



Memo

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

From: Jeremy Peters, NACD CEO

Date: July 6, 2026

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeremy Peters', is written over a vertical line.

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

- Senate releases Farm Bill language
- USDA News
 - Executive Order on Regenerative Agriculture
 - NACD supports the Fire Funding Fix Coalition
- Agency News
 - EPA announces funding for new practices challenge
 - EPA announces funding for Tribal drinking water programs
- Disaster Recovery Resource Development

Action Items:

- Contact your Senators about voting yes on a Farm Bill!

Current Events

Senate Agriculture Committee Releases Farm Bill Discussion Draft

On June 23, Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman John Boozman released a [discussion draft](#) of the Committee's proposed Farm Bill. The proposal includes numerous updates to the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), working lands programs, and partnership initiatives. The Committee has begun reviewing the legislation, which will serve as the basis for continued negotiations toward enactment of a comprehensive Farm Bill. Senator Boozman anticipates markup could commence in July. The Senate draft is very similar to the House passed bill with the biggest difference being changes to CRP.

NACD's GA team has developed a chart to show changes made to certain programs and the differences between the House passed version and the Senate discussion version. Please note the Senate draft is a discussion draft and will likely change during markup and before it goes to the Senate floor for a full vote. The Senate requires a supermajority of 60 votes to end debate and filibuster. Senate Republicans have acknowledged that they are unlikely to achieve this without some concessions to Democrats on certain SNAP provisions. Both chambers are working towards a



net neutral spending determination from the CBO but both bills retain historic spending levels for EQIP, CSP, and RCPP, among others, first conceived in the Inflation Reduction Act and made permanent in HR-1 (“Working Families Tax Cut Act” or “One Big Beautiful Bill Act”).

Contact your congressional representatives in the Senate to voice your support and request theirs for passage of a Farm Bill to ensure producers and other landowners have some certainty in their future. When reaching out, include a personal anecdote about what Farm Bill programs have meant for you and your local community. The NACD GA Team has developed a [fact sheet and template](#) for your use.

Program / Issue Area	Current Law / Baseline	2026 House Passed Farm Bill	Senate Farm Bill Draft	Potential Impacts for Districts
Conservation Title Reauthorization	The last FB was passed in 2018 and has been continued via resolution for the past 8 years.	Reauthorizes CRP through FY2031.	Reauthorizes CRP through FY2031.	Provides longer-term certainty for districts, producers, and partners.
CRP Acreage Cap	CRP currently operates under statutory acreage limits. 27 million acres total and/or 25% of agricultural land in a single county.	Reauthorizes CRP through FY2031 and maintains the 27-million-acre enrollment cap.	Maintains a 27-million-acre CRP cap and includes a new 12-million-acre Grasslands CRP cap.	Preserves enrollment capacity, including for grasslands and wildlife habitat.
Grasslands CRP	Grasslands CRP supports grazing lands, habitat, and working grassland conservation.	Continues the Grasslands CRP and maintains dedicated enrollment authority.	Continues dedicated Grasslands CRP authority.	Supports districts working on grazing lands, wildlife habitat, and grassland retention.



State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) Initiative	SAFE has operated as a targeted CRP wildlife initiative.	Codifies the SAFE Program within the Continuous CRP.	Codifies the SAFE Program within the Continuous CRP.	Gives districts and partners a stronger statutory basis for wildlife-focused CRP projects.
CRP Mid-Contract Management	Mid-contract management is required for many CRP contracts, but federal cost-share payments for those activities were eliminated in the 2018 Farm Bill.	Continues current policy and does not restore dedicated mid-contract management payments.	Restores federal cost-share payments for required mid-contract management activities.	Could improve CRP enrollment, habitat management, and long-term conservation outcomes by reducing producer costs.
Emergency Haying and Grazing	Emergency haying and grazing flexibility is limited and often tied to drought or disaster conditions.	Maintains existing emergency haying and grazing authorities.	Provides additional flexibility for emergency haying and grazing.	Helpful for producers during drought or forage shortages while keeping land in conservation use.
Grazing and Water Infrastructure in CRP	Infrastructure support is limited.	Does not establish a dedicated CRP cost-share for grazing or water infrastructure.	Adds grazing infrastructure and water infrastructure as eligible cost-share where grazing is included in the conservation plan and	Major opportunity for districts working on grazing management, drought resilience, and grassland conservation.



