry and the Honorable David Scott, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture