

August 27, 2018

Dear Farm Bill Conferees:

Our groups deeply appreciate your commitment and ongoing work to craft a final farm bill through the conference process. As you work to move the House and Senate farm bills into conference, the undersigned organizations write to ask you to protect the funding, structure, and long-term integrity of the conservation title in the next farm bill. Given the strong demand and critical need for conservation across the country, we believe it is essential to protect conservation funding in the final farm bill. Our groups are in the business of making the farm bill even better over the long term, and with that in mind, we urge you to ensure that the final farm bill reflects the following principles with regard to overall funding, to protect and strengthen the overall conservation title in the long term:

- **No Cuts to Overall Conservation Baseline**

The conservation title's programs and policies play a critical role in supporting farmers to protect water quality and quantity, build soil health and prevent erosion, create and maintain habitat for threatened, endangered, or economically important fish and wildlife, and prepare for and mitigate drought. Conservation funding was cut through the 2014 Farm Bill, as well as through sequestration and appropriations bills over the last several years, and these cuts have meant that fewer farmers, ranchers, and foresters have been able to enroll their land in conservation programs. At the same time, overall demand for conservation programs well exceeds available dollars. Given previous cuts to conservation funding and the significant demand, it is critical that no funding leaves the conservation title in a final bill.

- **Protect Long Term Funding**

We know that you operate under difficult budgetary constraints, but it is important that the final farm bill not only provides much needed conservation funding over the next five-year period of this farm bill, but also within the ten-year window, as well as into the future. This farm bill should invest not only in the farmers and ranchers who will utilize its provided authority and funding under this farm bill, but also position the title to expand and enhance future conservation efforts.

- **Retain Complete Suite of Conservation Programs**

The strength of the conservation title depends not only on total funding, but also on retaining and strengthening the diversity of programs available to assist producers in natural resource management, protection, and enhancement. This is critical so we can continue to expand the multiple unique, yet complementary, approaches to conservation. It is important both to retain the complete toolbox of programs within the conservation title, and also to make incremental improvements to them in each farm bill so that we can continue to enhance and expand conservation, in the next five years and beyond.

- **Protect Against Cuts Through Appropriations**

Finally, we urge you to ensure that the conferenced farm bill's conservation title is structured to the maximum extent possible to protect mandatory farm bill conservation funding during the annual

appropriations process. We are pleased that appropriators have avoided cuts to conservation programs in the most recent fiscal years, and we urge you to structure the funding of the overall title to support that investment in future appropriations processes. To do so, we encourage you to continue to structure the conservation title to include a blend of funding dollars and acres available for enrollment in multiple programs, thus better protecting against cuts through the appropriations process.

We look forward to working with you to craft a farm bill that protects conservation funding in the long term and the integrity of the conservation title overall.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

**National Organizations**

American Forests

American Society of Agronomy

Center for Food Safety

Center for Rural Affairs

Clean Water Action

Crop Science Society of America

CROPP Cooperative | Organic Valley

Defenders of Wildlife

Earthjustice

Endangered Species Coalition

Food Animal Concerns Trust (FACT)

Green Latinos

Hip Hop Caucus

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy

Izaak Walton League of America

Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future

National Farmers Union

National Organic Coalition

National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition

National Wildlife Federation

National Young Farmers Coalition

Natural Heritage Institute

Organic Farming Research Foundation

Pollinator Partnership

Rural & Agriculture Council of America

Sierra Club

Society for Range Management

Soil and Water Conservation Society  
Soil Science Society of America  
The Common Market  
The Conservation Fund  
The Wildlife Society  
Union of Concerned Scientists  
Wild Farm Alliance  
Women, Food and Agriculture Network  
World Wildlife Fund  
Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation

**State/ Local/ Regional Organizations**

California Climate & Agriculture Network  
Coastal Enterprises, Inc.  
Delta Institute  
Endangered Habitats League  
Environmental Law & Policy Center  
Fair Farms  
FairShare CSA Coalition  
Farm to Table New Mexico  
Friends for Our Riverfront  
Friends of the Mississippi River  
Green Lands Blue Waters  
Gulf Restoration Network  
Illinois Stewardship Alliance  
Kansas Rural Center  
La Montanita Coop  
Land Stewardship Project  
League of Women Voters Upper Mississippi River Region  
Maine Farmland Trust  
Michael Fields Agricultural Institute  
Midwest Environmental Advocates  
Mississippi River Collaborative  
Missouri Coalition for the Environment  
Montana Organic Association  
New Mexico Food & Agriculture Policy Council  
Northeast Organic Farming Association  
Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group  
Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association

Ohio Environmental Council  
Oregon Tilth  
Pennsylvania Council of Churches  
Pesticide Action Network  
Practical Farmers of Iowa  
Prairie Rivers Network  
Quapaw Canoe Company  
River Alliance of Wisconsin  
Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group  
The Wetlands Initiative  
Virginia Association for Biological Farming  
Western Landowners Alliance  
Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association