



September 1, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Room S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader Schumer:

As Governors from across the country, we strongly support your joint efforts to pass landmark legislation that will create millions of good jobs, rebuild our country's infrastructure, improve public health, advance environmental justice, and tackle the climate crisis.

Climate change is intensifying the wildfires that burn in the West, hurricanes that threaten the East, and extreme heat that endangers people and animals throughout the country. Now is the time for bold climate action. The most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report details what we already know – the window for preventing irreversible climate consequences is closing and we need to act quickly and comprehensively.

As we approach the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP 26) in November, it is imperative that the United States demonstrates that America is ready to lead and solve the climate crisis. President Biden has committed America to cutting its greenhouse gas emissions to 50 percent to 52 percent below 2005 levels by 2030. America's ability to meet this goal rests on how we respond to climate change today.

President Biden proposed the Build Back Better Agenda to rebuild America in a just and equitable way and ensure America's economy flourishes in the 21st century. It is vital for Congress to adopt both the bipartisan infrastructure deal and a bold and comprehensive reconciliation bill to achieve the goals of the

Build Back Better Agenda. Each of the elements of the Build Back Better Agenda are worthy of inclusion in an infrastructure package, but as Governors of states on the front line of the climate crisis, we place particular emphasis that the combined package includes the most impactful actions to protect our climate:

- **Carbon Free Grid:** A Clean Electricity Performance Program, expansion of tax credits for clean energy generation and storage, and funding for new and upgraded electricity transmission.
- **Transportation Electrification:** Tax credits for manufacturing of zero-emission vehicles; incentives for consumers, especially low-income consumers, to purchase zero-emission vehicles; funding for zero-emission infrastructure; and elimination of statutory obstacles to charging on federal rights of way.
- **Methane Emissions Reduction:** Funding to plug orphan wells and adoption of a methane polluter fee for the venting or burning of excess methane.
- **Climate-Smart Agriculture:** Investment in climate-smart agricultural and forest management programs for farmers and rural communities.
- **Climate Resilience:** Investment in protections for communities and transportation infrastructure from the impacts of climate change, as well as robust funding for a new Civilian Climate Corps.
- **Clean Building Incentives:** New consumer rebates for home electrification and weatherization.
- **Clean Energy and Sustainability Accelerator:** Establish an accelerator to mobilize private investment into distributed energy resources; retrofits of residential, commercial, and municipal buildings; and clean transportation.

We also respectfully request that any infrastructure package ensure 40 percent of the benefits of climate and clean infrastructure investments are directed to disadvantaged communities and invests in rural communities and communities impacted by the market-based transition to clean energy. We are excited to build back better with both of you and are committed to taking action to advance this crucial agenda.

Sincerely,



Governor Gavin Newsom
State of California



Governor Ned Lamont
State of Connecticut



Governor David Ige
State of Hawaii



Governor Janet Mills
State of Maine



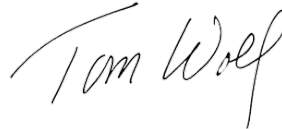
Governor Steve Sisolak
State of Nevada



Governor Kathy Hochul
State of New York



Governor Kate Brown
State of Oregon



Governor Tom Wolf
State of Pennsylvania



Governor Dan McKee
State of Rhode Island



Governor Jay Inslee
State of Washington

cc: The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the United States
The Honorable Gina McCarthy, National Climate Advisor
The Honorable John Kerry, Special Presidential Envoy for Climate
The Honorable Michael Regan, Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency
The Honorable Jennifer Granholm, Secretary, Department of Energy
The Honorable Pete Buttigieg, Secretary, Department of Transportation
The Honorable Tom Vilsack, Secretary, Department of Agriculture
The Honorable Marcia Fudge, Secretary, Department of Housing and Urban Development
The Honorable Gina Raimondo, Secretary, Department of Commerce

JARED POLIS
GOVERNOR



136 STATE CAPITOL
DENVER, COLORADO 80203

TEL 303-866-2471
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September 23, 2021

The Honorable Charles E Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader Schumer:

I want to express my strong support for your efforts to pass landmark legislation that will create millions of good jobs, rebuild our country's infrastructure, improve public health, advance environmental justice, and tackle the climate crisis.

Coloradans are feeling the impacts of climate change now with intensifying wildfires, degraded air quality from extensive wildfire smoke, extreme heat and droughts that are endangering our people, wildlife, prized public lands, and threatening key elements of Colorado's economy and culture such as agriculture and outdoor recreation. Now is the time for bold climate action. The most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report details what we already know – the window for preventing irreversible climate consequences is closing and we need to act quickly and comprehensively.

As we approach the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP 26) in November, it is imperative that the United States demonstrates that America is ready to lead and solve the climate crisis and nature crisis. President Biden has committed America to cutting its greenhouse gas emissions to 50 percent to 52 percent below 2005 levels, and preserving functioning natural systems and biodiversity, by 2030. America's ability to meet these goals rests on how we respond to climate change and related pressures today.

President Biden proposed the Build Back Better Agenda to rebuild America in a sustainable and equitable way, to ensure America's economy flourishes in the 21st century. Both the bipartisan infrastructure deal and proposals under discussion for a bold and comprehensive reconciliation bill contain critical policies that will aid in achieving the goals of the Build Back Better Agenda. The elements of the Build Back Better Agenda that are included in the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs (INVEST) Act are important investments in cleaner energy and transportation, clean water, clean air and climate resilience. Numerous provisions under consideration in the budget reconciliation package also hold immense promise for our climate, lands, wildlife, water and people. The federal government must produce a comprehensive approach to aid states like Colorado, which faces broad and multifaceted impacts from climate change, in urgently addressing the current crisis.

As the Governor of a state on the front line of the climate crisis that is taking action to reduce GHG emissions in the electric power sector by at least 80% by 2030 and 50% economy wide, I urge you to support the inclusion of strong climate related investments in the Build Back Better budget reconciliation

package. This will help support Colorado's existing efforts, including setting science-based emissions targets, and passing over 30 bills in the 2021 Colorado legislative session advancing clean buildings, climate action, environmental justice, transportation electrification, renewable energy, energy efficiency, and improving the resiliency of our state's outdoor and agricultural communities, and just transition. The package of legislation makes major progress on all of these goals including public investments in market transformation, creation of incentives from electric and gas utilities, and regulatory requirements to be implemented through the Public Utilities Commission, Transportation Commission and Air Quality Control Commission. However, the scale of the challenges, and needed solutions demands significant federal attention and prioritization.

Federal investments should include:

- **Clean Electricity Grid:** A Clean Electricity Performance Program; extension and expansion and updating of tax credits for clean energy generation, efficiency, and storage that increases the impact and availability of these credits via adoption of direct pay provisions; and funding and incentives for new and upgraded electricity transmission. These policies will put the electricity sector on a path to 80% clean electricity by 2030 and complement Colorado's renewable energy standard and state legislative requirement of 80% GHG reduction by 2030. Investing in transmission and grid infrastructure will support on-going efforts to harden that infrastructure against effects of wildfires and advance a legislative requirement for electric utilities to move toward a regional electricity market, which will require significant expansion of transmission.
- **Transportation Electrification:** Tax credits for manufacturing of zero emission vehicles; incentives for consumers, especially low-income consumers, to purchase zero-emission vehicles; funding and incentives for zero-emission medium-and heavy-duty fleet transition, including clean school buses; and funding for zero-emission infrastructure; and elimination of statutory obstacles to charging on federal rights of way. Colorado has a goal of a million EVs on the road by 2030. We will be investing nearly a billion dollars of state funds in this over the next decade, as well as significant utility funding, but need the partnership of the federal government.
- **Building efficiency and electrification:** Tax incentives for energy efficient and electrified buildings, including tax credits for large scale utility efficiency and electrification programs, and new consumer rebates for home electrification and weatherization. Colorado passed more than half a dozen pieces of legislation this year to advance building efficiency, electrification and low income weatherization, including requiring gas utilities to file enhanced energy efficiency plans and plans to achieve a GHG reduction of at least 20 percent by 2030. Large commercial buildings have to file annual energy reports and, as a sector, will be required to meet at 20 percent GHG reduction by 2030. These efforts would be magnified by federal investment.
- **Methane Emissions Reduction:** Funding to plug orphaned wells, support the adoption of reforms to the federal oil and gas program to reduce harmful methane and VOC emissions, and proposed polluter fee to address leakage, venting and flaring of excess methane. Colorado adopted the nation's first methane rules for oil and gas production in 2013, and recent legislation requires a 60% reduction in total methane emissions by 2030.
- **Climate-Smart Agriculture:** Robust investment in climate-smart agriculture, including voluntary conservation, investments in soil health, technological advancements, monitoring and research, forest management programs, watershed protection, and disaster resiliency programs for agricultural producers, farmers and rural communities. Among other priorities, these should incentivize practices that contribute to regional water supply and aquifer recharge objectives in Colorado and other drought-stricken Western states.
- **Climate Resilience:** Investment to protect communities from the impacts of climate change such as low-income weatherization and wildfire mitigation, as well as robust funding for a new Civilian Climate Corps. The devastating recent wildfire seasons and their after-effects in our state continue to create costly infrastructure damage, impacts to treasured landscapes and local economies, and degraded air quality from regional wildfire smoke. Among other resilience

investments, the proposal contains roughly \$40 billion of critical investments in forest and rangeland health, with \$15 million for state, tribal and private forest management efforts. Colorado has made significant investments in wildfire mitigation and our public lands to protect and restore sensitive ecosystems, especially through the new Keep Colorado Wild initiative, state wildfire related state stimulus investments, and Colorado's leading AmeriCorps Colorado Climate Corps.

- **Clean domestic manufacturing:** Direct investments and tax incentives for decarbonizing energy-intensive industries and using lower emission technologies, as well as Buy Clean federal procurement of low-carbon construction materials.
- **Dedicated programs to ensure a just transition:** Funding for the Rural Partnership Program, the National Dislocated Worker Grants program, rural electricity cooperative debt relief, and transition assistance via the Dept. of Energy. These and other programs are valuable to support a just transition for fossil fuel dependent communities and workers. Colorado leads the nation with the establishment of our Office of Just Transition, and we look forward to a partnership with the federal government to ensure that we do not leave communities or workers behind as we transition from fossil fuels to clean energy.
- **Clean Energy and Sustainability Accelerator:** Establish an accelerator to mobilize private investment into distributed energy resources; retrofits of residential, commercial, and municipal buildings; and clean transportation, with a focus on low-income and underserved communities. Colorado worked with the US Dept. of Energy to create a state green bank, dedicated to these same purposes; federal funding will allow our efforts to scale.

I strongly support efforts to maximize flexibility for states in the deployment of these funds to achieve our shared goals, and ensure equity and a just transition are central to the deployment and benefit of these investments. I'm proud of the leadership Colorado has taken in many of these priorities, however the global nature of the climate crisis and the investments needed for these priorities go well beyond state resources, and demand robust federal prioritization and action. I am grateful to support your work on these two important legislative vehicles and stand ready to take action to support this crucial agenda.

Sincerely,



Jared Polis
Governor
State of Colorado



September 30, 2021

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Chairwoman
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John Boozman
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow and Ranking Member Boozman,

As western governors, we write to express our strong support for the inclusion of important forestry, natural and working lands focused investments in the developing budget reconciliation package. As western states, where federally owned and managed lands make up significant portions, if not the majority, of lands in our states; these resources represent a vast and critical natural infrastructure. This natural infrastructure not only forms a key cornerstone in our ability to adapt to the climate crisis, but is also particularly vulnerable to its effects. Whether extreme drought, record setting wildfire seasons and oppressive wildfire smoke, more intense storms and corresponding flash-floods or landslides, or the broader impacts of climate change on wildlife and ecosystems, our states and our landscapes are on the front lines of the climate crisis, and the federal package must account for this fact.

A number of key proposed investments will help our lands, communities and states prepare for, and ideally avoid, the frequency and severity of future disastrous climate impacts that our states have faced in recent years. Specifically we would draw your attention to and call upon you to support those items currently included in the House Agriculture Committee mark, and proposed by the Senate Agriculture Committee relating to forestry, climate smart agriculture, research and clean energy. These investments include over \$50 billion to address critical elements of addressing and responding to the climate crisis for sectors foundational to the West. These investments will also serve to reduce over an estimated billion tons of carbon pollution, supporting the administration's greenhouse gas goals, all while supporting farmers, ranchers and landowners facing head-on the challenges brought upon them by our changing climate.

Our natural and working lands are a key component of a comprehensive approach to the climate crisis. The House Agriculture Committee Mark and Senate Agriculture Committee proposal contains vital investments totaling roughly \$40 billion particularly focused on landscape restoration and wildfire mitigation for both private and public forests. The west-wide wildfire impacts of the last several years underscore the urgent and critical nature of investing in our national forest system, as well as federal owned and managed rangelands, grasslands, and other multipurpose public lands located throughout the West. With response and recovery burdens all too frequently bestowed upon the states. These proposals include \$20 billion in targeted Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) investments, including fuels reduction, forest restoration and conservation on national forest lands, critical and targeted investments that will yield measurable benefits. Critical prevention, restoration and adaptation work is being done on non-federal lands and the proposed investment of roughly \$15 billion in grants to states, tribes and private landowners will ensure this critical work isn't undermined by the frequent checkerboard of land ownership we see in the West. With significant growth pressures in the WUI, conservation is a critical tool in helping states and localities ensure smart-growth and avoid the expansion of dangerous living conditions, the proposed \$4.5 billion in grants for programs like the Forest Legacy program and other conservation ends is vital funding for western states and communities. Finally, the improved research abilities enabled by the proposed \$500 million investment, will enable land management agencies, local communities and states to better plan, better understand and better invest in and better adapt to the needs of a climate-changed West. Smart, targeted investments today in science-based land management efforts will help avoid exponentially greater costs in the future.

As western governors, we have seen firsthand the devastation that comes with climate change, and these impacts have captured national headlines throughout the unprecedented and now never-ending wildfire seasons, through intense droughts, flash floods, mudslides and myriad of other impacts endured by our communities and citizens. The investments contained in the proposed reconciliation packages aimed at our western states, communities and especially landscapes and ecosystems will have direct benefits in alleviating those attention grabbing disasters. As leaders of states where every dollar matters, we understand the pressures associated with trimming public expenditures and detailed fiscal responsibility. Yet these disasters and the impacts of climate change will only increase as our climate warms, and for the sake of our states, communities, lands and budgets; in this case an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

We urge you to support these valuable investments without delay, as waiting any longer would only result in increasing and more expensive needs in the near future.

Sincerely,



Governor Jared Polis
State of Colorado



Governor Gavin Newsom
State of California



Governor Steve Sisolak
State of Nevada



Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham
State of New Mexico



Governor Kate Brown
State of Oregon

cc: The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker, United States House of Representatives
The Honorable Charles E. Schumer, Majority Leader, United States Senate
The Honorable Tom Vilsack, Secretary, United States Department of Agriculture
The Honorable Rep. David Scott, Chair, House Agriculture Committee
Members of the California Congressional Delegation
Members of the Colorado Congressional Delegation
Members of the Nevada Congressional Delegation
Members of the New Mexico Congressional Delegation
Members of the Oregon Congressional Delegation
Julie Chavez Rodriguez, Director, White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 7, 2021

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221 United States Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Chairwoman
United States Senate Committee on
Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Chairwoman Stabenow:

Thank you for your ongoing work to develop agriculture priorities in the FY2022 Budget Resolution Agreement Framework. Our states are counting on the expanded use of best management practices to help them meet their 2025 pollution reduction goals established under the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). Well-managed agricultural lands offer a number of additional benefits, including carbon storage, erosion control, and flood prevention. We respectfully ask you to include robust funding for climate-smart agriculture conservation in upcoming reconciliation legislation, sufficient to dedicate at least \$750 million to natural resources conservation programs in the Bay watershed.

Our constituent farmers have worked diligently to reduce nutrient and sediment pollutant loads, despite growing pressures including climate change impacts. This progress places the Chesapeake Bay Program, of which the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is a federal agency partner, at the forefront of large-scale ecosystem restoration efforts. However, an additional 50 million pounds of nitrogen was identified to achieve the Chesapeake Clean Water Blueprint by 2025, and more than 80-percent of the reduction must derive from agriculture. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) programs are critical to close this gap.

The 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement includes a Climate Resiliency Goal to increase the resiliency of the Chesapeake Bay watershed, including its living resources, habitats, public infrastructure and communities, to withstand adverse impacts from changing environmental and climate conditions. For example, extreme rainfall is driving nutrient and sediment runoff—including from the region's agricultural lands—into the Bay and its tributaries, making it even more challenging for states to meet their pollution reduction targets. Crops and livestock can suffer heat stress as rising temperatures also expand the range of pests and weeds.

Fortunately, many conservation practices such as rotational grazing and riparian buffers that cost-effectively reduce nutrients and sediment to local waters and the Chesapeake Bay are also highly effective at mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and helping farms adapt to climate change. Each watershed state has identified its most effective basins, areas where projects will improve water quality the most. Increased technical and financial assistance for resilient practices in the most effective basins is the fastest, most efficient way USDA can support farmers in making progress toward the partnership's clean water and climate change goals.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. We look forward to working with you to strengthen the health of the Chesapeake Bay and our region's resilience to climate change.

Sincerely,



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Agriculture
Washington, DC 20515

October 7, 2021

Dear President Biden, Speaker Pelosi, and Majority Leader Schumer,

As we work with the White House to deliver on the Build Back Better Agenda, we—the Democratic Members of the House Committee on Agriculture—wanted to highlight the critical investments we have included in our portions of the budget reconciliation process. These investments are essential to maintaining President Biden’s promise to “build back better” not just in urban and suburban communities, but also in rural and agricultural communities across the nation. As such, we respectfully urge that these provisions be maintained in any version of the *Build Back Better Act* passed by Congress.

The provisions included in the agriculture portion of the *Build Back Better Act* will make transformative investments that will benefit agricultural producers and rural communities for years and decades to come in the areas of agricultural research, rural development, renewable energy, biofuels, conservation, and forestry, as well as providing debt relief and assistance to economically distressed, at risk, and historically underserved farmers and producers.

America has been the world leader in agricultural research and innovation, but that position is at risk if we do not make key investments in research and education programs and our agricultural research facilities to help mitigate the impacts of climate change on our food and fiber production. These scholarships and investments will help train the next generation of agricultural scientists and specialists and ensure equity in agriculture by developing a diverse pipeline of agriculture professionals.

The Build Back Better agenda put a special emphasis on ensuring that rural communities and our communities at risk in rural areas be provided with the tools to address the need for clean drinking water, a transition to renewable energy sources, encouraging energy efficiency efforts, and continuing a role for biofuels in our transportation system.

The funding provided for climate-smart agriculture practices will help to address the fact that our current farm bill conservation programs are already oversubscribed with continuing backlogs that show the demand from producers and landowners willing to undertake efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and rebuild soil carbon.

We have also included a historic investment that will allow USDA’s Forest Service to be more responsive and proactive in their efforts to mitigate the disastrous wildfire years that have ravaged our Western states and to work with their partners on the needs of state and private forests, including reaching out to underserved private forest landowners.

As we work towards a path forward, we encourage you to keep these crucial investments in place, and we look forward to any further discussions on the importance these investments will have, especially as we prepare to write the next farm bill.

Sincerely,

Rep. DAVID SCOTT, *Chairman*

Rep. Jim Costa

Rep. James P. McGovern

Rep. Filemon Vela

Rep. Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.

Rep. Abigail Spanberger

Rep. Jahana Hayes

Rep. Antonio Delgado

Rep. Bobby L. Rush

Rep. Chellie Pingree

Rep. Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan

Rep. Ann M. Kuster

Rep. Cheri Bustos

Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney

Rep. Stacey E. Plaskett

Rep. Tom O'Halleran

Rep. Salud Carbajal



Rep. Ro Khanna



Rep. Al Lawson, Jr.



Rep. J. Luis Correa



Rep. Angie Craig



Rep. Josh Harder



Rep. Cynthia Axne



Rep. Kim Schrier M.D.



Rep. Jimmy Panetta



Rep. Ann Kirkpatrick



Rep. Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

October 18, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader Schumer,

As the primary sponsors of the Climate Stewardship Act (H.R. 2534) and the Agriculture Resilience Act (H.R. 2803), we are writing to underscore the urgency and importance of including bold investments through the Build Back Better Act that expand climate-smart agriculture practices through existing, voluntary incentive-based programs at the USDA. If the United States is going to meet its climate goals, it is essential that we actively enlist the help of those who know the land best - farmers, producers, ranchers, and forestland owners – to not just cut greenhouse gas emissions but actively sequester carbon from our atmosphere. Therefore, as we work with the White House to deliver on the Build Back Better Agenda and develop bold legislation to address the climate crisis and build a more inclusive economy, we urge you to maintain the robust investments in working-lands conservation programs, conservation technical assistance, and innovative conservation partnerships included in the Build Back Better Act as proposed by the House Agriculture Committee.

As we seek to “build back better,” it is critical that Congress demonstrate that we intend to do so not just in suburban and urban communities but also in rural communities across the country. The conservation provisions included in the current draft of the Build Back Better Act communicate that vision through targeted investments in climate-smart agriculture that would significantly sequester carbon and reduce on-farm greenhouse gas pollution while growing the bottom-lines of growers and producers nationwide.

Specifically, substantially increasing funding for USDA’s voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs, including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), and the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), is critical for engagement on farmers on the climate crisis. These are proven programs that farmers trust. However, these programs are currently underfunded and oversubscribed with significant backlogs due to high demand. Farmers who want to be part of the climate solution are already being turned away due to funding shortfalls. Last year alone, over 100,000 applications in EQIP and CSP went unfunded.

Similarly, across our districts, we hear a clear cry for greater “boots on the ground” through conservation technical assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and technical service providers (TSPs) trained by USDA. Unfortunately, funding for these positions has also failed to meet the sustained demand for agricultural producers.

The historic investments in conservation programs and technical assistance currently included in the Build Back Better Act would not only help clear the current backlog of conservation projects across the country but would also set USDA on a course to keep up with demand for years to come.

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Notably, the new funding proposed by the Build Back Better Act is specifically targeted towards climate-smart agricultural practices already covered by these programs – building off the framework established by the Climate Stewardship Act (H.R. 2534/S. 1072) and the Agriculture Resilience Act (H.R. 2803/S.1337). This targeted funding will enable USDA to meet farmers where they are while engaging them on climate issues.

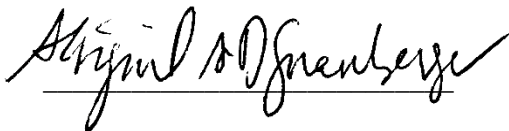
As the original conservationists, farmers, producers, ranchers, and foresters must be an integral part of any solution to the climate crisis. Critically, natural climate solutions from the agricultural and forestry sectors provide the unique opportunity not afforded by other sectors of the economy to directly sequester harmful climate pollution that has already occurred. As President Biden’s American Jobs Plan stated, we must position American agriculture “to lead the shift to net-zero emissions while providing new economic opportunities for farmers.”

Unfortunately, too often, these groups are left out of the national conversation on the climate crisis. At times, the discussion of the climate crisis has missed opportunities to learn from growers and learn how voluntary conservation practices benefit the environment and build more sustainable operations.

The Build Back Better Act avoids these pitfalls by including bold investments in climate-smart agricultural practices through existing USDA Programs. This investment recognizes the leadership of farmers, producers, and forestland owners in combatting climate change and ensures they have a seat at the table as we chart a path forward towards a cleaner economy.

American farmers are ready to lead, but they need Congress to provide them with the necessary knowledge, tools, and resources to do so. We are thrilled that the conservation provisions currently proposed in the Build Back Better Act would empower farmers with the resources they need to meet this charge. As such, we strongly encourage you to keep these crucial investments in place as Congress moves forward in crafting and passing a final version of the Build Back Better Act.

Sincerely,



Abigail D. Spanberger

Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree

Member of Congress

October 18, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Democratic Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader Schumer,

We are companies that are deeply committed to combating climate change and promoting clean and renewable energy and energy efficiency, and that have taken significant steps to reduce emissions and embrace climate-forward business strategies. We believe, however, that both private-sector and government action are necessary for the United States to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions. To that end, we support the robust climate provisions in the Build Back Better Act and request their inclusion in the final legislation.

Urgent action is needed to limit the catastrophic impacts of climate change, which include disruptions to supply chains, damage to public and private infrastructure, workforce displacement and price volatility to consumers. It is critical that the provisions in the final legislation drive down emissions across all sectors; create new partnerships and incentives for food and agriculture; create high-quality, good-paying jobs; invest in community resilience; and advance environmental justice to deliver a sustainable future.

Our companies are acting now by setting aggressive climate and sustainability goals and working actively to either meet or, in some cases, surpass them. We are tackling climate change through, among other things, developing innovative technologies and solutions, which ultimately creates jobs, drives economic growth, and strengthens U.S. competitiveness. The climate provisions in the Build Back Better Act support our own investment in low-carbon innovation and will help us grow our business and remain competitive globally while also meeting our climate goals.

While we support the inclusion of strong climate provisions in the Build Back Better Act, we look forward to discussing the revenue provisions including potential alternative approaches. We recognize that significant investments are needed for progress, but our continued ability to tackle climate change, procure clean and renewable energy as well as invest in energy efficiency and technology, our workforce, and in the local communities in which we are rooted, require our companies to remain globally competitive. We encourage you to find the right balance to ensure our competitiveness while protecting the planet.

We appreciate your consideration of our views, and we stand ready to work with you to achieve that right balance to ensure real action on climate and energy policy can take place alongside strong economic growth and vitality of the business community.

Sincerely,

bp America Inc.
Carrier
Cummins Inc.
Daikin US Corporation
Danfoss
Danone North America
DSM North America
Exelon
IKEA Retail US
Johnson Controls
Mars Incorporated
Nestlé
PepsiCo
Shell
Siemens USA
Trane Technologies plc
Unilever United States

October 15, 2021

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader Schumer and Speaker Pelosi,

As food companies committed to reducing the environmental impacts of our agricultural supply chains, we write to urge you to ensure that the \$28 billion allocated for climate-smart conservation practices remains in the final version of the budget reconciliation bill.

Because of insufficient conservation funding, more than 100,000 farmers and ranchers were turned away last year when they offered to share the cost of conservation practices with the USDA. By providing \$28 billion to fund climate-smart conservation practices, Congress can share the cost of efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and sequester carbon in the soil. These practices will also help make our farms better able to withstand the extreme weather caused by climate change.

Our companies understand that food system emissions account for a large share of greenhouse gas emissions as well as impacts to soil and water, and we are committed to taking responsible action to mitigate and reduce these impacts. While significant investments have been proposed to address energy and transportation sector emissions, no comparable investment has been made to reduce GHG emissions from our farms, ranches and associated businesses. Unless we address these emissions, we may fail to meet our climate goals.

Reducing emissions and storing carbon through conservation practices like cover crops, buffer strips, and better nutrient and feed management are among the most cost-effective ways to address the climate crisis while at the same time supporting more robust and climate resilient agricultural supply chains. The funding provided in the budget reconciliation for climate-smart agriculture will make it possible for USDA to partner in sharing the cost of these practices with our farmers and ranchers.

Thank you for making the climate crisis a priority.

Sincerely,

Alter Eco
Amy's Kitchen
Ashland Food Coop
bel Brands USA
Ben & Jerry's Homemade, Inc.
Big Tree Farms

Clif Bar & Company
Dairy Farmers of America, Inc.
Del Monte Foods, Inc.
Fetzer Vineyards
GloryBee
Guayakí Yerba Mate
Happy Family Organics
Homefree
Leprino Foods Company
Lundberg Family Farms
Nature's Path
Navitas Organics
Olipop
Organic Valley
Patagonia Provisions
Stonyfield Organic
Sustainable Harvest
Sustainable Food Policy Alliance, including: Danone North America, Mars Incorporated, Nestlé
USA and Unilever United States

cc:

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the United States
The Honorable Debbie Stabenow, Chairwoman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition,
and Forestry
The Honorable David Scott, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture

September 8, 2021

U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow
Chairwoman, United State Senate Committee
Nutrition & Forestry
328A Russell SOB
Washington, D.C. 20510

U.S. Representative David Scott
United States House Agriculture Committee on Agriculture,
1301 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Stabenow and Representative Scott,

Thank you for your ongoing work to improve the well-being of rural communities and support for sustainable agriculture in the budget reconciliation process. This is an important opportunity to make investments that can bring long term value for farmers, businesses, consumers, and the planet that supports all of us. Clif Bar & Company, with an agricultural footprint in more than a dozen states, offers the following suggestions that we believe will encourage an agriculture system with improved social and environmental sustainability.

Conservation and Climate

We support the request of the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition to increase working lands conservation funding by \$30 billion, with a specific target to provide technical assistance to BIPOC producers to better engage them in program opportunities. While there are many ideas and theories about how we can mitigate agriculture's GHG impact, the proven reality is that working lands conservation programs are immediate and actionable. We also support the funding of a Civilian Climate Corps to Americans respond to our current climate crisis and help transition to clean economy by helping protect our natural resources.

Renewable Energy on Farm

Increase funding for the Rural Development's Renewable Energy for America Program (REAP) by \$300 million annually with an increase in cost share to 50%, and with a special set-aside of funds or increased cost-share for BIPOC and beginning farmers and ranchers. We are at a moment when on-farm energy generating potential is increasing with more affordable farm-scale opportunities from solar panels with pollinator habitat underneath, to biodigesters, or wind generated power. REAP has historically been oversubscribed and we are at a moment when technology scaled for farmers is available and opportunity abounds.

Organic

Organic is the original regenerative, and its potential to improve biodiversity, water quality and soil health can be expanded. While some of that potential needs to be untapped via improved speed in USDA managing new standard development, the budget reconciliation provides an important tool for expansion, and the opportunity to bring more US farmers into the sector at a time with the industry is still importing crops that could be domestically produced. **We recommend the USDA provide an infusion of funding that positions organic agriculture to be responsive to consumers and business expectations and to grow domestically and internationally, including:**

- \$50 million for USDA to invest in public-private partnerships via competitive grants for technical assistance to organic farmers and those transitioning. Clif Bar is the largest private funder of organic research and technical assistance, serving not only farmers in our supply chain but across the nation. We can attract



more companies to invest in the future of organic with a more robust public-private partnership. This would help address the paucity of technical advisors and extension specialist serving organic in our public institutions.

- \$125 million to expand organic processing and infrastructure. Organic supply chains are often challenged by a lack of redundancy. We urge Congress to instruct USDA to use existing authorities to package and launch a three-prong organic market facilitation initiative that includes grants, loans, and technical assistance to deepen and engender more resilient food processing, distribution, and aggregation.
- \$20 million dedicate to grow international markets for US Organic products via the Market Access Program.

Climate Research

While climate action is urgent, there is much we do not know about best practices for agricultural mitigation and adaptation. We align with the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition in their request for funding of \$5 billion for research, education and extension focused on climate transformation. In particular we support their request for \$400 million focused on climate-related seeds and breeds research; \$400 million for climate hubs; and \$800 million to 1890s and 1994 Land Grant Institutions and other minority-serving institutions for BIPOC-focused climate transformation work.

We appreciate your consideration for investing in priorities Clif Bar believes would provide U.S. agriculture and the American people redeeming dividends for future generations that help sustain our planet, our farmers, and our rural communities. We look forward to future engagement with you in these shared efforts.

Sincerely,



Matthew Dillon
VP of Government Affairs
Clif Bar & Company





FETZER VINEYARDS.
— ESTD. IN 1968 —

IMPOSSIBLE™



May 25, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, Leader McCarthy, and Leader McConnell:

We are writing as members of Ceres' Climate-Smart Agriculture and Healthy Soil Working Group. We represent a group of leading companies who have joined together to make the case for ambitious action on climate, focusing on land-based solutions that help combat climate change while growing the economy. As companies that partner with American farmers, ranchers, and foresters who produce the ingredients and raw materials for consumer products, we are particularly focused on how Congress can better support agriculture and forest lands in becoming a solution to climate change. **We urge you to include a substantial investment of at least \$200 billion over the next decade in support for climate mitigation and adaptation on farm, ranch and forestland in any infrastructure package or reconciliation bill that Congress is currently considering.** This amount will help scale work across hundreds of millions of acres of private working lands with millions of private landowners. The new management innovations that are needed require up-front capital, technical assistance and research & development to overcome the short-term costs most landowners face.

We are glad to see that Congress has turned its attention to infrastructure. Furthermore, we see tremendous opportunity for Congress to think big and pursue infrastructure investments that deliver good-paying clean energy jobs, environmental justice, and climate solutions that protect our economy and public health. *As companies, we believe that agriculture and forests are critical to achieving science-based emission reduction targets aligned with a 1.5-degree pathway globally.* Given that the U.S. is currently the world's second-largest GHG emitter and the U.S. agriculture sector is responsible for 10 percent of these emissions, there is an unprecedented opportunity for this sector to demonstrate climate leadership and lead the shift to net-zero.

Consumer brands in the private sector are working with the agriculture and forestry industry on emissions reductions, particularly through corporate climate commitments. We cannot achieve net-zero alone and welcome public-private partnerships to help scale quicker and across more working landscapes. Farmers, ranchers, and foresters need greater support from USDA programs tailored toward climate mitigation and adaptation while planning and implementing conservation activities. They are

essential if we are to achieve the kind of broad engagement across all agriculture and forestry sectors that is urgently needed to turn this sector into a climate solution.

We appreciate that the Biden-Harris Infrastructure proposal calls for “positioning the U.S. agricultural sector to lead the shift to net-zero emissions while providing new economic opportunities for farmers.” Unfortunately, we also know that many of the current USDA programs that support farmers, ranchers, and foresters in climate mitigation and adaptation are *greatly oversubscribed*. We believe it is essential that any infrastructure package or reconciliation instructions to the House Committee on Agriculture and the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry ***include \$200 billion over the next decade to support new and existing USDA conservation, research, renewable energy, tree planting, and food systems initiatives. This funding should be in addition to robust funding for rural development programs including investments in USDA rural water, broadband, business, and electric programs.***

Many of our companies are already working with USDA to advance and co-finance strategies to engage farmers, ranchers and foresters in climate mitigation and adaptation. It is imperative for the public and private sectors to invest today to achieve the vision of a healthier future where American agriculture and forestry are leading the way towards net-zero emissions across the entire U.S. economy.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

**Danone North America
Fetzer Vineyards
Impossible Foods
Indigo Agriculture
Nestlé
Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI)
Stonyfield Organic**

CC:

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow, Chairwoman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

The Honorable John Boozman, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

The Honorable David Scott, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture

The Honorable Glenn “GT” Thompson, Ranking Member, House Committee on Agriculture

October 7, 2021

The Honorable Chuck Schumer, Majority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives

Dear Leader Schumer and Speaker Pelosi,

Thank you for your ongoing efforts to pass a Build Back Better Act that includes robust funding for climate-smart agriculture. As you continue to consider this important legislation, the undersigned groups write in strong support of the proposed \$28 billion investment into USDA agriculture conservation programs and conservation technical assistance and urge you to ensure that it remains in the final budget reconciliation package. This would be the largest investment into agriculture conservation in decades and would be transformative for farms, ranches, and forests across the country.

Increasing funding for USDA's popular and effective Farm Bill conservation programs is one of the quickest and most practical ways to energize rural economies, improve climate resilience, and ensure that our nation's farmers, ranchers, and foresters are part of the solution to climate change. USDA's voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs enable farmers, ranchers, and forest owners to adopt practices that build soil health, sequester carbon, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, while also improving surface and ground water quality, increasing water efficiency, creating habitat for fish and wildlife, and protecting agricultural lands for future generations.

Unfortunately, Farm Bill conservation programs are critically oversubscribed and meet only a fraction of the need for voluntary conservation on the landscape. Demand for conservation on 13.8 million acres goes unmet because of inadequate funding every year. That's why last month, over 215 groups announced their support for doubling of the Farm Bill conservation program funding. A \$28 billion investment in Farm Bill conservation programs, conservation technical assistance, and climate-smart agriculture would go a long way towards that goal. Hundreds of farm, food and conservation advocates, companies, and private citizens have weighed in with input during the budget reconciliation process, and they confirmed that the climate-smart agriculture provisions of the Build Back Better Budget will make a historic impact on conservation efforts.

Increasing funding for the Farm Bill conservation programs and climate-smart agriculture and ramping up conservation technical assistance on the ground will enable landowners to mitigate the impacts of drought and flood, restore wildlife habitat, improve soil health and long-term food security, create new job opportunities for rural economies, and galvanize the agriculture sector to lead the charge in our fight against climate change. Farmers, ranchers, and foresters are ready adopt practices that sequester carbon and reduce emissions if they are provided the tools and resources to make that goal a reality. Action this year on a reconciliation bill with robust funding for climate-smart agriculture represents the best opportunity in decades to meet farmer demand for conservation programs.

Thank you for all of your work on the Build Back Better Act and climate-smart agriculture funding. We look forward to working with you in the future to continue to build out these priorities that will energize the American economy and put Americans back to work.

Sincerely,

National Groups and Companies:

Alter Eco
American Bird Conservancy
American Farmland Trust
American Fisheries Society
Appalachian Trail Conservancy
Carbon180
Ceres
Clif Bar & Co
Climate Positive Consulting
Defenders of Wildlife
Dr. Bronner's
Earthjustice
Eleni Toubanos, LLC
Environment America
Environmental Defense Fund
Environmental Working Group
Farm Aid
GreenStep Solutions Inc.
Hazon
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Impossible Foods Inc.
Izaak Walton League of America
Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future
Land Trust Alliance
League of Conservation Voters
National Association of Conservation Districts
National Audubon Society
National Center for Appropriate Technology
National Deer Association
National Farmers Union
National Organic Coalition

Regional, State, and Local Groups:

Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley
Anacostia Watershed Society
Arizona Wildlife Federation
Audubon Western Everglades
Bird Conservancy of the Rockies
Bread Riot
California Climate & Agriculture Network
Cacapon Institute
Capital Region Land Conservancy
Carolina Farm Stewardship Association (CFSA)
Carteret Food and Health Council - NC
Center for Rural Affairs

National Parks Conservation Association
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
National Wildlife Federation
National Young Farmers Coalition
Natural Resources Defense Council
North American Grouse Partnership
Organic Farmers Association
Organic Farming Research Foundation
Oregon Tilth
Pesticide Action Network
Plant Based Foods Association
Pollinator Partnership
Queenan Productions
River Network
Save the Dunes
Sierra Club
Sierra Nevada Brewing Co.
Soil and Water Conservation Society
Tentree
The Bee Girl Organization (BGO)
The Conservation Fund
The Nature Conservancy
The Tofurky Company
The Trust for Public Land
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
U.S. PIRG
Union of Concerned Scientists
Wild Farm Alliance
Wildlife Management Institute
World Wildlife Fund
Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation

Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Chesapeake Conservancy
Chesapeake Legal Alliance
Coastal Enterprises, Inc.
Community Farm Alliance
Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture
(CISA)
Conservation Federation of Missouri
Conservation Northwest
Conservation Voters of Pennsylvania
Delaware Valley Ornithological Club
Environmental Law & Policy Center

Faith Community Church
Farm to Table - New Mexico
Florida Wildlife Federation, Inc.
Foodshed Capital
Friends of Family Farmers
Friends of St. Clements Bay
Friends of the Mississippi River
Friends of the Rappahannock
Georgia Organics
Green Lands Blue Waters
Green State Solutions
Guilford Urban Farming Initiative
Harpeth Conservancy
Healthy Gulf
Hendry-Glades Audubon Society
Hoosier Environmental Council
Idaho Wildlife Federation
Illinois Stewardship Alliance
Indiana Sportsmens Roundtable
Iowa Wildlife Federation
Izaak Walton League - Illinois Division
Izaak Walton League of America - Cypress
Chapter (Florida)
Izaak Walton League of America - Dwight Lydell
Chapter (Michigan)
Izaak Walton League of America - Florida
Division
Izaak Walton League of America - Florida Keys
Chapter
Izaak Walton League of America - Minnesota
Division
Izaak Walton League of America - Oregon
Division
Izaak Walton League of America - Porter County
Chapter (Indiana)
Izaak Walton League of America - W. J. McCabe
Chapter (Minnesota)
Izaak Walton League of America - Will Dilg
Chapter (Minnesota)
Izaak Walton League of America - Wisconsin
Division
Kansas Rural Center
Lancaster Clean Water Partners
Lancaster Farmland Trust
Land For Good
Land Stewardship Project
League of Rural Voters

Maine Farmland Trust
Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners
Association
MD Campaign for Environmental Human Rights
Michael Fields Agricultural Institute
Milwaukee Riverkeeper
Mississippi River Network
Mississippi Wildlife Federation
Missouri Coalition for the Environment
Missouri River Bird Observatory
Montana Organic Association
Montana Wildlife Federation
Narrative Food
National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative
Nebraska Wildlife Federation
Neighboring Food Co-op Association
Nevada Wildlife Federation
New Mexico Wildlife Federation
North Dakota Wildlife Federation
Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance
Northeast Organic Farming Association -
Massachusetts
Northeast Organic Farming Association - New
York
Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association
Oregon Climate and Agriculture Network
Pasa Sustainable Agriculture
PennFuture
Pennsylvania Council of Churches
Potomac Conservancy
Rivertown Coalition for Clean Air & Water
Rowan Food and Farm Network
Salem Audubon Society
Scenic Hudson
South Dakota Wildlife Federation
Southern Vision Alliance
Sustainable Food Center
The Alliance for the Great Lakes
The Piedmont Environmental Council
Trout Unlimited - Illinois Council
Virginia Association for Biological Farming
Virginia Conservation Network
Western Landowners Alliance
Wildlife Mississippi
Wisconsin Farmers Union
Wisconsin Wildlife Federation

cc: The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the United States; The Honorable Debbie Stabenow, Chairwoman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry and the Honorable David Scott, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture

August 4, 2021

The Honorable Chuck Schumer, Majority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives

Dear Leader Schumer and Speaker Pelosi,

Thank you for your ongoing efforts to ensure that agriculture is part of the solution to climate change. As you consider the role of agriculture in the infrastructure conversations in Congress, the undersigned groups urge you to support a robust investment into USDA agriculture conservation programs and conservation technical assistance in the budget reconciliation package.

We were pleased to see that President Biden's American Jobs Plan places a priority on "positioning the U.S. agricultural sector to lead the shift to net-zero emissions while providing new economic opportunities for farmers." Increasing funding for USDA's popular and effective Farm Bill conservation programs is one of the quickest and most practical ways to directly equip farmers and ranchers, energize rural economies, improve climate resilience, and ensure that agriculture is part of the solution to climate change. The full suite of voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs administered by USDA enables farmers, ranchers, and forest owners to adopt practices that build soil health, sequester carbon, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, while also improving surface and ground water quality, increasing water efficiency, and creating habitat for fish and wildlife.

Unfortunately, however, Farm Bill conservation programs are routinely oversubscribed. Demand for conservation on 13.8 million acres goes unmet because of inadequate funding every year. Additionally, our current programs meet only a fraction of the need for voluntary conservation on the landscape. That's why we are urging Congress to double the investment in Farm Bill conservation programs and to ramp up conservation technical assistance funding in a corresponding manner. As funds for conservation programs increase, it is vital for conservation technical assistance to keep pace. This assistance is essential for the delivery of conservation funding and provides on the ground support for farmers, ranchers, and forest owners as they adopt conservation practices on their lands.

Increasing baseline funding for the Farm Bill conservation programs and ramping up conservation technical assistance on the ground will enable landowners to mitigate the impacts of drought and flood, improve habitat, improve soil health and long-term food security, create new job opportunities for rural economies, and galvanize the agriculture sector to lead the charge in our fight against climate change. We believe farmers, ranchers, and foresters are ready to move agriculture toward net zero emissions if they are provided the tools and resources to make that goal a reality. Action this year on the climate and infrastructure bill represents the best opportunity in decades to meet farmer demand for conservation programs.

We look forward to working with you to build out these priorities that will energize the American economy and put Americans back to work.

Sincerely,

National Groups and Companies:

American Farmland Trust
American Fisheries Society
American Grassfed Association
American Woodcock Society
Appalachian Trail Conservancy
Association of State Floodplain Managers
Bee Girl Organization
Carbon180
Center for Rural Affairs
Defenders of Wildlife
Delta Waterfowl
E2 (Environmental Entrepreneurs)
Earth Force
Earthjustice
Environmental Defense Fund
Environmental Working Group
Ernst Conservation Seeds
Food Animal Concerns Trust
Food Democracy Now!
Hazon
Influence Advocacy, LLC
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Izaak Walton League of America
Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future
Land Trust Alliance
League of Conservation Voters
National Association of Conservation Districts
National Audubon Society
National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative
National Center for Appropriate Technology
National Deer Association
National Farmers Union

National Organic Coalition
National Parks Conservation Association
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
National Wildlife Federation
National Young Farmers Coalition
Natural Resources Defense Council
NatureServe
North American Grouse Partnership
Organic Farmers Association
Organic Farming Research Foundation
Pesticide Action Network
Pollinator Partnership
Rachel Carson Council
River Network
Ruffed Grouse Society
Rural Coalition
Sierra Club
Slow Food USA
Soil and Water Conservation Society
Sustainable Monarch
The Breakthrough Institute
The Conservation Fund
The Nature Conservancy
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation
Partnership
Trout Unlimited
Union of Concerned Scientists
Western Landowners Alliance
Wild Farm Alliance
Wildlife Management Institute
World Wildlife Fund
Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation

Regional, State and Local Groups:

Alliance for the Great Lakes
Altamaha Riverkeeper (Georgia)
Arkansas Wildlife Federation
Atlanta Coyote Project
Beaverdam Creek Watershed Watch Group (Maryland)
Bird Conservancy of the Rockies
Blue Ridge Land Conservancy
Breathe Project
California Climate and Agriculture Network
California Farmers Union
California Waterfowl Association
Capital Region Land Conservancy
Carolina Farm Stewardship Association
Chemung Valley Audubon Society (New York)
Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Chesapeake Conservancy
Chesapeake Legal Alliance
Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage
Clean Fairfax
Clean Water Liganore, Inc. (Maryland)
Climate Land Leaders
Climate Reality Project Susquehanna Valley PA Chapter
Coastal Enterprises, LLC
Colorado Wildlife Federation
Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA)
Conservation Coalition of Oklahoma
Conservation Resource Alliance (Michigan)
Coosa River Basin Initiative
Cypress Chapter Inc. of the Izaak Walton League of America
Delaware Nature Society
Delaware Valley Ornithological Club
Environmental Law & Policy Center
Farm to Table – New Mexico
Florida Division of the Izaak Walton League of America
Florida Keys Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America
Florida Wildlife Federation, Inc.
Food and Agriculture Committee, Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter
Foodshed Capital
Forever Maryland
Friends of Family Farmers (Oregon)
Friends of the Mississippi River
Gallatin Valley Land Trust
Georgia Wildlife Federation
Goose Creek Association
Grassland Groupies (Kansas)
Grassworks (Wisconsin)
Green State Solutions (Iowa)
Harpeth Conservancy
Hawaii Farmers Union United
Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association
Healthy Gulf
Heart of the Rockies Initiative
Idaho Wildlife Federation
Illinois Council of Trout Unlimited
Illinois Division, Izaak Walton League
Illinois Stewardship Alliance
Indiana Division, Izaak Walton League of America
Indiana Sportsmens Roundtable
Indiana Wildlife Federation
Iowa Environmental Council
Iowa Wildlife Federation
Island Grown Initiative
Izaak Walton League of America - Geneseo Chapter (IL)
Izaak Walton League of America – Grand Island (NE)
Izaak Walton League of America- Oregon Division
Kalmiopsis Audubon Society (OR)
Kansas Farmers Union
Kansas Wildlife Federation
Lancaster Clean Water Partners
Lancaster Farmland Trust
Land For Good
Land Stewardship Project (Minnesota)
Louisiana Hypoxia Working Group
Louisiana Wildlife Federation
Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper Association
Maine Farmland Trust
Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association
Maryland Bird Conservation Partnership
Maryland Ornithological Society
Mass Audubon
Michael Fields Agricultural Institute
Michigan Audubon
Michigan Farmers Union
Milwaukee Riverkeeper
Minnesota Conservation Federation
Minnesota Division, Izaak Walton League of America
Minnesota Environmental Partnership

