

# DRAMATICALLY INCREASING THE PACE AND SCALE OF CONSERVATION IN THE 2023 FARM BILL



1

## CREATE ON-RAMPS FOR CONSERVATION INNOVATIONS

The bill should require development of faster ways to add new agricultural innovations as covered practices and to models of ecosystem services. NRCS should be required to proactively recognize new practices and technologies, rather than the status quo of waiting for a petition. Also, new technologies like software for precision agriculture should be made eligible for cost-share. These changes will allow farmers to use the best available tools for environmental progress.

2

## STREAMLINE ADMINISTRATION OF RCPP

The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) is built on a strong fundamental idea of working with local partners to identify and implement conservation practices, but its administration could be improved. The current complex contracting structure should be replaced with grants for agricultural sustainability, modeled off the Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) On-Farm Trials. RCPP should also have a higher award cap and lower match requirements. These changes would eliminate the need for a distinction between classic contracts and alternative financial arrangements, save thousands of hours of staff time yearly, and encourage more limited resource organizations to apply.

3

## PRIORITIZE CONSERVATION OUTCOMES

NRCS should create options to directly purchase the most cost-effective quantified conservation benefits. This could save taxpayers money, ensure progress on environmental goals, and give producers greater flexibility. Changes to RCPP could give the Secretary the authority to directly purchase quantified units of improvement to air, soil, or water. Either through RCPP or a standalone program, the Farm Bill should provide flexible grants to the states already successfully buying conservation outcomes from farmers. Additionally, the bill should create a subpart of CIG for developing infrastructure for outcomes purchasing models. This would provide the necessary resources to states to develop and implement new, effective models for conservation outcomes.

4

## FUND TRANSFORMATIVE FUNDAMENTAL RESEARCH

To develop effective solutions for conservation and production, the bill should prioritize funding fundamental research. This type of risky research is not likely to be supported by the private sector but could provide the scientific basis for radical new solutions. The [Agricultural Genome to Phenome Initiative](#) and [AgARDA](#) are two examples of how to administer these high-impact funds.



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