

RELEASE: Equitable solutions to the land access crisis in the 2023 Farm Bill proposed in new bill introduced in the House

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Washington, D.C. (June 9, 2023) Today, **U.S. Representatives Nikki Budzinski (D-IL-13), Zach Nunn (R-IA-03) and Joe Courtney (D-CT-02)** [introduced](#) the bipartisan *Increasing Land Access, Security, and Opportunities Act*, [H.R.3955](#), in the House. If enacted, this innovative bill would secure powerful solutions to the land access crisis facing the new generation of young and Black, Indigenous and other people of color (BIPOC) farmers through the 2023 Farm Bill.

Funding through the [Increasing Land Access, Security, and Opportunities Act](#) will provide critical resources to both individual producers as well as community-led organizations to implement farmland access, retention, and transition projects. **The proposed \$100 million of annual funding over ten years will complement the Department’s existing farm production and conservation programs, and be available to a wide variety of entities, such as tribes, municipalities, non-profits, and cooperatives.** Funded projects will provide direct access to funding for producers and will serve the needs of farmers and ranchers who have been most marginalized from accessing federal resources.

“Secure access to affordable, quality farmland is the top challenge facing the passionate young people across the country who are stewarding land and feeding their communities. The *Increasing Land Access, Security, and Opportunities Act* directly responds to the requests from the hundreds of farmer leaders in our network, and reflects the innovative work that community-led organizations are already doing to address land-related challenges in their regions,” said **Holly Rippon-Butler, Land Campaign Director with the National Young Farmers Coalition.**

The Increasing Land Access, Security, and Opportunities Act expands upon the novel [Increasing Land, Capital, and Market Access Program](#) (LCM), which the [United States Department of Agriculture \(USDA\)](#) introduced in August 2022 as a one-time funding opportunity. LCM offered \$300 million in funding for projects that will increase land access for underserved farmers, including funding for innovative ways to connect available land to underserved producers who have challenges in accessing land, or restore lands into the hands of those who have been underserved.

“Investing in secure, equitable access to land for farmers is an imperative insurance policy for all other public dollars spent by Congress in the 2023 Farm Bill,” said **David Howard, Policy Development Director at Young Farmers.** “This is the moment for Congress to take action and ensure that the 2023 Farm Bill delivers material benefits for historically underserved farmers, ranchers, and forest owners striving to establish and grow their operations.”

As an advocacy partner and founding member of the National Family Farm Coalition, the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund (the Federation) applauds this marker bill. **Dānia Davy, the Federation's Director of Land Retention and Advocacy**, stated: "This Act creates important, community-led avenues in the 2023 Farm Bill to level the playing field for small-scale farmers and farmers belonging to historically underserved communities, who may not have the capital to purchase farmland that is often priced far beyond their reach. Funding for underserved farmers to gain access to land is an immediate need that must be addressed if we are to keep a stable national food supply and help rural communities to thrive again."

"As the average age of farmers continues to rise, our nation faces an unprecedented generational transfer of farmland. Meanwhile, beginning and historically marginalized farmers are struggling to access farmland and the resources they need to grow viable farm businesses," **said Tim Fink, Policy Director for American Farmland Trust**. "Today's introduction of the bipartisan Increasing Land Access, Security, and Opportunities Act reflects a growing understanding that these challenges are interrelated, and that addressing them requires urgent investment and creative, community-led solutions."

"The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition applauds the introduction of the **Increasing Land Access, Security, and Opportunities Act**. Land access is one of the biggest challenges for young and beginning farmers all across the country – from small-scale dairy farmers in New England, to livestock and grain producers in the Midwest, to specialty crop producers across the South. This bill will invest directly in an array of efforts aimed at improving access to land, capital, and markets for underserved farmers and ranchers across the country," **said Nick Rossi, Policy Specialist at the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition**.

"The Congressional sponsors and the team at National Young Farmers Coalition have worked diligently to create the essential opportunities the next more diverse generation of farmers and ranchers urgently need to care for the land and water, and feed and sustain communities into the future," **said Lorette Picciano, Executive Director of Rural Coalition**.

This program, if included in the farm bill, could be a catalytic opportunity to support young, BIPOC farmers across the country with real dollars for land access, retention, and transition. Some examples on what this program could look like in action are:

- Creative financial solutions to low credit access like revolving funds with low to no interest loans and forgivable loans;
- Supporting land banks to provide targeted services to young, BIPOC growers;
- Infusion of funds to non-profit organizations that provide grants or awards to young, BIPOC farmers to acquire land;
- Supporting Tribal governments to buy back land and make it available to native producers;
- Providing funds to granting organizations to award to farmers to acquire legal services related to land acquisition;
- And supporting community held land options from cooperative ownership to community land trusts.

Young farmers desperately need access to quality, affordable farmland. Congress must act now to ensure that investment in secure and equitable land tenure for the next generation is funded through the 2023 Farm Bill. We look forward to working together with Members of Congress, the USDA, farmers, and our partner organizations to further this legislation and through the implementation work that will follow.

Please visit youngfarmers.org/land to learn more about the National Young Farmers Coalition's **One Million Acres for the Future** campaign, made possible with support from Chipotle, which aims to equitably transition farmland to the next generation of farmers through a historic investment in the 2023 Farm Bill.

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The National Young Farmers Coalition (Young Farmers) is a national grassroots network of young farmers changing policy and shifting power to equitably resource the new generation of working farmers. Visit Young Farmers on the web at www.youngfarmers.org, and on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#) and [Instagram](#).