Minnesota Farmers Union
Mississippi River Network
Mississippi River Trust
Mississippi Wildlife Federation
Missouri Farmers Union
Missouri Prairie Foundation
Missouri River Bird Observatory
Missouri Stream Team Watershed Coalition
Montana Farmers Union
Montana Organic Association
Montana Wildlife Federation
Native Prairies Association of Texas
Nebraska Farmers Union
Nebraska Wildlife Federation
Neighboring Food Co-op Association
Nevada Wildlife Federation
New England Farmers Union
New Mexico Food & Agriculture Policy Council
New York State Ornithological Association
North Dakota Farmers Union
North Dakota Wildlife Federation
Northeast Organic Farming Association-Interstate
Council
Northern Virginia Conservation Trust
Northwest Farmers Union
Ohio Conservation Federation
Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association
Ohio Environmental Council
Ohio Farmers Union
Onondaga Audubon (New York)
Oregon Climate and Agriculture Network
Our Santa Fe River
Pasa Sustainable Agriculture
PennFuture

Pennsylvania Council of Churches
Pennsylvania Division, Izaak Walton League of America
Penns Valley Conservation Association
Pinelands Preservation Alliance (New Jersey)
Porter County, Indiana Chapter- Izaak Walton League
Potomac Conservancy
Prairie Rivers Network
Quivira Coalition
Rivertown Coalition for Clean Air and Water (PA)
Rockbridge Area Conservation Council
Rocky Mountain Farmers Union
Salem Audubon Society
Savanna Institute
Saving Birds Thru Habitat
Sociedad Ornitologica Puertorriquena
Soque River Watershed Association (Georgia)
South Carolina Wildlife Federation
South Dakota Wildlife Federation
Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project
Southeastern Massachusetts Agricultural Partnership
Sustainable Food Center (Texas)
Texas Conservation Alliance
The Sustainable Business Network of Massachusetts
Unitarian Universalist Church of Roanoke
Utah Wildlife Federation
Vermont Center for Ecostudies
Virginia Association for Biological Farming
Virginia Conservation Network
Virginia Division, Izaak Walton League of America
Waterkeepers Chesapeake
Wildlife Mississippi
Wisconsin Farmers Union
Wyoming Wildlife Federation

cc: The Honorable Debbie Stabenow, Chairwoman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry and the Honorable David Scott, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture

August 5, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
H-305, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leaders Schumer, McCarthy, and McConnell,

As you continue to develop infrastructure legislation, the undersigned organizations welcome and applaud efforts to secure increased investment in climate-smart agricultural practices that sequester carbon or reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In doing so, these practices also will lead to other benefits such as improved water quality and strengthened wildlife habitats. We strongly encourage you to ensure that these investments be focused on working lands managed by the producers who work to sustainably provide our country with a safe, affordable, and abundant food supply.

Farmers and ranchers tend with great care to their natural resources while taking a proactive approach to the long-term sustainability of their land and water. Currently, USDA conservation financial incentives and technical assistance provide producers with voluntary, incentive-based assistance to carry out multiple stewardship practices on their operations. Programs also support partnerships between farmers and conservation groups to improve natural resources in targeted areas. However, more can be done to emphasize innovative approaches that can yield meaningful environmental benefits, including manure and feed management or carbon benefits in the case of soil health. We also know that effective programs that support climate smart agriculture are highly oversubscribed.

We support efforts to increase spending on conservation incentives, including strong technical and financial assistance, as part of upcoming infrastructure-related legislation. This would provide an important opening to strengthen and advance the focus on those innovative practices and approaches that can help farmers to continue and enhance the work they have already done to reduce their environmental footprint. These approaches also result in benefits to our nation's infrastructure, improving water quality and reducing sediment in our waterways. Producers of all

sizes, all commodities, and in all regions of the country are eager to partner with you on this unique stewardship opportunity, especially given that current programs are oversubscribed.

We support a significant increase rural broadband investment in this legislation. Broadband is no longer a luxury; it is a necessity for agriculture, education, healthcare, and economic development in rural communities. The internet plays a significant role in countless aspects of our daily lives, and decisions are being made today for a future that will require access to high-speed internet. To ensure that all Americans have access to this quickly developing future, it is critical for this legislation to increase funding for USDA programs that would expand rural broadband access and infrastructure.

Finally, our organizations also wish to reiterate the significant concerns we have voiced regarding multiple tax policies that have been put forth as potential offsets for infrastructure legislation. Specifically, we urge Congress not to alter or eliminate long-standing provisions that support future new and multi-generational family farms. As discussions on offsets continue, it is critical to avoid an approach that would undermine the future of farming in the United States.

In closing, our organizations look forward to continuing to work with you on infrastructure legislation. We are enthusiastic for the unique opportunity to help farmers and ranchers augment their ongoing environmental stewardship and sustainability efforts.

Sincerely,

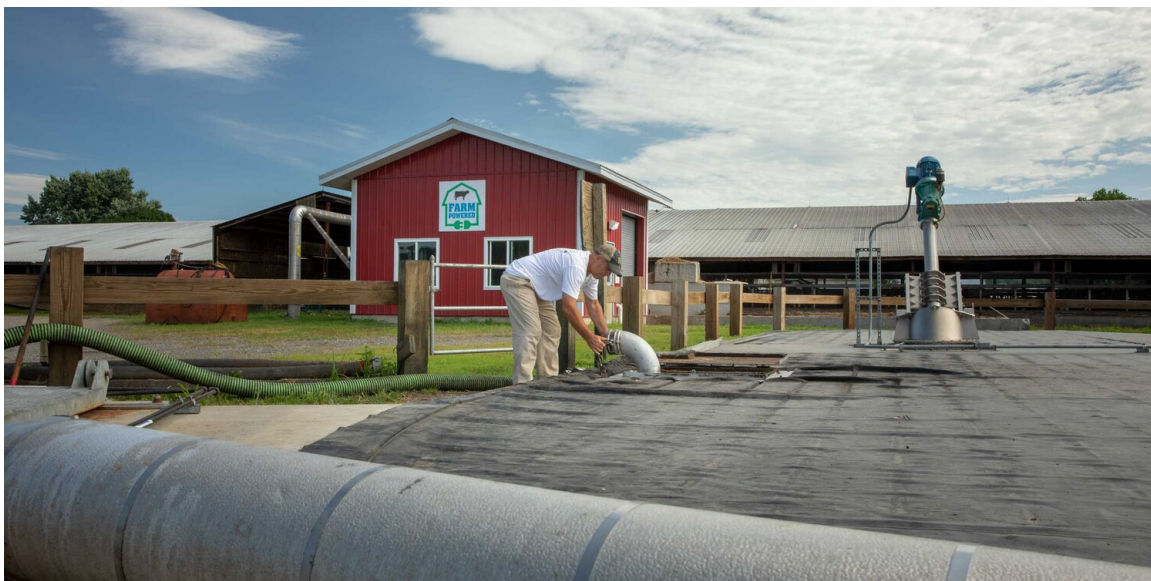
National Milk Producers Federation
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
Agricultural Retailers Association
American Seed Trade Association
CropLife America
National Association of Conservation Districts
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Farmers Union
National Potato Council
Produce Marketing Association
U.S. Apple Association



NMPF, NCFC LEAD COALITION CALL FOR CLIMATE-SMART AG INVESTMENTS

nmpf.org/nmpf-ncfc-lead-coalition-call-for-climate-smart-ag-investments

August 5, 2021



The National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) and the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives (NCFC) today led a coalition of 12 agricultural and conservation organizations on a [letter](#) advocating for significant new funding for climate-smart agricultural practices that can help farmers to build on their environmental stewardship leadership.

Congressional efforts toward infrastructure legislation provide opportunities for substantial new investments in conservation support, with more emphasis on climate-smart agricultural practices. USDA conservation financial incentives provide farmers

with voluntary technical assistance to carry out numerous stewardship practices. But more can be done to enhance practices that can yield meaningful environmental benefits, such as climate-smart manure and feed management on dairy farms.

“Dairy farmers are proactive stewards of their land and water resources, but they are always seeking to innovate further. Dairy farmers in 2020 committed to become carbon-neutral or better by 2050 and maximize water quality around the country. Bolstering conservation investment and focusing on climate-smart practices better positions dairy farmers to fulfill the dairy sector’s 2050 environmental stewardship goals as envisioned in the Net Zero Initiative,” said Jim Mulhern, president and CEO of NMPF.

“America’s farmer co-ops and their producer-owners stand ready to help address the global challenge posed by climate change. Increasing conservation funding for climate-friendly farming practices is essential to giving them the tools they need to do that and to continue their stewardship of our shared natural resources,” said Chuck Conner, president and CEO of NCFC.

NMPF, NCFC, and their colleagues call in the letter for increased spending on conservation incentives, including strong technical and financial assistance, with a greater focus on climate-smart practices. The organizations also support new rural broadband resources in pending infrastructure legislation. The letter also reiterates the major concerns that many of its signers have already voiced regarding several proposed changes to tax policy that would undermine the transfer of family farms from one generation to the next.

Organizations joining NMPF and NCFC on the letter include the Agricultural Retailers Association, American Seed Trade Association, CropLife America, National Association of Conservation Districts, National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, National Association of Wheat Growers, National Farmers Union, National Potato Council, Produce Marketing Association, and U.S. Apple Association.

HOARD'S DAIRYMAN

Dairy could provide valued climate solutions

Oct. 11 2021

By Paul Bleiberg, National Milk Producers Federation



It's well-known within dairy and all of agriculture that producers are proactive leaders in land and water stewardship. But that story is less known in Washington, D.C., where lawmakers provide policy incentives that help dairy farmers build on the significant work they have already done. After a summer of real National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF)-driven progress on Capitol Hill, dairy's priorities are moving in the right direction.

The success comes from persistence that has broken through the charged political climate. It's also come through the ability of NMPF and others to speak with one voice in support of the industrywide Net Zero Initiative. This unified voice has helped align congressional agriculture policy with dairy's environmental goals of becoming carbon neutral or better by 2050 and improving water quality while optimizing water use.

Publicly, this summer saw continued public wrangling about when and whether to move forward with significant legislation, with greater emphasis on the differences between policymakers than on the potential areas of alignment that might help conclude important debates. But away from the national headlines, NMPF has been working with members of both parties to steadily develop momentum to enact policies to improve conservation programs to better meet dairy's needs; spur adoption of innovative technologies and practices; and bolster emerging environmental markets.

The triple play of working examples

In August, NMPF led a dozen agricultural and conservation organizations in urging Congress to bolster existing farm bill conservation programs to target climate-smart practices, which hold major potential to help dairy farmers to further reduce emissions that studies show are already on the decline. Senate Agriculture Committee Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow continues to spearhead this legislative effort. It's becoming likely that pending budget legislation will successfully enhance funding for these critical programs. This will better position conservation programs to support dairy producers as they implement new approaches to feed management and undertake advanced nutrient management practices.

Second, NMPF has built on its springtime success in fostering federal incentives toward innovative technologies and practices. After working to win language in the House's 2022 agriculture spending bill to nudge the Food and Drug Administration to speed up approval of animal feed additives, NMPF then worked with a bipartisan coalition of members to secure dedicated funds to achieve this goal when the bill hit the House floor in July. After that bill was approved, NMPF subsequently worked with senators in both parties to secure both the policy directive and the needed funds in the Senate's bill.

This momentum has carried over to the bipartisan, bicameral Agriculture Environmental Stewardship Act. This legislation, for which NMPF has led support efforts, creates an investment tax credit to cover 30% of the upfront capital costs of methane digesters and nutrient recovery systems. After advancing the proposal in the Senate this spring, we worked with House members to include key portions of the bill in a spending plan approved last month by the House Ways and Means Committee that's poised to move ahead in Congress.

Third, Congress is continuing to delve into voluntary agricultural carbon markets. After the Senate overwhelmingly passed the Growing Climate Solutions Act in June, action shifted to the House, where its Agriculture Committee held a hearing to inform members on voluntary carbon markets in agriculture. The committee is now considering the next steps regarding the Growing Climate Solutions Act.

Bringing plans to completion

As the saying goes, it ain't over til it's over. Inside the Capital Beltway, that point is often stated as, "Nothing's agreed to until everything's agreed to." Legislation is complicated, and loss of focus or a small mistake can make momentary successes quickly fade. But this year has provided an opening for NMPF to successfully pursue the key policy priorities needed to help make Net Zero a reality for dairy. NMPF is determined to bring these efforts to a successful conclusion.

To comment, email your remarks to intel@hoards.com.

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October 11, 2021



August 6, 2021

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
H-305, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy,

The Food and Agriculture Climate Alliance (FACA) consists of organizations representing farmers, ranchers, forest owners, agribusinesses, manufacturers, the food and innovation sector, state governments, sportsmen, and environmental advocates. Our organizations have broken through historical barriers to develop and promote shared climate policy priorities across the entire agriculture, food and forestry value chains.

As Congress prepares to draft a budget reconciliation package that could substantially increase federal investment in climate-smart agriculture and forestry initiatives, FACA is committed to ensuring this opportunity yields the strongest results for both the climate and the farmers, ranchers and forest owners who are stewards of the land.

FACA, now more than 80 members strong, was founded on the principle of bipartisanship and believes widespread support strengthens any legislation. We also recognize this package offers a significant opportunity to increase funding for voluntary, incentive- and science-based climate and conservation programs. FACA supports investments in these programs to foster carbon capture and storage on farms and forests, reduce other greenhouse gas emissions and provide a host of additional environmental benefits, such as cleaner water and improved wildlife habitat.

The package must also protect existing farm bill programs and do no harm through tax changes that threaten the economic sustainability and resilience of multi-generational family farms, working forests and lands and the entire food supply chain. Such changes would compromise our industries' ability to deliver continued climate benefits.

FACA appreciates the opportunity to share our views on this legislation. The alliance and its individual members reserve the right to take a position on the entire package – including both

agriculture- and forestry-related climate investments as well as funding mechanisms – based on final bill text.

Sincerely,

The Food and Agriculture Climate Alliance

cc:

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Chairwoman, U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry

The Honorable John Boozman
Ranking Member, U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry

The Honorable David Scott
Chairman, U.S. House Committee on Agriculture

The Honorable Glenn ‘GT’ Thompson
Ranking Member, U.S. House Committee on Agriculture

September 23, 2021

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Chairwoman
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry
U.S. Senate
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The Honorable David Scott
Chairman
Committee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives
468 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

CC: The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Chairs Stabenow and Scott,

As food and farm policy advocates, we strongly support the investments proposed in the current reconciliation package and oppose any reductions in the size and scope of these food, nutrition, farm, forestry, renewable energy, research, and rural development investments.

In particular, we strongly support the investments designed to simplify and increase year-round assistance to low-income school children; help schools provide and expand access to healthier meals; provide debt relief for those most at risk; invest in farming practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and store carbon; expand sustainable farming research; and support renewable energy development on our farms. The programs that result from this spending bill will be stronger with equity central to their design, application, accessibility, and impact.

We urge you to maintain these investments at the proposed levels. They will reduce hunger, improve nutrition, address long-standing inequities in our food and farm system, create thousands of jobs in our rural communities, and meet growing farmer demand for conservation funding.