			addresses a resource concern. Dedicates \$100 million to this practice.	
CRP Payment Limitation	Current payment limit is \$50,000.	Maintains the current CRP payment limitation.	Raises payment limitation for the first time in program history to \$125,000.	May improve participation for larger or multi-parcel operations, especially in high-cost areas.
State Soil Health Grant Program	Not included in current Farm Bill.	State Assistance for Soil Health - developed in the House bill as a subprogram of CSP – authorizes annual matching grants to cover up to 50% of state program costs and 75% for Tribes.	State Conservation Assistance Program – standalone program similar to the House bill but includes consideration of wildlife and other natural resource concerns.	Would better incentivize effective conservation delivery by providing relief for oversubscribed state and Tribal programs.
CREP	CREP supports federal-state conservation partnerships.	Reauthorizes CREP through FY2031.	Reauthorizes CREP and includes drought-related CREP improvements.	Could improve state and local flexibility for water, drought, and targeted resource concerns.
EQIP	Supports producer implementation	Expands precision agriculture,	Updates precision agriculture	Maintains a core delivery tool for districts and



	of conservation practices.	improves Conservation Innovation Grants, and revises payment limits.	definitions, expands irrigation authorities, and revises payment limits.	local conservation planning
CSP	Supports whole-farm conservation stewardship.	Increases the minimum annual payment, supports precision agriculture, and establishes State Assistance for Soil Health.	No statutory changes to CSP.	Preserves support for producers already implementing advanced conservation systems.
RCPP	Supports partner-led conservation projects.	Updates partnership authorities, relinks RCPP to covered programs, allows for administrative cost-effective reimbursement, updates producer assistance, funding, and Critical Conservation Areas.	Updates partnership authorities, allows for administrative cost reimbursement, and provides a statutory limit to project size.	Important for districts that serve as project partners or lead local conservation initiatives.
ACEP	Supports agricultural land easements and wetland easements.	Provides updates to cost-share rates, certification, and	Provides updates to cost-share rates, certification, and	Supports districts working on farmland protection, wetlands,



		modification sections within ALE.	modifications within ALE though changes are more limited.	wildlife habitat, and land retention.
Source Water Protection	Farm Bill requires a portion of NRCS conservation funding to support source water protection priorities.	Continues source water protection priorities within existing NRCS conservation programs. Adds reporting requirements and public data release.	Continues source water protection priorities within existing NRCS conservation programs.	Important for districts coordinating with NRCS, utilities, and state partners on drinking water protection.
Locally Led Conservation	Districts rely on local work groups, conservation planning, and locally identified resource concerns.	Continues locally led conservation through Local Working Groups and State Technical Committees.	Continues locally led conservation through Local Working Groups and State Technical Committees.	Strong opportunity to reinforce district authority and role in implementation.
Watershed Programs	Watershed and flood prevention programs support local infrastructure and flood mitigation.	Provides important updates to Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention authorities, including higher cost share for Dam rehab, and allowing a new authority of	Proposes doubling construction cost limits and incorporating components of the Watershed Protection and Forest Recovery Act authorizing emergency protection	Important for districts involved in watershed planning, aging infrastructure, flood prevention, and drought resilience.



		remedial actions and an important streamlining initiative.	measures on National Forest System lands	
Forest Conservation Easement Program (FCEP)	Does not exist in current Farm Bill	Creates FCEP to replace the Healthy Forests Reserve Program, establishing Forest Land Easements and Forest Reserve Easements.	Similar to the House version, the Senate version also creates FCEP and replaces HFRP, while adding cost-share levels (50% standard/75% for priority forests), Safe Harbor Agreements, and transition language for existing HFRP contracts.	Similar to ACEP, FCEP could improve long-term forest conservation partnerships and easement delivery in forested states.
Conservation Technical Assistance	CTA supports planning and local delivery but is funded through appropriations, not mandatory Farm Bill program funding which allows for more flexibility for conservation delivery.	Continues support for technical assistance and Technical Service Providers but does not make major structural changes to CTA funding.	Watch for report language or policy direction supporting technical assistance and local delivery.	District priority because Farm Bill program funding only works if NRCS and districts have capacity to deliver it.



