



# CONSERVATION

VOLUNTARY. LOCALLY-LED. INCENTIVE-BASED.

NASDA strongly supports the Farm Bill's locally-led, voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs. This approach allows farmers and ranchers to tailor conservation programs to their specific needs and counter the need for regulatory action.

## WORKING LANDS

NASDA supports NRCS working lands programs, including but not limited to the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Agriculture Conservation Easement Program (ACEP). These programs are designed to leverage state and partner funds and technical assistance to increase conservation practice adoption. The 2014 Farm Bill created efficiencies in the conservation title however, funding for the title was cut significantly. NASDA opposes further cuts to these essential conservation programs.

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Funding for conservation technical assistance is essential to ensure conservation gains are realized from NRCS programs. NASDA remains concerned with proposals that would reduce or eliminate funding for conservation technical assistance. NASDA supports increased funding for conservation technical assistance.

NASDA members use NRCS programs to work with farmers and ranchers to address a host of conservation efforts such as water quality improvements and nutrient reduction.

# 52%

Percent of RCPP dollars working to improve water quality.

## STATES ARE PARTNERS IN CONSERVATION

NASDA proposes amending the Agriculture Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) in order to increase flexibility for state program delivery and streamline program administration.

- **Certification:** NASDA proposes improving the certification process to recognize the diversity of state programs and enable these programs to become certified. The certification process should result in greater flexibility at the state level for choice of land acquisitions, allow for a wider window of time for choosing projects and accelerate the closing of easement agreements.

Over for more details.



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# MORE ON CONSERVATION

- **ACEP Ag Land Easement (ALE) Farm Plans:** NASDA proposes eliminating the ALE plan requirements as they are duplicative and burdensome for both landowners and program administrators. Many state protection programs require farms to have nutrient management plans and farms with highly erodible soils are required to have federal conservation plans.
- **Minimum Easement Terms:** NASDA proposes streamlining the approval of state minimum easement terms. NASDA encourages Congress to direct NRCS to allow easement terms that reflect those developed by local entities and are consistent with the purposes of the program.
- **Substitution:** NASDA proposes clarifying that NRCS must provide states the flexibility to substitute parcels. Substitution is a necessary part of state program delivery as it enables projects to be completed if initial agreements were to fall through.

## THE FARM BILL IMPACTS EVERYONE.

Agricultural producers, the rural economy, and communities of every size rely upon a forward looking, and fully funded Farm Bill. NASDA calls for enhanced investment in American agriculture that provides producers the tools they need to succeed. The Farm Bill is also vital to providing consumers access to the safest, highest quality and affordable food supply, which is essential for our nation's economy and security.

## OUR FARM BILL PRIORITIES

- Conservation
- Trade Promotion
- Specialty Crops
- Invasive Species
- Animal Diseases
- Research
- Food Safety



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