



National Association of
Conservation Districts

Farm Bill Task Force

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Over the past year and a half, NACD's Farm Bill Task Force has worked to define a set of conservation **policy requests for the 2018 Farm Bill.**

1. Starting with a survey of our members last summer, the Task Force identified the needs of NACD's conservation district and state association members and developed **2018 Farm Bill Principles.**
2. Based on those principles, the Task Force then created a list of **policy requests.**
3. The NACD Government Affairs Team has **already started discussions** with members of the Senate and House Agriculture Committees and other members of Congress about the importance of these requests.



General 2018 Farm Bill Requests

- No Further Cuts to Conservation Title Funding in the Farm Bill

NACD believes, at a minimum, no further cuts should occur in the next farm bill to the Conservation Title, and we hope to see Congress increase its funding.

- Technical Assistance & Conservation Planning are the Bedrock of Conservation Delivery

Congress should include language in the next Farm Bill that emphasizes the importance of technical assistance provided through the Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) program.

- Repeal SAM/DUNS Requirements

Congress should include in the next Farm Bill bipartisan legislation introduced in the 115th Congress (S. 364/H.R. 1163) to remove this unnecessary regulation.



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General 2018 Farm Bill Requests

- Continue Current Conservation Compliance Policy

NACD supports the continuation of the existing policy of conservation compliance as included in the 2014 Farm Bill.

- Crop Insurance Should Continue Working in Tandem with Conservation

The next Farm Bill should direct USDA to be proactive in its messaging that conservation practices such as cover cropping are allowed. RMA should work closely with NRCS to ensure that Approved Insurance Providers (AIPs) and local crop insurance agents are fully aware of federal policy.





Environmental Quality Incentives Program

EQIP is the workhorse of the Farm Bill's Conservation Title, often serving as the gateway to voluntary conservation for producers. It assists farmers and ranchers who may not already implement conservation to address their operation's resource concerns. **Because of its crucial role, EQIP baseline funding should be increased, or at the very least maintained, in the next Farm Bill.**

NACD also supports expanding Acequias eligibility to the full EQIP program to ensure these unique irrigation systems can continue to provide conservation benefits and economic stability to low income, minority, and underserved farmers.



Regional Conservation Partnership Program

NACD supports language encouraging local engagement of conservation districts by RCPP project sponsors. Some state conservationists have encouraged this during the application process, but explicit language would increase coordination with conservation districts that have firsthand knowledge of local conditions.

RCPP is partially funded through funds taken from the other conservation programs. If applicants in a state cannot procure matching funds and ultimately be awarded a grant, that state loses out on the funding taken from the donor program. Program equity around the nation is a priority for NACD and **funding for RCPP should only be increased from donor programs if a similar increase in the underlying program occurs.**



Small Watershed Dam Rehab Program

Small watershed dams help meet water quality and erosion control resource concerns across the country and over the decades, conservation districts have stepped up to sponsor these projects.

There are over 11,800 flood control structures nationwide. These often require significant continued technical assistance and financial resources on the part of the sponsoring conservation district.

NACD fully supports robust funding (\$75 million requested in FY18) for the Small Watershed Dam Rehab Program to help meet today's needs for these structures.



Conservation Reserve Program

NACD supports CRP as a program that addresses natural resource concerns on our nation's most sensitive working lands by resting/idling them from production agriculture.

Acreage Cap – A balanced approach

NACD supports an increase in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acreage cap, but not at the expense of other programs (EQIP, CSP, etc.) within the Conservation Title. NACD prefers a balanced approach to funding conservation programs and we do not want to see any one conservation program eliminated or suffer significant cuts to fund large increases in another.



CRP Technical Assistance – Apportioned at the discretion of the Secretary of Agriculture

With NRCS and FSA now under the same mission area, decisions on the amount of technical assistance provided to NRCS should also be made solely by the agriculture secretary, rather than the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

Grazing – An ecologically responsible management practice

NACD supports allowing more grazing in CRP as NACD believes grazing activities can be done in an environmentally sound way and can actually improve the health of the land.



Transitioning out of CRP – Ensuring the continuation of environmental benefits

NACD strongly believes land transitioning out of CRP back into crop production should have an updated conservation plan. Further, NACD believes that EQIP and CSP should be available to contract holders in the last year of a contract as it is for those participating in CRP-TIP.

SAFE Acres separate under the County Cap

NACD supports a continuation of the 2014 Farm Bill policy of allowing continuous CRP acres and State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) acres to be counted separately from the 25% cap imposed on General CRP lands in a county.



Increase CRP Payment Limit

NACD encourages Congress to increase the CRP payment limit per person or legal entity from \$50,000 per year to \$100,000 per year. The current maximum payment limit for CRP annual rental payments and incentive payments per person or legal entity has remained the same since 2002.

Natural Disasters Substituting for Mid-Contract Management

In some instances when a natural disaster occurs, such as a fire, flood, or hailstorm, the requirement to still conduct a practice during the contract could be duplicative. In other instances, this requirement would be detrimental to the vegetation if the landowner is still required to mow or disk/till the vegetation. Congress should allow FSA/NRCS to assess the ecological outcome of the natural disaster.



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2018 Farm Bill Requests

We encourage you to contact your members of Congress directly so that they may hear from you – their constituents who work to put conservation on the ground through farm bill programs regularly.

If you have questions or need more information, please contact NACD's Director of Government Affairs Coleman Garrison at coleman-garrison@nacdnet.org.



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Every acre,



every American,



every day.

