

Land Trust Alliance 2021 Policy Agenda



As a national land conservation organization representing 1,000 member land trusts that are supported by more than 5 million members nationwide, the Land Trust Alliance works passionately to advance federal policies and secure resources that support land trusts. Our policy agenda for 2021 reflects our member priorities and advances private land conservation.

Response to national emergencies: Seek resources to assist land trusts

Land trusts, like many entities, can be impacted by national emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The Alliance will monitor and analyze emergency response legislation and advocate in support of policies and resources to support our community.

CONSERVATION FUNDING

Farm Bill: Lead the charge on reauthorization, rulemaking and implementation

The Farm Bill is the largest single source of federal funding for private land conservation. It is a top priority for the Alliance. We will lead our members through the ongoing 2018 Farm Bill rulemaking and implementation process and the upcoming 2023 Farm Bill reauthorization cycle.

Federal conservation funding

The Alliance will advocate for funding for key conservation programs to advance our work, including the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, and for regional programs such as the Great Lakes and Chesapeake Bay.

Federal conservation programs: Expand federal programs to allow third-party holders

The Alliance will pursue legislation to increase opportunities for third parties to hold easements under new and existing conservation programs.

TAX ISSUES

Tax shelters: Put an end to abusive conservation easement tax shelters

Abusive conservation easement tax shelters continue to cost taxpayers billions of dollars and put public goodwill and the critical federal policy and funding programs that goodwill helped us secure at risk. The Alliance will continue to advocate in support of legislative and administrative actions to halt the abuse.

IRS reform: Inoculate conservation donations and tax credits from harm

The IRS continues to focus on innocent donor documentation mistakes (often called “foot faults”) that result in disqualification of truly charitable donations. The Alliance is working to safeguard these donations by pursuing legislation that reorients the IRS from focusing on such minor mistakes. Additionally, the Alliance is actively working with Congress to exempt conservation donations from the State and Local Tax limitation.

ENERGY AND CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

Natural climate solutions: Drive funding to land trusts to protect resilient lands and advance natural climate solutions

Land trusts and landowners can lead the way within the land sector in addressing the impacts of climate change. Our policy goal is to promote policies and funding that advance natural climate solutions and support the protection, restoration and stewardship of open and working lands that increase climate resilience. The Alliance recognizes responsible grassland management, including proper ruminant animal grazing techniques and proper forest management can support these goals.

Advocate for private land conservation as a critical part of 30x30

There are growing calls to conserve 30% of America's lands and waters by 2030. The Alliance will continue to champion the critical role of private lands in meeting this ambitious national land conservation target. Additionally, the Alliance will advocate for strategies that will drive resources to land trusts, which are uniquely equipped to work with private landowners to conserve more natural and working lands to achieve this goal.

Energy siting solutions: Advance conservation-compatible development of energy infrastructure

Increasing pressure to site energy infrastructure, including renewable energy projects, on conserved lands is putting our community's land conservation work in jeopardy. The Alliance is coordinating with our members to educate decision-makers on the importance of the sustainable location of energy infrastructure as guided by regional perspectives and without undermining the essential conservation values the land trust community works hard to protect.

CONSERVATION AND JOB CREATION

Creating jobs with a reimagined Civilian Conservation Corps

As the country faces an unprecedented unemployment crisis as well as a growing backlog of park maintenance, habitat restoration and hands-on stewardship needs, a nationwide conservation corps modeled after the Civilian Conservation Corps of a century ago would provide much-needed opportunities for under-employed Americans to serve as essential stewards in our communities. The Alliance will advocate for the creation of a reimagined CCC that includes new opportunities for land trusts to partner with corps programs to address stewardship needs, enhance recreational access and build capacity for habitat restoration on private lands.

To learn more or take a more active role in our policy work, email policy@lta.org