



National Association of Conservation Districts

Memo

To: NACD Officers, Executive Board, Board Members, Presidents and Executive Directors of State/Territory Associations, Members

From: Jeremy Peters, NACD CEO

Date: November 17, 2025

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jeremy Peters'.

Re: NACD Update on Recent Congressional and Executive Actions

All NACD updates are accessible on the [members only page](#) of the NACD website.

Headlines and Deadlines

- Government Reopens
 - USDA, among others, and Farm Bill funded through Sept. 30, 2026
- Notice of additional opportunities under the USDA Supplemental Disaster Relief Program
- Notice of proposed WOTUS rule

Upcoming Deadlines:

- Dept. of the Interior Regulatory Reform – ongoing

Government Shutdown

The record-setting government shutdown has officially ended after 43 days. The House of Representatives and President Trump approved a bill package from the Senate late Wednesday, November 12, 2025. The legislation authorizes funding for most agencies through Jan. 30, giving both chambers additional time to craft and approve a full slate of appropriations, while also funding three full appropriations bills through September 2026. The Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, which funds USDA's Conservation Operations Account, is funded until 2026, alongside bills to fund the Legislative Branch and Military Construction and Veterans Affairs. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) program will also be funded in full until September of next year, but it is unclear how quickly full payments will resume.

Additionally, the package extends Farm Bill provisions for the rest of FY26. This includes Farm Bill programs whose authorization expired on September 30, 2025, like the Conservation Reserve Program. While many aspects of the conservation delivery system were addressed in the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act", several provisions were left out that required addressing. These include preventing outdated "permanent law" from disrupting commodity markets (the "dairy cliff"), extending the U.S. Grain Standards Act, and renewing caps that would have prevented new applicants to multiple programs. Additionally, conservation provisions include a payment limitation for the duration of that farm bill (e.g., \$450,000 payment limitation for EQIP). With a



Farm Bill extension, some producers who would have otherwise been eligible for a new contract may hit the original payment limitation. To ensure landowners can continue to participate in farm bill programs during the extension (i.e., through September 30, 2026), they temporarily lifted payment limitations. However, this is a short-term, technical fix that does not represent Congressional intent to eliminate payment limitations.

The legislation further provides \$850 million to NRCS for conservation technical assistance and an additional \$53,000,000 for watershed operations.

Natural Resources Conservation Service — Conservation Operations

- \$850,000,000— Conservation Operations
 - \$697,624,000 – Conservation Technical Assistance
 - \$34,625,000 - Community Project Funding/Congressionally Directed Spending – see below for examples
 - \$16,571,000 – Snow Survey and Weather Forecasting
 - \$10,000,000 - Plant Materials Centers
 - \$86,000,000 – Soil Surveys Program
 - \$5,000,000 – Urban Agriculture Office

- \$50,000,000 - Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations (including the Emergency Watershed Protection Program)
 - \$10,000,000 - allocated to multi-benefit irrigation modernization efforts
- \$3,000,000 – Watershed Rehabilitation Program
- \$8,000,000 – Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative
 - \$1,000,000 for a cooperative agreement to establish diverse, State-based coalitions and to undertake grazing education

In addition, agricultural research programs get \$3.8 billion, including \$1.8 billion for the Agricultural Research Service and \$1.7 billion for the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, while cutting funding for USDA’s climate hubs.

USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) will be funded at \$1.2 billion and the agency will get \$13.5 million to help ranchers offset the cost of electronic ID tags. This legislation also retains a longstanding prohibition of the closure of Farm Service Agency field offices.

- This bill also:
 - Rehires federal employees laid off during the shutdown
 - Guarantees backpay for federal employees furloughed during the shutdown
 - Stops reductions in force (RIFs) in any department or agency at least until the January 30, 2026 end date of the continuing resolution



Congressionally Directed Spending/Community Project Funding for specific projects:

Please note this list is not exhaustive and there may be other projects where a conservation district is involved but not the sponsoring entity (see GA Lake Lanier Water Quality Initiative below).

- **CA - Collins Pine Forest Health and Resiliency Partnership**

Sponsor: Resource Conservation District of Tehama County

Amount Awarded: \$2,500,000

Project Description: The Resource Conservation District of Tehama County requested funds to be used for thinning forests, reducing fuel loads, and restoring ecological functions.

- **CA – Salinas River Watershed Improvements**

Sponsor: Resource Conservation District of Monterey County

Amount Awarded: \$1,000,000

Project Description: The Resource Conservation District of Monterey County requested funds to complete eradication of what was a 1500+ acre infestation of invasive non-native *Arundo donax* and full implementation of the Stream Maintenance Program.

- **CA - Kaweah River Siphon Resiliency Project**

Sponsor: Tulare Conservation District

Amount Awarded: \$3,500,000

Project Description: The Tulare Conservation District requested funds to replace the existing siphon on the Kaweah River and development of an underground pipeline that carries water underneath obstacles caused by the 2023 winter storms.

- **IL - Silver Creek Habitat Restoration and Flood Reduction Project**

Sponsor: McHenry Conservation District

Amount Awarded: \$300,000

Project Description: The McHenry Conservation District is requesting \$300,000 to restore wetland and prairie habitats along Silver Creek through brush removal, streambank planting, and floodplain enhancement.

- **OR - Conservation Community Center**

Sponsor: Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District

Amount Awarded: \$654,000

Project Description: The Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District is requested funds to be used for the restoration of Wheeler library for a Conservation Community Center, enabling one



of the few public services in this community to continue operation for local residents, including through accessibility and resiliency upgrades to this historic building.

- **RI - Pocasset Flood Mitigation Project:**

Sponsor: Rhode Island Association of Conservation Districts

Amount Awarded: \$4,000,000

Project Description: The Rhode Island Association of Conservation Districts requested funds to minimize flood damages in Cranston, Johnston, and adjacent un-incorporated areas resulting from floods on the Pocasset River for magnitudes up to and including the 100-year flood event.

- **GA – Lake Lanier Water Quality Initiative**

Sponsor: Georgia Water Planning and Policy Center at Albany State University in coordination with the Georgia Association of Conservation Districts

Amount Awarded: \$2,500,000

Project Description: A coalition of groups requested funding to reduce and prevent nutrient loading in Lake Lanier and the Chattahoochee watershed.

USDA

Earlier today, USDA [announced](#) it is opening phase two of the Supplemental Disaster Relief Program, opening access to producers with non-indemnified, uncovered (uninsured), and quality losses. Stage two covers eligible crop, tree, bush and vine losses. The enrollment period for Stage 2 opens Nov. 24, 2025, and closes April 30, 2026.

Waters of the United States (WOTUS) Announcement:

This week, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) [announced](#) that it will be moving forward with a proposed rule updating the definition of “waters of the United States” under the Clean Water Act (CWA). The [notice](#) provides a pre-publication version of the proposed rule which was developed after nine listening sessions with various stakeholders and implements the Supreme Court decision in *Sackett v. EPA* which limits adjacency to a finding of “continuous surface connection”. NACD will continue to follow and provide links for comment once the rule is published.