Sincerely,

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Border Agricultural Workers Project
Carolina Farm Stewardship Association
Center for Science in the Public Interest
Certified Naturally Grown
Chef Ann Foundation
Community Alliance with Family Farmers
Community Health Improvement Partners Farm to Institution Center
DC Greens
Earthjustice
Environmental Working Group
Fair Food Network
Family Farm Action Alliance
Family Farm Defenders

Farm Aid
Farm Generations Cooperative
Farm to Table New Mexico
Farmers Market Coalition
Farms to Grow, Inc.
Farmworker Association of Florida
Food Research & Action Center
FoodCorps
Foodshed Capital
Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities
Hazon
Health, Environment, Agriculture, Labor (HEAL) Food Alliance
Healthy Babies Bright Futures
Hunger Free America
Illinois Stewardship Alliance
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Intertribal Agriculture Council
Island Grown Initiative
Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future
Land Loss Prevention Project
Maine Farmland Trust
Missouri Coalition for the Environment
National Center for Appropriate Technology
National Farm to School Network
National Latino Farmers & Ranchers Trade Association
Natural Resources Defense Council
New Entry Sustainable Farming Project
Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York
Northwest Center for Alternatives to Pesticides
Oregon Climate and Agriculture Network
Oregon Farm to School & School Garden Network
Organic Farming Research Foundation
Rooted
Roots of Change
Rural Advancement Foundation International-USA (RAFI-USA)
Rural Advancement Fund of the National Sharecropper Fund
Rural Coalition
Rural Development Leadership Network
San Diego Hunger Coalition
Slow Food USA
Sustainable Agriculture and Food System Funders
Sustainable Food Center
Sustainable Iowa Land Trust
The Food Trust
The James Beard Foundation
Union of Concerned Scientists
Virginia Association for Biological Farming

Wallace Center
Whole Kids Foundation
Wholesome Wave

May 28, 2021

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
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The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, Leader McCarthy, and Leader McConnell:

Thank you for your ongoing bipartisan efforts to craft strategic investments designed to equitably rebuild infrastructure, create jobs, revitalize the economy, and tackle the climate crisis. As Congress develops these legislative proposals, we urge you to fully invest in our nation's soil as a fundamental component of infrastructure and one key way to help communities adapt to and help mitigate climate change.

Devastating climate impacts are already unfolding across the country and around the world. The 2018 Fourth National Climate Assessment shows ways in which farms, ranches, and forests across the United States are projected to experience climate change impacts. These impacts—which include an increased frequency and severity of droughts, heavy rainfall, and extreme heat; changing planting seasons; and new pests and crop diseases—are taking a toll on farmers, farmworkers, the environment, and eaters. To prevent the worst of these impacts, science shows that the United States must commit to transitioning to a net-zero emissions economy no later than 2050. As scientists with expertise in food and farm systems, we strongly believe that the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has a vital role to play in reducing the global warming emissions that come from the agriculture sector.

In 2016, science and technical experts issued *The State and Future of US Soils*, which referred to soil as “essential to modern life” due to its ability to grow food, reduce water pollution, and support climate change mitigation and ecological resilience. More specifically, agricultural practices that build healthy soil on farms can deliver services such as sequestering carbon and contributing to global warming emissions reductions, increasing resilience to droughts and floods, and reducing water pollution.

We applaud President Biden's American Jobs Plan calling for “the US agricultural sector to lead the shift to net-zero emissions” as well as for its clear message that new investments should advance racial equity, yet we simultaneously caution that the plan's proposed scale of investment in soil health practices falls short of the urgent need of this moment. As a scientific community with expertise throughout the food and farm system, we believe that in order to build climate-resilience, it is essential that Congress make immediate and major additional investments in effective, existing USDA research and conservation programs. Further, we firmly believe that Congress must take into

account the institutional and systemic racism experienced by Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) farmers and the disproportionate impacts of climate change on BIPOC communities.

As a first step, it is essential to increase public funding for agricultural and food research particularly research that addresses climate change mitigation and adaptation at the USDA, especially through agroecological interdisciplinary and systems approaches. In recent decades, the US investment in publicly funded research has declined. Among high-income countries, the US share has decreased from 35 percent in 1960 to less than 25 percent by 2013. Congress can and should reverse this trend by acting this year to bolster existing programs and initiatives that can fund and support more urgently needed climate-related research needs—including the USDA Climate Hubs, the Long-Term Agroecosystem Research Network, the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program, and the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative.

The USDA's Farm Bill conservation programs—including programs such as the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), and the Regional Conservation Partnership Program—are incredibly popular and consequently routinely oversubscribed at current funding levels yet offer one of the most immediate pathways to promote climate adaptation and mitigation through soil health. Because CSP and EQIP are familiar to farmers and ranchers and already encourage the adoption of many practices that can help farmers mitigate and adapt to climate change, small adjustments and significant investments in these programs offer immediately actionable opportunities to tackle the climate crisis. Furthermore, the USDA's ability to successfully deliver the full benefits of these and other conservation programs depends heavily on Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA). As Congress crafts investments to promote soil health, strengthening CTA will help ensure that we can meet climate mitigation and adaptation goals.

In the months ahead, Congress has a historic opportunity to address the climate crisis head on by supporting science-based policies which benefit farmers, urban and rural communities, and the environment. To date, numerous legislative proposals, including the Agriculture Resilience Act (HR 2803/S 1337) and the Climate Stewardship Act (HR 2534/S 1072), have been introduced and detail many essential investments that could be included in a climate and infrastructure package this year. Furthermore, many of these same investments have been highlighted by both the House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis and the Senate Democrats' Special Committee on the Climate Crisis.

As you continue to craft much needed infrastructure investments, we look forward to working with you to ensure that Congress recognizes soil as infrastructure and invests boldly in science-based policies that will create a more equitable and climate-resilient food and farm system.

Sincerely,

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The Honorable Debbie Stabenow, Chairwoman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
The Honorable John Boozman, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
The Honorable David Scott, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture
The Honorable Glenn "GT" Thompson, Ranking Member, House Committee on Agriculture
The Honorable Bernie Sanders, Chairman, Senate Committee on the Budget
The Honorable Lindsey Graham, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on the Budget
The Honorable John Yarmuth, Chairman, House Committee on the Budget
The Honorable Jason Smith, Ranking Member, House Committee on the Budget

August 25, 2021

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Chairwoman, Senate Agriculture Committee

The Honorable David Scott
Chairman, House Agriculture Committee

Re: Reconciliation Support for Climate Solutions & Equity in Agriculture

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, Chairwoman Stabenow, and Chairman Scott,

We appreciate your leadership and recognition of the deep connections between agriculture, climate change, and the overarching importance of equity. We strongly support adoption of a robust reconciliation package that advances climate, economic, and equity goals together. In particular, to build a food system that is resilient enough to feed us in a changing climate, we must dramatically increase public investments in sustainable farming and farming communities – including those who have been, and continue to be, underserved by U.S. farm policy.

USDA's well-documented and ongoing track record of marginalization of small-scale farmers and discrimination against farmers of color, especially in its farm loan programs, has left many small and limited-resource farms, particularly those owned by Black, Indigenous, and other farmers of color, on the brink of financial ruin. These farmers are often leaders in climate-friendly agriculture, innovators in regionally tailored farming practices, and key providers of food for local communities. The National Institute for Food and Agriculture calls small farms "a nursery for the development of new enterprises and marketing systems," and this is especially true of farms operated by people of color.

However, these farmers also face enormous barriers, and they need immediate support, including debt relief and other tools that will help them access and retain land and capital. In addition, they need regionally and culturally appropriate technical assistance, research, and market development.

To ensure that the Build Back Better agenda supports truly diversified and climate-friendly farming that delivers meaningful emissions reductions and climate resilience, aligns with the Justice40 Initiative, and does not exacerbate long-standing inequities in our food system, the reconciliation agriculture package should direct significant funding to climate-friendly agriculture and resources for underserved producers. While significantly more funding is needed in the future to support healthy ecosystems, underserved producers and workers, food security, and climate resilience, **at a minimum**, the reconciliation investments should include:

- **\$30B for conservation programs** with a focus on climate-friendly agricultural practices and organic production, including sustainable pest management without synthetic (fossil-fuel derived) pesticides, cover cropping, reduced tillage, hedgerow planting, pollinator protection, composting, prescribed grazing, and other regenerative practices that

increase resilience to climate change, improve the health of workers, communities, and soil, protect water and air quality, increase biodiversity, and help store carbon in the soil

- **\$5B for sustainable and organic agriculture research programs** focused on climate resilience-related research, education, and extension programs with strong dedicated support for 1890s and 1994 Land Grant Institutions
- **\$3B to support resilient rural development through investments in community-based infrastructure** focused on value-added agriculture, rural renewable energy, and infrastructure for local processing of crops and livestock to improve food system resilience and better support small- and medium-sized farmers
- **\$10B for debt relief** to stabilize the operations of producers who have not received a fair share of aid from recent federal support programs.

The package should guarantee socially disadvantaged producers the opportunity to participate in, and be key beneficiaries of, any program funded through the package, regardless of past participation and without cumbersome application requirements. These resources should support the next generation of farmers, including beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, as well as farmworkers desiring to enter farming as producers, and support them as they build on their knowledge of traditional ecological stewardship.

In addition, the package should fund an on-farm Civilian Conservation Corps program that:

- Trains the next generation of farmers to adopt climate-friendly practices, particularly in underserved regions;
- Creates job opportunities for beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers, ranchers, and farmworkers that pay a living wage and provide pathways to long-term employment;
- Protects farmer and farmworker health, safety, and economic stability;
- Increases biodiversity, restores critical wildlife habitat, and increases carbon sequestration on working lands;
- Promotes rural entrepreneurship and rural economic development; and
- Prioritizes environmental justice for frontline communities

We look forward to working with you to fully realize the many benefits of climate-friendly agriculture and to ensure producers of color receive the support they deserve – this year and into the future.

Sincerely,

Alabama State Association of Cooperatives
Alianza Nacional de Campesinas
American Indian Mothers Inc
American Sustainable Business Council
Appetite For Change
Beyond Pesticides
BioRegional Strategies (BRS)
Black Farmers and Agriculturalists
Campaign for Family Farms and the Environment

Center for Biological Diversity
Center for Food Safety
Concerned Citizens of Tillery
Cottage House Incorporation
Detroit Food Policy Council
Earthjustice
Family Farm Action
Farm Aid
Farmworker Association of Florida (FWAF)
Fertile Ground LLC
FoodCorps
Friends of the Earth
Green America - Center for Sustainability Solutions
Hawaii Ulu Cooperative
HEAL (Health, Environment, Agriculture, Labor) Food Alliance
Health Care Without Harm
I-Collective
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Intertribal Agriculture Council
JSA Sustainable Wealth Management
Just Food and Water
Kansas Black Farmers Association
League of Conservation Voters
MegaFood
National Center for Appropriate Technology
National Family Farm Coalition (NFFC)
National Latino Farmers and Ranchers Trade Association
National Organic Coalition
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC)
National Young Farmers Coalition
Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)
Naturepedic Organic Mattresses & Bedding
Northeast Organic Farming Association-Interstate Council
North Carolina Association of Black Lawyers Land Loss Prevention Project
Nourish Colorado
Now You Know New Mexico
Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project, Inc.
Organic & Non-GMO Report
Organic Farmers Association
Pesticide Action Network
Rural Advancement Fund of the National Sharecroppers Fund, Inc.
Rural Coalition
Rural Development Leadership Network
Scenic Hudson

Sierra Club
Southwest Georgia Project for Community Education, Inc.
Steward
The Carbon Underground
Thousand Hills Lifetime Grazed
Union of Concerned Scientists
World Farmers
Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation
Zero Foodprint

Cc: USDA Secretary Vilsack

Congress must include Climate Smart Agriculture in budget reconciliation

BY FRED YODER AND RAY GAESSER, OPINION CONTRIBUTORS — 09/22/21 04:00 PM EDT 144
THE VIEWS EXPRESSED BY CONTRIBUTORS ARE THEIR OWN AND NOT THE VIEW OF THE HILL

Hurricane Nicholas wreaked havoc, dumping torrential rainfall and causing flooding across the Gulf Coast of The Southeastern United States — and came less than two weeks after the devastation left in the same region by Hurricane Ida.

The weather disasters have prompted more discussion about steps that various sectors, including agriculture, need to take to improve their resilience and mitigate the impacts of these enormous and wicked storms. They are said by many researchers to be a near-perfect example of what can be expected to become the norm if there is a failure to act on climate change.

Last week, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) listed Ida as one of the strongest on record to strike the Southeastern United States, a development that bodes ill for the months ahead (hurricane season formally ends Nov. 30), particularly following a record-breaking 2020.

Last year, hurricane season brought with it an unprecedented 30 named storms, including seven major hurricanes of Category 3 strength or higher (Category 5 being the highest).

While it is difficult to say any one storm is the direct result of climate change, the increase in global temperatures stemming largely from human-generated carbon pollution is intensifying the factors that create hurricanes, including warmer ocean waters. Those increasing water temperatures are expected to drive more, even stronger, hurricane winds and rains.

This reality reaffirms the need to scale up Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA), an approach that incorporates systems and practices that enable farmers, ranchers and forest landowners to sustainably intensify production, improve resilience and

simultaneously deliver valuable carbon sequestration services, all while generating reductions in climate-warming greenhouse gases.

A roadmap released by the North America Climate Smart Agriculture Alliance (NACCSAA), outlines multiple pathways to effectively address the changing climate. As Congress takes up the proposed budget reconciliation and infrastructure measures, policymakers should heed the recommendations laid out in that roadmap and include funding and enabling authority for critically needed conservation and technical assistance programs and clean energy investments, including ethanol.

According to the Department of Energy's Argonne National Laboratory, ethanol's average carbon intensity is now 44 to 52 percent lower than gasoline's carbon intensity. Given the fact that legacy vehicles powered by internal combustion engines will be on the road for the next several decades, Congress should mandate improvements in fuel quality to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve air quality and increase fuel efficiency, all while supporting agriculture's contribution toward helping address climate change and decarbonizing transportation.

Any reconciliation measure should also make water management and infrastructure investments, and fund carbon pricing mechanisms and ecosystem service payment programs. The legislation should also invest in integrated science research on climate risks and innovations in adaptation, all while boosting the economic value and effectiveness of CSA production practices.

Hurricanes Ida and Nicholas have sparked yet more calls to action. With sound climate smart agriculture enabling policies, investments and markets, those who work the land can deliver solutions to climate, food system, energy and national security challenges. Who in Congress will help agriculture respond to these existential threats?

Fred Yoder is a member of the Board of Directors of Solutions from the Land, an alliance of agricultural leaders addressing food security, economic development, climate change and conservation of biodiversity. Yoder, who is an SfL co-chair, is a fourth-generation Ohio corn, soybean and wheat grower and former president of the National Corn Growers Association.

Ray Gaesser is a member of the Board of Directors of Solutions from the Land, an Iowa grower of soybeans and corn and is a former president of the American Soybean Association.

Budget bill includes \$28 billion for historic climate-focused conservation efforts

WASHINGTON – The Environmental Working Group today applauds House and Senate leaders for including in the budget reconciliation bill \$28 billion to tackle a growing backlog of farmers seeking U.S. Department of Agriculture Conservation Assistance for efforts to address the climate emergency.

“This is the biggest investment in agricultural conservation programs since the Dust Bowl,” said **Scott Faber**, EWG’s senior vice president for government affairs. “EWG applauds Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow and Chairman David Scott for proposing these historic investments in the budget reconciliation bill.”

Stabenow (D-Mich.) chairs the Senate agriculture committee and Scott (D-Ga.) leads the House agriculture panel.

The \$28 billion budget proposal provides funding through USDA’s Environmental Quality Incentives Program, or EQIP; Conservation Stewardship Program, or CSP; and the Regional Cooperative Conservation Program, or RCCP. All of the new spending would help farmers reduce greenhouse gas emissions or store carbon in the ground, based in large part on proposals included in the Climate Stewardship Act introduced earlier this year by Sen. Cory Booker (D-N.J.) and Rep. Abigail Spanberger (D-Va.).

