The undersigned organizations request that you provide at least $1.2 billion for Conservation Operations within the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Fiscal Year 2025 (FY 2025). This funding is critical to the effective administration of USDA conservation programs and provides essential tools to help farmers, ranchers, and private landowners across the country voluntarily implement effective conservation practices.

Conservation Operations funding primarily supports Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA), which facilitates the administration of USDA conservation programs by supporting our conservation workforce, conservation planning, and the extension of specialized technical assistance to producers. Providing strong funding for CTA is now more important than ever as NRCS and partners work to administer historic investments in voluntary conservation programs. Our country’s conservation delivery system and producers across the country depend on the availability of on-the-ground technical assistance to implement effective conservation practices. Conservation Operations funding also supports NRCS soil surveys, snow surveys, water supply forecasting, and plant materials centers. These provide important information and tools to help producers monitor and manage their land more effectively.

We also request that FY 2025 appropriations legislation maintains full authorized funding for farm bill conservation programs. Voluntary, incentive-based, and locally led USDA conservation programs enjoy bipartisan support in Congress and are utilized by producers of all kinds across the United States to adopt conservation practices on their operations that enhance water quality, increase resilience, and reduce harmful emissions. Demand for these programs, including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program
(CSP), exceeds available dollars by a wide margin. While recent investments have allowed more producers than ever to access conservation programs, current application backlogs remain significant. It is critical that FY 2025 appropriations legislation maintains full authorized funding to help more producers voluntarily implement conservation on their lands.

As your subcommittee develops the FY 2025 appropriations bill, we urge you to provide at least $1.2 billion in discretionary funding for NRCS Conservation Operations and to reject any changes in mandatory spending for farm bill conservation programs. We appreciate your attention to our request and look forward to working with you to support conservation and our nation’s producers.

Sincerely,

National Association of Conservation Districts
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
American Bird Conservancy
American Farmland Trust
American Rivers
American Society of Agronomy
American Soybean Association
Amphibian and Reptile Conservancy
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Bozeman Birders
California Climate Agriculture Network
California FarmLink
Carbon180
Carolina Farm Stewardship Association
Certified Naturally Grown
Clean Wisconsin
Cleveland and Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition
Climate Land Leaders
Crop Science Society of America
Cultivate Kansas City
Dakota Rural Action
Defenders of Wildlife
Dietrick Institute for Applied Insect Ecology
Ducks Unlimited
Earthjustice
Environmental Defense Fund
Environmental Law & Policy Center
Farm Aid
Farm to Table - New Mexico
Food Animal Concerns Trust
Friends of the Mississippi River
Illinois Stewardship Alliance
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
International Certified Crop Advisor Program
Izaak Walton League of America
Jóia Food & Fiber Farm
La Semilla Food Center
Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance
Land Core
Land For Good
Land Stewardship Project
Latino Farmers & Ranchers International, Inc.
Maine Farmland Trust
Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association
Michigan Food and Farming Systems
Midwest Cover Crops Council
Mississippi River Network
Missouri Coalition for the Environment
National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils
National Corn Growers Association
National Farmers Union
National Sustainable Agriculture Network
National Wildlife Federation
National Young Farmers Coalition
New Mexico Food & Agriculture Policy Council
Northeast Organic Farming Association Massachusetts
Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont
Oregon Climate and Agriculture Network
Organic Farming Research Foundation
Pesticide Action Network
Pheasants Forever
Pollinator Partnership
Quail Forever
Resource Renewal Institute
Rhode Island Food Policy Council
River Network
Rural Advancement Foundation International
Rural Coalition
Soil and Water Conservation Society
Soil Science Society of America
Southeastern Massachusetts Agricultural Partnership
Sprout
The Conservation Fund
The Nature Conservancy
The Wetlands Initiative
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Trust for Public Land
USA Rice
Virginia Association for Biological Farming
Western Landowners Alliance
Women, Food and Agriculture Network
World Farmers
World Wildlife Fund
Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation