



Maintain Conservation Program Funding

The Conservation Title (Title II) took a 10 percent funding cut in the 2014 Farm Bill and continues to be cut annually during the appropriations process. Every dollar cut from mandatory conservation programs leads directly to less conservation on the ground and only increases natural resources concerns and the probability of regulatory hassles. **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.**

Keep EQIP and CSP Functionally Separate

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) serve important, complementary purposes. EQIP provides producers with financial assistance for individual conservation practices. CSP takes a larger view by offering longer-term contracts to implement new, and maintain existing, best management practices on working lands. CSP focuses on the adoption of management or stewardship practices while also incentivizing producers moving to a higher level of stewardship. Each program provides a unique way to put conservation on the ground. **NACD believes that these programs should operate independently. If they are combined, the functions of each program should remain separate with guaranteed funding for each of them.**

Thoughtfully Reform Regional Conservation Partnership Program

The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) is funded through both mandatory funding and a contribution of seven percent of several of the other major conservation programs. This program has leveraged private sector funding for conservation and been a tool used by conservation districts across the country. While there is still a great need for conservation funding, NACD does not believe there is enough demand for RCPP funding to warrant expanding the program. **NACD urges Congress to:**

- **Retain RCPP at its current size**
- **Reject calls for a pilot grant program, which would undermine the current conservation delivery system**
- **Encourage project sponsors to engage with local conservation districts**
- **Retain the existing funding pool proportions – state, federal and critical conservation area**
- **Implement administrative tweaks, such as providing more flexibility in the application process and for matching funding**



Repeal SAM/DUNS Requirements

NACD supports eliminating the System for Award Management and Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (SAM/DUNS) registration system for participants in NRCS cost-share programs. These requirements are unnecessary and add additional regulatory burdens on farmers and ranchers who are attempting to do the right thing by working with NRCS to install conservation practices. **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.**

Support Watershed Programs

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 for the Small Watershed Dam Rehab Program to help meet today's needs for these structures.**

Increase CRP Acreage Responsibly with Flexibility for Grazing

NACD supports an increase in the Conservation Reserve Program acreage cap due to the water quality, soil health and erosion benefits the program provides. However, this increase should not come at the expense of the working lands conservation programs (EQIP, CSP, etc.). USDA should also allow more grazing in CRP as NACD believes grazing activities can be done in an environmentally sound way and can improve the health of the land. **NACD asks Congress to include legislation (H.R. 4298) that addresses this issue in the next farm bill.**

Continue Current Conservation Compliance Requirements

In the 2014 Farm Bill, NACD supported including linking crop insurance subsidies to Sodbuster and Swampbuster compliance requirements that have long been placed on Title I payments. This ensures that farmers of highly erodible land are farming using proper conservation practices and that wetlands are not drained. **NACD supports the continuation of the existing policy of conservation compliance linked to crop insurance as was included in the 2014 Farm Bill.**