“The budget reconciliation bill provides a once-in-a-generation chance to make better farmland stewardship, not unlimited subsidies, our top priority,” Faber said. “Farmland conservation practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and store carbon also have the added benefit of reducing the amount of farm pollution that is fouling our drinking water.”

By every measure, the problems posed by farm pollution – like toxic algae blooms, high nitrate levels in drinking water and low-oxygen dead zones – are getting worse, as the nutrients and chemicals applied to farmland continued to wash into the nation’s rivers, lakes and bays.

Although Congress made **important reforms** in the 2018 Farm Bill, spending on USDA conservation programs did not increase enough to meet farmer demand. Farmers and ranchers offering to share the cost of **conservation practices** like buffer strips and cover crops continue to be turned away from the federal funding they need.

According to its own recent data, the USDA:

- This year turned away 87,163 farmers with valid applications for conservation funding through **EQIP**
- This year turned away 20,641 farmers with valid applications for conservation funding through **CSP**
- In the past two years turned away more than 100 proposals offered through **RCPP**
- Last year turned away more than **5,000 farmers** offering to enroll about 420,000 acres of marginal land into the Conservation Reserve Program, or CRP.

“The unfunded annual backlog for EQIP, CSP and RCPP is more than \$2 billion,” Faber said. “It could cost an additional \$2 billion to enroll the acres offered into CRP. Thousands of other farmers have simply stopped seeking funds after being turned away by the USDA again and again.”

After rising steadily in the past, farm conservation spending has **leveled off** in recent years.

“Increasing conservation spending will reduce the backlog of farmers waiting for conservation assistance,” Faber said. “And it will help protect our drinking water supplies, provide more habitat for wildlife, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, lead to more carbon being stored in the ground and help our farms prepare to better withstand the effects of extreme weather caused by the climate crisis.”

He said, “Spending more is just one part of the solution. We must also spend smarter.”

EWG’s **extensive analysis** of conservation spending shows the government isn’t doing enough to ensure that participating farmers adopt “the right practices in the right places.” Conservation funds are frequently used for on-

farm infrastructure improvement projects and **practices** that mostly benefit farmers, not the American taxpayer or the environment.

“The fact that this proposal will exclusively fund practices that reduce emissions or store carbon is as historic as the scale of the investment that is being made,” Faber said.

###

The Environmental Working Group is a nonprofit, non-partisan organization that empowers people to live healthier lives in a healthier environment. Through research, advocacy and unique education tools, EWG drives consumer choice and civic action. Visit www.ewg.org for more information.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 15, 2021

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CLIMATE, FOOD
+ AG DIALOGUE

AGree Calls for Increased Investment in Working Lands Conservation

Recommendations outline how USDA and Congress can improve and increase conservation across the country

Washington, DC — Today, the AGree [Climate, Food, and Agriculture Dialogue](#) (CFAD) — a diverse and bipartisan group of producers, food and agriculture companies, and civil society organizations — released recommendations for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Congress to increase and target investments that improve working lands conservation. The recommendations build on previous [guidance](#) for climate change solutions, and emphasize the need to include the perspective of agricultural producers who are on the frontlines, driving conservation on working lands.

“It is essential farmers, ranchers, and foresters are at the table as we design programs that will help our country address climate change,” said Heather Lair, Partner at Meridian Institute who leads CFAD. “By expanding and improving our current systems of conservation, we can build toward climate-resilient and profitable agricultural and forestry systems across millions of acres of U.S. working lands.”

USDA and Congress have several immediate opportunities to promote climate smart agriculture throughout the United States. The CFAD policy recommendations outline how USDA and Congress can:

- Exponentially increase conservation program funding,
- Elevate an integrated focus on conservation and climate solutions at USDA,
- Tailor existing conservation programs to maximize effectiveness and promote whole-farm conservation planning,
- Expand and improve technical assistance for adoption of conservation and climate-smart practices and systems, and
- Align financial incentives to recognize the financial and risk-reduction benefits of conservation.

The recommendations illustrate why a three- to five-fold increase in new funding for existing conservation programs is necessary to drive the adoption of conservation practices in a timely, voluntary, and incentive-based way. This idea is widely supported by a growing number of advocacy groups and policymakers. Notably, the Biden administration's recent budget proposal includes funding increases for conservation programs. Exponentially increasing regenerative practices on American farmland will generate benefits for the environment, agricultural producers, and society at large.

CFAD recommends that to maximize effectiveness, USDA should adjust existing programs by fast-tracking conservation plans and contracts for scalable practices such as cover crops, conservation tillage, livestock manure management and irrigation management. Creating bundles of climate practices will, when combined, decrease emissions, increase mitigation, yield co-benefits for nature, and provide long-term farm resiliency.

As conservation programs expand, we must also expand the network of technical assistance providers and partnerships available to farmers and ranchers. In addition, it is increasingly important to measure and monitor these outcomes to track the benefits promised to farmers and the public.

By taking a USDA-wide look at climate-smart conservation practices, the department can improve the mechanisms by which farmers, ranchers, and foresters can best care for their land, while simultaneously improving financial incentives for farmers and ranchers to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

CFAD's work is grounded in commonsense principles that federal policy on climate change and food systems must: be bipartisan and broadly supported; be inclusive of the food and agriculture community, especially people who live in rural areas; promote mitigation and adaptation; be rooted in science and data; provide economic and market-based incentives; mitigate and reduce economic and environmental risk; and bolster overall resilience.

Read the full recommendations [HERE](#).

###

About the [Climate, Food, and Agriculture Dialogue \(CFAD\)](#): AGree's Climate, Food, and Agriculture Dialogue includes farmers, ranchers, and foresters; environmental and conservation NGOs; food and agriculture companies; and former government officials. Members share a common view that climate change demands ambitious and durable federal policy solutions that are commensurate with the urgency and scale of the problem. CFAD sees the U.S. food, agriculture, and forestry sectors as a crucial source of solutions to climate change.



OCTOBER 8TH, 2021 BY [TIM FINK](#)

AFT Joins 164 Other Organizations in Calling for Congress to Maintain \$28 Billion for Conservation in Reconciliation Bill

AFT is proud to [stand alongside 164](#) other organizations and corporations in calling for Congress to maintain the \$28 billion proposed for conservation programs in the reconciliation package. This funding recognizes the critical role that our nation's farmers and ranchers can play in combatting climate change and represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to provide producers with the tools they need to protect their land, increase resilience to extreme weather, sequester carbon, and reduce emissions - all while improving their soils and profitability.

The \$28 billion in funding would provide a much-needed investment in USDA conservation programs, which have proven consistently popular with farmers. In the case of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), which helps many producers adopt regenerative practices like cover crops and no-till, for every one producer that receives funding, as many as three others are turned away due to insufficient funds. The current conservation section would increase EQIP's funding by \$9 billion while also increasing Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) funding by \$4 billion.

In November 2020, AFT called for a [Cover Crop Initiative](#) as one of five [transition recommendations](#). According to [AFT research](#), tripling cover crop acreage, when combined with no-till, would have the same climate impact as removing up to 260 million cars from roadways every single year.

The reported conservation section includes a \$5 billion Cover Crop Initiative which would bring us closer to that goal, by paying farmers \$25 per acre per year to plant cover crops. The Initiative would also offer a \$5 per acre incentive to non-operating landowners, an innovative idea to increase adoption



has shown that women non-operating landowners are an especially receptive, and often untapped, community for advancing regenerative practices.

We also appreciate the proposal's recognition of the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), including its Agricultural Land Easements (ALE) subprogram, as essential to any meaningful climate strategy. AFT's [Farms Under Threat research](#) revealed that from 2001–2016, 11 million acres of agricultural land in the U.S. were paved over or converted to uses that threaten the future of agriculture. Lost with these acres is not only a low-emission land use when compared to developed land, but also a critical carbon sink. Because eased lands will remain in agricultural use, they represent some of our best opportunities for ensuring that the carbon sequestered through regenerative practices remains in the soil.

AFT research has highlighted the climate benefits of farmland protection through avoided greenhouse gas emissions – an approach that California has taken with its Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program. Last year alone, agricultural land protection projects funded through the program were estimated to prevent the release of over [4 million metric tons](#) of carbon dioxide equivalent through avoided vehicle emissions and other factors. To this end, AFT especially encourages Congress to sustain the \$1.5 billion proposed for ACEP as negotiations continue. In addition to being a climate strategy, agricultural conservation easements are also an important way to create land access opportunities for the next generation of producers, particularly as the current generation of farmers reaches retirement.

Finally, we welcome the proposed additional support for the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). AFT has engaged producers and partners in several RCPP projects across the nation and believes the additional focus on Alternative Funding Arrangements will help to ensure that the program enables wider practice adoption, while also serving as a proving ground for innovative conservation approaches. RCPP can also be used for farmland protection and for advancing regenerative practices on eased lands.

We thank Chairwoman Stabenow, Chairman Scott, and the House and Senate



lead our nation in meeting the greatest challenge of the 21st century. We encourage Congress to maintain this funding as negotiations continue.

About the Author



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POLICY DIRECTOR

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Build Back Better Act would help Maine farms adjust to climate change

Melissa Law serves on the Maine Climate Council representing the interests of Maine farmers. She is co-owner of Bumbleroot Organic Farm in Windham.

At Bumbleroot Organic Farm in Windham, we grow certified organic vegetables and flowers for our farm stand, CSA and local restaurant partners with the goal of building resilience on our farm and in our community. As young farmers, we view climate change as the primary threat to our business and our livelihoods. We're grappling with how to adapt to the unpredictable weather patterns that are already taking place, and how to prepare for the uncertainty that lies ahead.

Like farmers and ranchers across the country, Maine farmers are facing chaotic and extreme weather events that make it increasingly challenging to provide food for our communities. Here at Bumbleroot we experienced significant crop loss to mid-season hail storms in 2018, saw increased pest pressure and poor germination of direct seeded crops during the drought of 2020, and are currently coping with disease issues and decreased yields in this season's fall harvest due to the unseasonably warm and dry spring that was followed by an incredibly wet July. We're working hard to adjust to the extreme weather events but it is increasingly difficult to keep pace.

As we learned last year from the Maine Climate Council's Scientific and Technical Committee, these weather extremes will only increase in the future, leading to poor crop and livestock growth as well as heat exhaustion for farmworkers. There is no time to waste. All Mainers will face significant costs if we fail to take action; we have an

opportunity and a responsibility to make changes now to address these impacts and transform our food system.

The Build Back Better Act reconciliation package takes direct aim at addressing the climate crisis through investments in climate-friendly infrastructure, practices and programs. Congress needs to ensure that farmers have the support they need to build resilience in the face of rapidly changing weather patterns, to protect and improve our carbon-sequestering agricultural soils, and to strengthen our local food system.

As a member of the Maine Climate Council, I worked to ensure that Maine's Climate Action Plan set ambitious goals for all of this, including a specific call for increasing the amount of food consumed in Maine that is grown by in-state food producers from just 10 percent in 2020 to 30 percent by 2030 through local food system development. Maine's congressional delegation must help us achieve the Climate Action Plan goals by embracing the Build Back Better Act.

As the stewards of many important natural resources in Maine and key players in our state's economy, farmers are committed to protecting the health of our soil and water, our biodiversity, our rural communities and our people. With education and resources directed at climate change adaptation, farmers like us can reduce our emissions, sequester carbon and continue to grow food that nourishes our communities.

The Build Back Better Act is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to support the future of agriculture and our food system. Specifically, we need increased support for conservation and climate-friendly farming programs like the Conservation Stewardship Program, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, the Conservation Reserve Program, and the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program. These programs help farmers adopt climate-smart practices and improve on-farm infrastructure. Here at Bumbleroot we have benefited from some of these programs directly, however, only 25

percent of the Conservation Stewardship Program applications and 43 percent of Environmental Quality Incentives Program applications in Maine were funded last year.

These are smart investments that would yield real dividends for farmers like us who are trying to provide healthy food for our communities. Now is the time to invest in real solutions to the climate crisis that work for farmers and would result in healthier soils, cleaner air and water, and a climate-smart economy that allows us to feed our communities for generations to come.

Budget Reconciliation Is the Key to Stopping Climate Change

By [Trevor Higgins](#) August 16, 2021, 9:00 am

The United States is suffering acutely from the chaotic changes in climate that scientists now directly attribute to the burning of fossil fuels and other human activity. The drought, fires, extreme heat, and floods that have already [killed hundreds](#) this summer across the continent and around the world are a tragedy—and a warning of worsening instability [yet to come](#).

However, this week, the Senate initiated an extraordinary legislative response that would set the world on a different path. Enacting the full scope of President Joe Biden's Build Back Better agenda would put the American economy to work leading a global transition to clean energy and stabilizing the climate.

RELATED

- [Optimizing the Federal Budget Process and Timeline To Center Climate Science](#)
- [The Revenue-Raising Opportunity To Fund Climate and Conservation](#)

A look at what's coming next through the budget reconciliation process reveals a ray of hope that is easy to miss amid the fitful negotiations of recent months: At long last, Congress is on the verge of major legislation that would build a more equitable, just, and inclusive clean energy economy. This is our shot to stop climate change.

Building a clean energy future must start now

Until the global economy stops polluting the air and instead starts to draw down the emissions of years past, the world will continue to heat up, blundering past perilous tipping points that threaten irreversible and catastrophic consequences. [Stemming the extent of warming at 1.5](#) degrees Celsius rather 2 degrees or worse will reduce the risk of crossing such tipping points or otherwise exceeding the adaptive capacity of human society. Every degree matters.

Stabilizing global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius starts with cutting annual greenhouse gas emissions in the United States to half of peak levels by 2030.

This isn't about temporary offsets or incremental gains in efficiency—it's about the rapid adoption of scalable solutions that will work throughout the world to eliminate global net emissions by 2050 and sustain net-negative emissions thereafter.

Building this better future will tackle climate change, deliver on environmental justice, and create good jobs. It will give us a shot to stop the planet from continuously warming. It will alleviate the concentrated burdens of fossil fuel pollution, which are concentrated in systemically disadvantaged, often majority Black and brown communities. It will empower American workers to compete in the global clean energy economy of the 21st century.

There is no time to lose in the work of building a clean energy future.

A moment of opportunity for climate legislation

The key to urgent climate action is a process called budget reconciliation, which enables the enactment of budget-related measures by simple majority vote. This week, the Senate voted to begin the process by passing a budget resolution that instructs committees to start drafting a [comprehensive set of investments](#) that would “put America on a path to meet President Biden’s climate change goals of 80% clean electricity and 50% economy-wide carbon emissions reductions by 2030.”

The resulting reconciliation bill would deliver major emissions reductions and change the trajectory of global warming through a new clean electricity payment program; incentives for clean energy and clean vehicles; investments in climate-smart agriculture and forestry; new consumer rebates for home electrification; and more.

As articulated by President Biden, the scope and scale of these investments mark an approach that is categorically different from past spending efforts. Neither the \$90 billion in clean energy investments through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 nor the bipartisan infrastructure framework that passed the Senate this week are at the same level. It's the

fiscal year 2022 budget resolution that opens the door for the pivotal investments needed to build a clean energy future.

The solution starts with clean electricity

Roughly [one-quarter](#) of the annual greenhouse gas pollution in the United States still comes from the combustion of fossil fuels in power plants to generate electricity, but the sector is poised for a transformation to clean electricity if Congress makes the right investments now. Doubling the share of clean electricity—from roughly 40 percent today to at least 80 percent in 2030—would cut more than a full gigaton of annual carbon dioxide emissions. That can be accomplished this decade, and it's more than half the emissions reductions required to meet Biden's economywide 2030 goal. Two major policies lead the way:

- **Clean electricity tax incentives.** Tax credits for building new clean energy sources, such as wind turbines and solar panels, have helped drive the progress toward clean electricity to date, but they've been allowed to lapse in a pattern of on-again, off-again extensions. [If redesigned for maximum impact](#), 10 years of flexible, full-value tax credits for clean electricity with direct pay could achieve between 57 percent and 68 percent clean electricity by the end of the extension. Clean electricity tax incentives are included in the budget reconciliation instructions to the Senate Committee on Finance and were a major part of the [Clean Energy for America Act](#) recently endorsed by the committee.
- **Clean electricity payment program.** A [program](#) of payments and penalties for utilities—mimicking the incentives of the clean electricity standards that have proven effective at [the state level](#)—will fill the gap that tax incentives for renewables developers do not. This will help spur end-to-end investments in

generation, efficiency, transmission, storage, and distribution. This program represents the major part of the reconciliation instructions to the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By setting the power sector on the path to 100 percent clean electricity by 2035, the investments proposed for budget reconciliation would further strengthen the case for electrification in other sectors.

