



# National Association of Conservation Districts

## Climate Change Issue Paper

**More frequent storms, longer droughts, larger floods, and devastating wildfires represent some of the significant challenges communities across the country face due to climate change.**

NACD understands the immediate need for significant action to address climate change and reduce the threats it poses to our communities, ecosystems, and producers. Farmers, ranchers, and other land stewards, including underserved producers, are particularly vulnerable to many climate threats and are currently taking action to meaningfully reduce greenhouse gas emissions, protect ecosystems, and make our communities more resilient.

### The Role of Conservation Districts and NACD:

Conservation districts work with federal and local partners to help cooperating producers and land managers across the country implement conservation practices that protect natural resources on private, public, and tribal lands. Helping producers plan and implement prescribed burns, reduced tillage, buffers and perennial strips, and other important conservation practices streamlines production, improves soil health, bolsters climate resilience, increases carbon sequestration, and enhances the quality of surrounding lands, water, and wildlife habitats. Conservation districts are also instrumental in helping producers and land managers develop conservation plans, which facilitate the identification and implementation of effective conservation practices that best fit unique operations and resource needs. In addition to supporting the work being led by conservation districts, NACD is spearheading several efforts to help land managers address climate change and improve their operations:

- NACD founded the Soil Health Champions Network, which showcases more than 300 farmers, ranchers, and forestland owners from across the nation working to increase the adoption of soil health practices.
- NACD is a lead partner for a USDA Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities project that will enable conservation districts across the country to support scaling climate-smart production systems and help underserved producers access markets.
- NACD's Urban Conservation Initiative provides resources for conservation districts and their partners to help producers address natural resource concerns and implement climate-smart agriculture practices in urban communities.



### Federal Policy Priorities:

Congress must continue to support federal programs that accelerate the implementation of effective climate-smart agricultural and forestry practices. Voluntary farm bill conservation programs, including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), and Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) are critical to sequestering carbon and improving resilience on working lands. NACD calls on Congress to support these USDA conservation programs, support the staffing needs of USDA and local partners, and to provide robust funding for Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA).

As lawmakers consider policies to address and mitigate the impacts of climate change, we ask Congress to support the important work being done by conservation districts across the country. Voluntary, locally led conservation plays an outsized role in sequestering carbon, reducing harmful emissions, and helping communities in all areas of the country become more resilient. NACD requests:

- Additional support for conservation technical assistance, conservation planning, and workforce development to expand the implementation of effective conservation practices.
- Streamlining and simplifying federal conservation programs to incentivize more and new producers – including historically underserved producers – to apply and participate.
- Support for a wholistic, conservation systems-based approach to addressing climate change through USDA programs.
- Support for conservation practices that improve climate resilience and consideration of those practices in future climate-focused initiatives.



### About NACD

The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) represents a nationwide network of 3,000 conservation districts, working with millions of landowners and farmers to manage and protect private and public working lands in the United States. Districts are local units of government that help put locally led, voluntary, and incentive-based conservation programs into action.

#### Contact

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