Regenerative Agriculture

President Trump signed an [Executive Order \(EO\)](#) - *Advancing Regenerative Agriculture and Strengthening American Farm Resilience* - focused on regenerative agriculture and its benefits for a healthier food system. While much of the order focuses on researching alternatives to currently used pesticides, it also highlights soil health as a specific concern for this administration.

The EO directs the EPA to expedite registration actions for crop protection products that can serve as more desirable alternatives to older active ingredients. To achieve this the EO also instructs the Department of Health and Human Services and Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health to prioritize research into cumulative chemical exposure and technologies to reduce reliance on conventional tools while also mandating USDA to expand public-private partnerships to increase capacity and education for producers adopting regenerative practices.

Agencies

USFS

American Forests is reconvening the original Fire Funding Fix Coalition to support reauthorization of the Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund before its authorization expires at the end of FY2027. NACD participated in the original coalition, which came together in 2008 to address "fire borrowing," the practice of transferring funding from forest management, conservation, and other land management programs to cover emergency wildfire suppression costs.

The reserve fund, established in 2018 and available beginning in FY2020, created a dedicated funding source for the largest wildfire suppression costs and has helped protect other agency programs from mid-year funding transfers. Funding has continued to increase annually, from \$2.25 billion in FY2020 to \$2.75 billion in FY2025, with \$2.85 billion requested for FY2026. Without congressional action, the authority for the reserve fund will expire at the end of FY2027.

Given NACD's previous participation in the coalition and the importance of maintaining stable funding for forest management and conservation programs, staff recommend supporting the coalition's sign-on effort.

NRCS Conservation Practice Standards

USDA is currently updating the National Handbook of Conservation Practices, which guides how NRCS defines and implements conservation practices nationwide. The proposed revisions would modernize practice standards to reflect new science, technology, and conservation approaches.

Today is the last day to submit public comments (July 6) on this batch. NRCS has emphasized the importance of stakeholder input from conservation districts, producers, and partners in shaping final standards. [NRCS Conservation Practice Standards feedback](#)



EPA

The Environmental Protection Agency [announced](#) a public challenge to develop practical, cost-effective alternatives to conventional crop desiccation practices. EPA is proposing offering up to \$30 million in prize funding for effective new practices that go hand in hand with regenerative agriculture efforts. The initial announcement is a Request for Information to help shape the design of the challenge, including project design, prize structure, phased development approaches, and eligible use of prize funding.

The EPA also [announced](#) more than \$227 million in funding for American Indian Tribes and Alaska Native Villages to improve drinking water and wastewater services. The funds will be available through the Clean Water Indian Set-Aside (similar to State Revolving Funds), Drinking Water Infrastructure Grants, Emerging Contaminants in Small or Disadvantaged Communities Tribal Grant Program, and Small, Rural, and Tribal (SmaRT) Drinking Water Assistance Grant Program. One of the primary barriers Tribal Nations face in pursuing or implementing funding programs is a lack of capacity and these funds will allow these communities to build capacity and address numerous issues within the drinking water and wastewater programs.

Disaster Prevention and Recovery

This past week, NACD staff had an opportunity to meet and speak with stakeholders and leaders at the Western Governors Association's Annual meeting where wildfire prevention and recovery was a top priority. Discussions included the need for a recovery coordination network and prevention plan development. NACD's Public Lands and Forestry Subcommittees have been working with WGA staff and partners to develop a resource that combines federal, state, local, and tribal information to ensure the most effective and timely response to drought conditions, forest management, and disaster recovery. If you would like to be included in the conversation, please reach out to Libby Wawro at libby-wawro@nacdnet.org.