Switch from fossil fuels to electricity wherever possible

Roughly one-third of the annual greenhouse gas pollution in the United States comes from the combustion of fossil fuels in buildings—primarily furnaces and water heaters—or in the cars, trucks, and buses that we drive. Such emissions are usually discussed as parts of the broader buildings or transportation sectors, but they have an important aspect in common: They can readily be replaced by highly efficient electric heat pumps and electric vehicles, possibly including hydrogen produced by electricity in the case of trucks. Other important parts of the economy can also be shifted to run on electricity.

However, since consumers tend to keep their cars, furnaces, and water heaters for between one to two decades, the United States must begin now in order to complete the transition by midcentury. The right set of incentives would not only deliver substantial near-term emissions reductions, but they would also set replacement rates on the path to 100 percent electric in the 2030s.

- **Electric vehicle tax incentives.** A comprehensive set of consumer incentives for electric vehicles, manufacturing investment, and charging infrastructure could drive light-duty battery electric vehicle sales from 2 percent today to between 40 percent and 58 percent of all light-duty vehicles in 2031, depending on battery prices—and even before getting to regulatory actions—according to the [Rhodium Group](#). Clean vehicle tax incentives are included in the budget reconciliation

instructions to the Senate Finance Committee and were a major part of the recently endorsed by the committee.

- **Heat pump rebates.** Heat pumps are essentially air conditioners that can run in reverse to deliver or remove heat, making them a very efficient replacement for home furnaces and water heaters when it comes time to replace home appliances. [Rebates](#) for these and other electric appliances would make it easy for everyone—especially low- and middle- income households—to make the switch. Electrifying these appliances would lower monthly bills, cut down on indoor air pollution, and ready home electrical equipment for rooftop solar and electric vehicle charging. Consumer rebates to weatherize and electrify homes are a major component of the reconciliation instructions to the Senate Energy Committee, and reflect [legislation recently introduced](#) by Sen. Martin Heinrich (D-NM).

Strong incentives now for buildings and vehicles will set in motion the longer-term transitions that need to be completed by mid-century, leaving a much narrower set of emissions from other sectors still needing to be addressed.

The full reconciliations instructions have a comprehensive scope

The rest of the economy contributes about two-fifths of annual greenhouse gas emissions, the great majority of which come from fossil fuel extractive industries, petrochemical and plastics production, agriculture, landfills, aviation, metals production, and cement production.

Major investments proposed as part of the build back better agenda include:

- **Methane.** More than 280 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents vented, flared, or leaked from the oil and gas industry in 2019, according to the EPA inventory, mostly in the form of methane. Setting a fee on oil and gas producers would cause them to clamp down on this pollution, with immediate and significant emissions benefits. Such a fee is included in the instructions to the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works and [similar legislation](#) has been proposed by Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI).
- **Agriculture.** Roughly 600 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents—mostly methane and nitrous oxide—were emitted from fertilizer application and production, livestock management, and other agricultural practices in 2019. Significant emissions reductions are possible from better agricultural practices such as planting cover crops and preserving grasslands, with [one recent study](#) from the Nature Conservancy and others finding opportunities for between 180 million and 500 million metric tons in near-term savings for the sector. Doubling funding for conservation programs at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which could be accomplished under the reconciliation instructions for the Senate Committee on Agriculture, would have huge potential benefits.
- **Conservation.** Roughly 800 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents are drawn out of the atmosphere by trees in the United States every year. Investing more in conservation and stewardship of forests and other natural lands—including the right reforestation and afforestation practices—is a straightforward way to grow this natural carbon sink. The Biden administration has committed to

conserving 30 percent of U.S. lands and ocean by 2030 to do just that. Funding under the reconciliation instructions to the Agriculture Committee and other committees would kick-start this process and could sequester over [150 million tons](#) above baseline in 2030.

The list continues, with investments planned in emerging clean energy technologies; clean fuels and sustainable aviation fuel; direct air capture of carbon dioxide; capture of emissions from non-combustion industrial processes; support for rural electric co-ops to retire stranded coal power plants; federal procurement of clean vehicles and green materials; climate research; and more.

From clean electricity through emerging technologies, each of these programs is important, and, together, they add up to a dramatic change in the trajectory of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions. Further details and integrated analysis are needed to substantiate a precise estimate, but it is clear that, coupled with a return to the proper implementation of the Clean Air Act and other bedrock environmental laws, this package of investments would put the United States firmly on the path to cutting emissions to half below peak levels by 2030.

Climate, justice, and jobs

Investments in clean energy and climate mitigation will deliver major victories, but they're only one part of a broader commitment to environmental justice and good, high-quality jobs for the communities that need them.

The budget resolution provides instructions that will deliver investments in historically Black colleges and universities and minority-serving institutions; climate and health equity; tribal nations and more. The Senate Committee on Banking receives instructions for \$332 billion, including for affordable housing, public housing, community land trusts, other revitalization programs, and transit improvements. The Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works receives instructions for \$67 billion, including for environmental justice investments in clean water access and affordability, healthy ports, electric school buses, and a

clean energy technology accelerator that will fund low-income solar and other pollution-free technologies. The Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources receives instructions with funding for consumer rebates to weatherize and electrify homes in disadvantaged communities.

The creation of a Civilian Climate Corps would deploy clean energy where it is needed, help address the legacy of pollution in overburdened and frontline communities, and give people the opportunity to help build their future, with funding across multiple committees in the budget instructions indicating an expansive scope of work.

The reconciliation bill will also contain provisions that will create good-paying, high-quality union jobs. In addition to the job-creating investments themselves, there are provisions for labor enforcement and penalties modeled on the PRO Act and shifts in the tax code to be more pro-worker. The Clean Energy for America Act includes job quality and domestic content standards. Investments in domestic manufacturing of clean energy and electric vehicle supply chains will support America's global competitiveness. These would be major victories.

Conclusion

The significance of the budget resolution cannot be overstated. It has created the opportunity for Congress to enact by simple majority vote the most consequential investments in climate, justice, and jobs ever seen. Those of us looking for good work, for clean air, and for a stable climate have no time to lose. It's time to cut out the pollution that drives the climate crisis, create millions of good jobs, and build a just and equitable economy for all.

Trevor Higgins is the senior director of Domestic Climate and Energy Policy at the Center for American Progress.

Margaret Krome: Budget reconciliation funds must support climate change mitigation

- By Margaret Krome | local columnist

Aug 13, 2021

Last weekend, a tornado touched ground 3 miles east of our family's property in southwestern Wisconsin, and another hit 6 miles to the west.

Friends who sold their Montana farm to move east to avoid wildfires are inhaling smoke coming across the continent. My native city of Norfolk, Virginia now continually risks devastating floods. Friends in usually temperate Oregon suffered dangerous heat waves in June.

Farmers I work with face flood conditions one year and drought conditions the next. Gulf fishermen lose fish habitat, infrastructure and fishing season under the force of more and more destructive hurricanes every year.

To anyone watching the news with an appreciation for the facts, it is obvious that the climate is becoming dangerous and unpredictable in

real time, before our eyes — just as scientists predicted decades ago that it would. Recently, the United Nations issued an explicit and urgent call for immediate, comprehensive and widespread global action to protect the planet. It was a fact-based, unequivocal warning, supported by the overwhelming consensus of climate scientists that the globe is hurtling toward a tipping point from which it cannot return to normal.

Carbon dioxide levels are higher than at any time in the past 2 million years. Global temperatures have increased faster than any time in the past 2,000 years, and oceans are rising faster than at any time in 3,000 years. Species extinction, human displacement and injury at a massive scale result.

Yes, it's terrifying. And infuriating that there are still those who resolutely choose to believe dogma unsupported by facts that these are natural climate cycles, that they're not influenced by humans — that we need not inconvenience ourselves or change the fossil fuel consumption that fuels our economic engine.

But occasionally, good news directly confronts the bad. Last week was such a week. Led by Wisconsin's Sen. Tammy Baldwin, who serves on the body's Climate Solutions Caucus and chairs the Senate Appropriations Agriculture Subcommittee, the U.S. Senate passed a bipartisan agricultural appropriations bill that offered climate solutions in several important ways.

Recognizing that conservation practices such as managed grazing, expanded crop rotations, cover crops and no-till planting can help farmers change from being part of the climate problem to part of the solution, the bill increased funding for such practices and for research and outreach about them. It increased funding for badly-needed

conservation staffing, Climate Hub projects, and a new Working Lands Resiliency Program. I'm especially excited that it restored funding for the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative, which funds technical assistance and education about managed grazing practices.

The bill also addresses renewable energy, increasing funding for rural electric cooperatives to transition power plants to clean energy. It almost doubled funding to help rural Americans purchase energy efficient appliances and weatherize their homes, reducing energy demand and expenses.

As good as this bill is and refreshing for Sen. Baldwin's outreached hand in bipartisanship to be rewarded in kind, the United Nations Climate Report demonstrates that more is needed. Annual discretionary funding pools are insufficient to address the enormity of the climate crisis.

In the upcoming budget reconciliation bill, Congress must double its current conservation program funding and dramatically increase conservation staffing. Senate appropriators have done everything in their means to help farmers mitigate climate change. Now billions of budget reconciliation dollars must support that vision.

Margaret Krome of Madison writes a semimonthly column for The Capital Times. She is policy program director for the Michael Fields Agricultural Institute.



Advancing soil health policies & programs
that create value for farmers, businesses,
and communities.

INVEST IN SOIL HEALTH & RESILIENT AGRICULTURE IN THE RECONCILIATION PACKAGE

August 31, 2021

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Chairwoman, Senate Agriculture Committee

The Honorable David Scott
Chairman, House Agriculture Committee

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, Chairwoman Stabenow, and Chairman Scott,

As efforts to develop legislation for the \$3.5 trillion budget reconciliation package continue, following House passage of the budget resolution (S.Con.Res.14), we urge Congress to make significant investments in agriculture and help producers restore soil health and rebuild resilience in our environment and economy.

We thank the Senate for **allocating \$135 billion to agriculture** in the budget resolution. This represents a robust investment that recognizes the importance of agriculture for building the economic prosperity of our communities, securing our nation's food supply, and significantly increasing our resilience in the face of climate change. **This topline number should not be cut.**

Further, this funding should focus on building resilience in the US agriculture system. We stand with a broad coalition of farming, food, ag business and nonprofit organizations calling on Congress to use these funds to:

- **Double investment in USDA conservation programs**
 - USDA conservation programs currently receive about \$6 billion¹ per year for the current five-year cycle (or \$30 billion), which still leaves many of the most needed programs - like the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) - oversubscribed (demand for conservation on 13.8 million acres² goes unmet every year).
 - Doubling the conservation budget would **provide critical access to these voluntary, incentive-based programs as well as the needed training and support** for the successful adoption and implementation of soil health and regenerative agriculture

practices. This parallels Senate Agriculture Committee Chairwoman Stabenow's calls for \$50 billion³ in new spending through the reconciliation bill.

- All new conservation **funding should be limited to the practices that maximize soil health and climate resilience**, as detailed in the Climate Stewardship Act of 2021⁴.
- **Double conservation technical assistance funding**
 - USDA is woefully understaffed to adequately help producers with technical assistance and training, which is essential to ensuring that conservation programs are effective in their goals of land restoration and conservation. This increased funding would reestablish the role of USDA-NRCS as a real technical assistance resource, not just a grant issuing agency for conservation and cost share programs.

This request represents a minimum viable investment to build a resilient, climate-friendly US agriculture. We urge Congress to **push for this request, regardless of any potential reductions to the topline budget numbers**. In pursuit of this goal, we also urge Congress to avoid pitting critical conservation infrastructure against other non-conservation-related investments in agriculture. As per the reconciliation instructions⁵ provided to Senators by Majority Leader Schumer's office, child nutrition, debt relief, and other programs are critical in their own right and should not compete for much needed funding with agriculture conservation, drought, and forestry programs.

Along with the 450+ organizations and 30+ Congressional leaders who initially called for \$200 billion^{6,7} in US agriculture as part of the President's infrastructure package, we urge Congress now to boldly support climate resilient agriculture as outlined above.

Doubling funding for USDA conservation programs and doubling technical assistance funding is one of the fastest and most pragmatic ways to support rural communities and our nation's producers, while building soil health, mitigating the impacts of flood, drought and other disasters, restoring biodiversity, ensuring our national food security, and addressing climate change.

In healthy soils, we have a non-partisan, keystone issue that provides the common ground to move America forward. We look forward to continuing to work with Congress to build a more resilient US agriculture while meeting the administration's climate and infrastructure goals.

Sincerely,



Aria McLauchlan
Co-Founder & Executive Director, Land Core
aria@landcore.org

About: [Land Core](https://www.landcore.org) is an independent 501(c)3 organization with a mission to advance soil health policies and programs that create value for farmers, businesses and communities. We are building the missing infrastructure and market-based incentives that will make the rapid adoption and scalability of soil health possible.

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7. Rep. Chellie Pingree (D-ME-1), "In Bicameral Letter, Pingree, Spanberger, Heinrich, Booker Lead Call for Investment in Agriculture as a Climate Solution", May 27, 2021, <https://pingree.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=3756>

More Ag Climate Solutions & Equity Needed in Reconciliation

August 26, 2021 [Allison Johnson](#)

NRDC and over 60 leading farming, environmental, and social justice organizations are calling on Congressional leaders to ramp up support for climate-friendly and equitable agriculture. Congress is drafting a once in a lifetime package of climate investments that would direct \$135 billion to food and agriculture priorities, including conservation programs that help farmers and ranchers work in collaboration with nature, research to support food system resilience in a changing climate, nutrition programs to make sure no kid goes hungry, and debt relief and rural investments to stabilize our agricultural communities. Prioritizing sustainable farming and the needs of small-scale producers, workers, and farming communities will maximize the climate, health, and equity benefits of this package.

To support the truly diversified and climate-friendly approach to farming we need in the face of the climate crisis and to begin to remedy the deep inequities that plague our food system, Congress must commit to transformative support for organic and regenerative food systems and deliver overdue resources to small farms, including producers of color, who haven't received a fair share of public investments.

U.S. farm policy has marginalized small-scale farmers and failed to redress widespread discrimination against farmers of color. Decades of underinvestment have left small-scale farmers—[especially farmers of color](#)—struggling for survival. Skyrocketing land prices and limited access to capital also make it extremely challenging for the next generation of farmers and farmworkers - many of whom are strong advocates of climate-friendly regenerative and organic farming - to start farms of their own.

That's why NRDC, National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, American Sustainable Business Council, Earthjustice, Farmworker Association of Florida, National Family Farm Coalition, and Rural Coalition, among other groups, sent a [letter](#) to leadership specifically calling for a reconciliation package that directs significant funding to climate-friendly agriculture and resources for underserved producers, by providing **at least**:

- **\$30 billion for conservation programs** with a focus on climate-friendly agricultural practices and systems that increase resilience to climate change, improve the health of workers, communities, and soil, protect water and air quality, increase biodiversity, and help store carbon in the soil
- **\$5 billion for sustainable and organic agriculture research programs** focused on climate resilience related research, education, and extension programs with strong dedicated support for 1890s and 1994 Land Grant Institutions
- **\$3 billion to support resilient rural development through investments in community-based infrastructure** focused on value-added agriculture, rural renewable energy, and infrastructure for local processing of crops and livestock to improve food system resilience and better support small and medium-scale farmers
- **\$10 billion for debt relief** to stabilize the operations of producers who have not received a fair share of aid from recent federal support programs.

