

Farm Bill Conservation Funding



The conservation programs in the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill) are aimed at providing critical assistance to farmers, ranchers and forest landowners to address local natural resource issues. Benefits of these programs include improved water quality, soil health and habitat, as well as practices that have been proven to sequester carbon and mitigate climate change. Last year, Congress approved increased levels of mandatory spending for Farm Bill Conservation Programs, including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program (FRPP), Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) and Grassland Reserve Program (GRP). NACD is concerned about any effort to reduce the spending levels for these important conservation programs below the mandatory spending levels approved under the 2008 Farm Bill.

Farm Bill conservation programs provide cost-share, incentives, technical assistance and easement purchases to help private landowners and managers install and maintain conservation practices. These programs allow conservation practices and technical assistance to be tailored to landowners' specific crop production type, soil type, water resources and habitat needs. The programs help producers take environmentally sensitive land out of production, provide cost-share funds for structural improvements in farming and ranching operations and create incentives to undertake new management practices.

The Obama Administration's proposed Fiscal Year 2012 budget includes nearly \$1 billion in cuts to mandatory conservation programs under the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In the 2008 Farm Bill, Congress made a commitment to conservation and those commitments should be honored.

Conservation Program	2008 Farm Bill Mandatory Spending Level FY2012	President's FY2012 Request	President's FY2012 Proposed Cuts
EQIP	\$1,750 billion	\$1,408 billion	\$342 million
WRP	3,041 million acres (Multiyear total)	271,158 acres	Permanent cut of 158,895 acres
WHIP	\$85 million	\$73 million	\$12 million
CSP	12.8 million acres	\$788 million	Permanent cut of 764,204 acres

The NACD urges Congress to maintain the mandatory conservation funding levels as agreed to in the 2008 Farm Bill.

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