

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