The package should also guarantee socially disadvantaged producers the opportunity to participate in, and be key beneficiaries of, any program funded through the package, regardless of past participation and without cumbersome application requirements.

These resources should support the next generation of farmers, including beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, as well as farm workers desiring to enter farming as producers, and support them as they build on their knowledge of traditional ecological stewardship.

In addition, the package should fund an on-farm Civilian Conservation Corps program that:

- Trains the next generation of farmers to adopt climate-friendly practices, particularly in underserved regions;
- Creates job opportunities for beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and farmworkers that pay a living wage and provide pathways to long-term employment;
- Protects farmer and farmworker health, safety, and economic stability;
- Increases biodiversity, restores critical wildlife habitat, and increases carbon sequestration on working lands;
- Promotes rural entrepreneurship and rural economic development; and
- Prioritizes environmental justice for frontline communities

While significantly more funding is needed in the future to support healthy ecosystems, underserved producers and workers, food security, and climate resilience, these investments would offer immediate and tangible public health and environmental benefits and keep our small farms alive.



October 4, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-222 Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Yarmuth
Chairman
House Committee on the Budget
U.S. House of Representatives
204-E Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Bernie Sanders
Chairman
Senate Committee on the Budget
U.S. Senate
624 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader Schumer, Chairman Sanders and Chairman Yarmuth:

First and foremost, thank you for your service, leadership and continued work to use the budget reconciliation process to make transformational investments that will make families more safe, secure, and prosperous, create good paying jobs, advance equity, and fight climate change.

We are a national alliance¹ whose member organizations, and the farmers and ranchers they work with, understand that the climate crisis presents a severe and immediate threat to the agriculture sector and to rural and urban communities across the country.

On behalf of our members, we urge you to support the inclusion of robust investments in climate-friendly agriculture, sustainable agriculture research, and food and nutrition security as part of the *Build Back Better* budget reconciliation bill. We strongly support the agriculture and nutrition investments proposed in the current reconciliation package and urge you to protect against reductions in the size and scope of these farm, forestry, conservation, renewable energy, research, debt relief, food, nutrition, and rural development investments.

Protecting the proposed agriculture investments is especially important in the context of mandatory sequestration and the continued impacts that has had on food, agriculture and rural development programs.

¹ Represented NSAC Members: Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association Salinas, CA; CCOF Santa Cruz, CA; California FarmLink Santa Cruz, CA; C.A.S.A. del Llano (Communities Assuring a Sustainable Agriculture) Hereford, TX; Catholic Rural Life St Paul, MN; Center for Rural Affairs Lyons, NE; Claggett Farm/Chesapeake Bay Foundation Upper Marlboro, MD; Community Alliance with Family Farmers Davis, CA; Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture South Deerfield, MA; Dakota Rural Action Brookings, SD; Delta Land and Community, Inc. Almyra, AR; Ecological Farming Association Soquel, CA; Farmer-Veteran Coalition Davis, CA; Florida Organic Growers Gainesville, FL; FoodCorps, OR; GrassWorks New Holstein, WI; Hmong National Development, Inc. St Paul, MN and Washington, DC; Illinois Stewardship Alliance Springfield, IL; Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy Minneapolis, MN; Interfaith Sustainable Food Collaborative Sebastopol, CA; Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation Des Moines, IA; Izaak Walton League of America St. Paul, MN/Gaithersburg, MD; Kansas Rural Center Topeka, KS; The Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture Poteau, OK; Land Stewardship Project Minneapolis, MN; LiveWell Colorado Denver, CO; MAFO St Cloud, MN; Michael Fields Agricultural Institute East Troy, WI; Michigan Food & Farming Systems – MIFFS East Lansing, MI; Michigan Organic Food and Farm Alliance Lansing, MI; Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service Spring Valley, WI; Missouri Coalition for the Environment St. Louis, MO; Montana Organic Association Eureka, MT; The National Center for Appropriate Technology Butte, MT; National Center for Frontier Communities Silver City, NM; National Hmong American Farmers Fresno, CA; Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society Ceresco, NE; Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance Deerfield, MA; Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society LaMoure, ND; Northwest Center for Alternatives to Pesticides Eugene, OR; Ohio Ecological Food & Farm Association Columbus, OH; Oregon Tilth Corvallis, OR; Organic Farming Research Foundation Santa Cruz, CA; Organic Seed Alliance Port Townsend, WA; Rural Advancement Foundation International – USA Pittsboro, NC; Union of Concerned Scientists Food and Environment Program Cambridge, MA; Virginia Association for Biological Farming Lexington, VA; Wild Farm Alliance, Watsonville, CA; Women, Food, and Agriculture Network Ames, IA. Full membership list, including participating members: <https://sustainableagriculture.net/about-us/members/>

Mandatory sequestration of farm bill programs, now extended through 2030², has been extended numerous times as an offset for other spending bills. This has unfairly diminished critical support for conservation, beginning farmers, socially disadvantaged farmers, local food systems, organic research, and more, resulting in across the board cuts to program funding in the amount of approximately 6-7% every year since 2011, continuing until at least 2030.

These cuts come at the expense of water quality, soil health, climate change mitigation, and agricultural productivity. That is why it is critical that as Congress moves forward with plans to pass reconciliation legislation that *food and agriculture investments be spared from any additional reductions* as part of ongoing negotiations to reduce the topline funding amount. Maintaining the agriculture and nutrition investments proposed in the current reconciliation package will help to make up for the previous and future sequestration cuts to agriculture programs and is only fair to our farmers and food producing communities. We also urge you to take the first available chance to rescind the thoughtless policy of mandatory sequestration.

As illustrated in the attached tables, the impact on farm bill spending resulting from the sequester will continue to be significant resulting in billions of dollars of cuts to vital agriculture and food systems programs. From fiscal year (FY) 2013 through FY 2020, mandatory sequestration has resulted in the sequestration of approximately \$10.6 billion in budget authority from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and its various agencies, services, and programs, one of the single largest areas of budget authority sequestration has been farm bill conservation programs which have been reduced by over \$2 billion during that same period of time³.

Protecting critical food and agriculture investments in the reconciliation bill will support our nation's sustainable farmers and ranchers in tackling our nation's response to the climate crisis. Thank you for your support of the food and agriculture components of the reconciliation bill, and for your attention to the harmful effects of mandatory sequestration on many of the best and most important food, farm, and environmental programs in the farm bill.

Sincerely,



Eric Deeble, V.M.D.
Policy Director
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition



Wes King
Senior Policy Specialist
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition

² The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2019 extended mandatory sequestration of farm programs from 2027 to 2029. The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (H.R. 748), the CARES act, extended direct/mandatory sequestration by another year to 2030; and the INVEST in America Act, proposes to extend mandatory sequestration by another year to 2031.

³ “Appendix C. Budget Sequestration” of the Congressional Research Service’s March 2020 report titled *Agriculture and Related Agencies FY2020 Appropriations* provides a detailed look at the impacts of mandatory sequestration in years passed as well as information about existing food and agriculture exemptions from mandatory sequestration.
<https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R45974>

**Table 1. Sequestration Cuts to Mandatory Farm Bill Spending⁴⁵ (2022 – 2030)
(dollars millions)**

	2 yr (7%) ⁶	5 yr (7%) ⁷	9 yr (7%) ⁸
Title I	439.11	1,296.4	3,020.08
ACEP	59.1	152.95	278.95
CSP	119.77	301.49	579.32
EQIP	245.14	643.58	1,206.38
RCP	33.18	93.17	177.17
Vaccine	4.2	4.2	4.2
LAMP	7	17.5	31.5
FOTO	6.3	16.8	28.35
SCBG	11.9	29.8	53.55
SCRI	11.2	28.0	50.4
OREI	5.6	16.1	30.1
Trade	53.6	89.3	160.65
TOTAL	996.1	2,689.29	5,620.65

Table 2. Mandatory Farm Bill Spending Subject to Sequestration (2022 – 2030)⁹

	2022	2023	2 yr	2024	2025	2026	5 yr	2027	2028	2029	2030	9 yr
Title I¹⁰	4,388	1,885	6,273	3,421	3,421	5,405	18,520	6,712	6,585	5,709	5,618	43,144
ACEP	416	427	843	442	450	450	2,185	450	450	450	450	3,985
CSP	971	740	1,711	810	865	921	4,307	969	1,000	1,000	1,000	8,276
EQIP	1,704	1,798	3,502	1,868	1,905	1,919	9,194	1,983	2,007	2,025	2,025	17,234
RCP	223	251	474	272	285	300	1,331	300	300	300	300	2,531
Vaccine	30	30	60				60					60
LAMP	50	50	100	50	50	50	250	50	50	50	50	450
FOTO	40	50	90	50	50	50	240	50	50	50	50	405
SCBG	85	85	170	85	85	85	425	85	85	85	85	765
SCRI	80	80	160	80	80	80	400	80	80	80	80	720
OREI	30	50	80	50	50	50	230	50	50	50	50	430
Trade	255	255	510	255	255	255	1,275	255	255	255	255	2,295

⁴ Assumes sequestration rate of 7%, reflecting average estimate of previous years' rates

⁵ Title 1 and ACEP, CSP, EQIP, and RCP figures are based on estimated outlays from CBOs July 2021 Farm Bill Baseline Projections report, <https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2021-07/51317-2021-07-usda.pdf>, the remainder of those programs listed use the budget authority associated with each program.

⁶ Includes 2022-2023 – this is the total funding that will be sequestered from these programs under the remainder of the 2018 Farm Bill

⁷ Includes 2022 – 2026

⁸ Includes 2022 – 2030 based on the CARES act extension of mandatory sequestration. Does not include the INVEST Act's impacts.

⁹ Title 1 and ACEP, CSP, EQIP, and RCP figures are based on estimated outlays from CBOs July 2021 Farm Bill Baseline Projections report, <https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2021-07/51317-2021-07-usda.pdf>, the remainder of those programs listed use the budget authority associated with each program.

¹⁰ Does not include Market Facilitation Payments



Contact: Meshal DeSantis, National Wildlife Federation, DeSantisM@nwf.org, 202-657-8976

Working Lands Conservation Agreement Represents Historic Investment in Agricultural Conservation, Climate Solution

WASHINGTON, D.C. (September 27, 2021) — The House and Senate Agriculture Committees' proposed \$28 billion in new investments in Farm Bill conservation programs and collaborative partnerships focused on America's farms, ranches, and private forests underscore how the Build Back Better Act will address the immense challenges facing people and wildlife alike. The National Wildlife Federation heralded House and Senate Agriculture Committee Chairs Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.) and David Scott's (D-Ga.) proposal and thanked them for following through on their commitments to include these investments in the Build Back Better Act.

"The Senate and House Agriculture Committees' proposal to invest \$28 billion in on-farm conservation and Farm Bill conservation programs underscores the central role that farmers, ranchers and private forest owners have in addressing the challenges facing people and wildlife. This once in a generation opportunity to enable farmers, ranchers, and foresters to play a pivotal role in fighting climate change will create jobs, support rural communities, and help ensure our shared wildlife heritage will endure for future generations," said Collin O'Mara, president and CEO of the National Wildlife Federation. "Recent disasters and flooding, from the heartland to the coasts, has shown that every community has a stake in addressing the climate crisis. Thank you to Chairwoman Stabenow and Chairman Scott for ensuring the Build Back Better Act elevates and empowers farmers, ranchers, and private forest owners."

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- Meshal DeSantis

- Sep 27, 2021

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RELEASE: National Young Farmers Coalition Comment on the Reconciliation Package

SEPTEMBER 30, 2021

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Lytisha Wyatt, National Young Farmers Coalition
press@youngfarmers.org

Washington, D.C. (October 1st, 2021) – The National Young Farmers Coalition (Young Farmers) commends Congress, and especially the House and Senate Agriculture Committees, for their proposed investments in the current reconciliation package to help farmers, including young and BIPOC farmers, and to tackle the climate crisis. We are particularly pleased to see the inclusion of \$255 million to address land loss and improve land access. Land access is the largest barrier young farmers face and a precursor to this new generation’s ability to sequester carbon and play a role in mitigating climate change. Young Farmers urges Congress to take up consideration of this important funding as soon as possible.

“To build a food system that is resilient enough to feed us in a changing climate, we must dramatically increase public investments in sustainable farming and farming communities—

including those who have been, and continue to be, underserved by U.S. farm policy.” says Sophie Ackoff, Co-Executive Director of Young Farmers. “It is vital that we do not miss this moment to both combat the climate crisis, invest in the next generation of farmers and ranchers, and pursue all options to create a fair, humane, and functional immigration system.”

Young Farmers applauds the inclusion of \$28 billion for climate-smart agriculture in conservation programs, critical new funding for research and rural development, and \$4.5 billion for the Civilian Conservation Corps, a new program that will mobilize the next generation of conservationists and advance important on-the-ground climate goals.

We urge members of Congress to protect the \$10 billion for debt relief to stabilize the operations of producers who have not received a fair share of aid from recent federal support programs. This funding for economically distressed farming operations is essential as we seek to protect the land tenure of farmers and use their skills and knowledge in the fight against climate change.

“Young farmers and ranchers are on the frontlines of the climate crisis. They acknowledge the necessity of concerted climate action and are committing their energy and their farms to form part of our national response to this emergency. The reconciliation package is investing in our young farmers and ranchers, land stewards and future ones to make land the foundation of our planetary health,” said Vanessa Garcia Polanco, Federal Policy Director at Young Farmers.

The National Young Farmers Coalition (Young Farmers) is a national grassroots network of young farmers fighting for a brighter, more equitable future for U.S. agriculture. Visit Young Farmers on the web at www.youngfarmers.org, and on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#) and [Instagram](#).

Congress Could Make Transformational Investments in Private Land Conservation

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A plan has been announced to boost agricultural conservation spending by \$28 billion through the budget reconciliation process

The TRCP and our partner groups have been outspoken for some time about how oversubscribed our [Farm Bill conservation programs](#) are. Our research has shown that nearly 40 percent of landowner applications go unfunded, leaving the conservation of over 13 million acres on the table each year.

These core, voluntary-incentive programs are ripe for investment, particularly as we evaluate how to [enhance climate resilience through habitat improvements](#) and [meet our land conservation goals](#) in the years to come. Now—through the [budget reconciliation process that the TRCP has been tracking closely](#)—Congress could be on the threshold of increasing private land conservation spending in an extremely impactful way.

For the better part of Friday, September 10, 2021, the House Agriculture Committee debated a more than \$65-billion spending package for climate research, forestry, and rural development programs. Committee Democrats approved the package, with the assertion that an additional \$28 billion in conservation spending would be included as an amendment on the House floor.

While the spending bundle is delayed on account of budget analyses, we're getting a glimpse of what's included. Here are the highlights:

- \$9 billion for climate-smart working lands practices under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program
- \$5 billion to support a \$5 to \$25 per acre cover crop initiative
- \$7.5 billion for landscape-scale conservation through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program
- \$1.5 billion to support agricultural and wetland easements
- \$4 billion to support whole-farm conservation assistance through the Conservation Stewardship Program
- \$200 million to build technical assistance support at the Natural Resource Conservation Service
- \$50 million to support USDA's [Climate Hubs](#)
- \$6 million to support greenhouse gas monitoring

There is still a long, narrow road that this legislative package must travel between now and passage. Broader political disagreement threatens to shrink the topline of the Democrats' proposed spending package, downsizing conservation dollars as well. But as lawmakers and staff count dollars and cents, it's important to acknowledge the proven value of these programs—[direct impacts on water quality, habitat improvement,](#)

[and carbon reduction](#), as well as resilience and risk reduction for farmers, ranchers, and forest owners.

Our organization and partners will continue to support these important investments. If you'd like to speak up for Farm Bill conservation funding, [click here to use our simple advocacy tool](#).

[Learn more about the benefits of Farm Bill conservation programs to landowners, wildlife, and sportsmen and women HERE.](#)