



The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
Chairwoman  
Senate Agriculture Committee

The Honorable Glenn “GT” Thompson  
Chairman  
House Agriculture Committee

The Honorable John Boozman  
Ranking Member  
Senate Agriculture Committee

The Honorable David Scott  
Ranking Member  
House Agriculture Committee

September 29, 2023

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow, Ranking Member Boozman, Chairman Thompson, and Ranking Member Scott,

On behalf of the undersigned national, state, and local organizations, businesses, and leaders, we write to you to ensure small and mid-sized producers can access critical conservation programs by including the text of the Small Farm Conservation Act in the 2023 Farm Bill.

Young and historically underserved farmers are on the frontlines of the climate crisis and need support to continue implementing solutions on their farms. Young and historically underserved farmers and ranchers are most likely to operate smaller-than-average farms, which creates barriers to using USDA programs. Small acreage farms have a crucial role to play in protecting our natural resources, conserving water, and improving soil health, and these farmers are already highly motivated to conserve natural resources while feeding their communities. Programs like the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) can help ensure that young farmers do not have to choose between meeting their bottom-line and investing in conservation efforts to protect shared resources.

According to the [2022 National Young Farmer Survey](#), 83% of young farmers reported that one of their farm’s primary purposes for existing is engaging in conservation or regeneration. At the same time, 68% also reported that they never or rarely received the technical and business support they require from the USDA.

Recently introduced in both the Senate and the House of Representatives, the Small Farm Conservation Act ([S.2180](#), [H.R.5354](#)) will help more young and beginning farmers implement on-farm conservation practices while building climate resiliency for the next generation.

Specifically, the Small Farm Conservation Act will:

- Create a new subprogram within EQIP with tailored support for small farms and ranches under the median farm size or herd size for their state;
- Accept applications and provide payment on a continuous enrollment basis instead of waiting for the annual ranking period;
- Streamline the application and contract approval process for small farms and ranches to reduce the application burden for these small contracts;
- Establish a National Subprogram Coordinator and an additional Coordinator in each state to support the implementation of this new subprogram;
- Implement a minimum contract of \$2,500 for contracts awarded under the subprogram;
- Create bonus payments for producers under 50 acres who are implementing soil health practices; and
- Require the Natural Resources Conservation Service to train field staff on conservation practices tailored to small-scale producers and to conduct outreach to these farmers and ranchers.

We must act now to ensure that the next generation of farmers can continue feeding their communities and our country. By including the provisions of the Small Farm Conservation Act in the 2023 Farm Bill, you can guarantee that our nation's small-scale producers can continue to protect our shared natural resources and build resiliency for the future of agriculture.

We thank you for your time and consideration. Please join us in supporting the inclusion of the Small Farm Conservation Act in the 2023 Farm Bill.

Sincerely,

The undersigned

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### **National Businesses and Organizations**

American Sustainable Business Network  
Amphibian and Reptile Conservancy  
Carbon180  
Defenders of Wildlife  
Earthjustice  
Environmental Policy Innovation Center  
Environmental Working Group  
Farm Aid  
HEAL Food Alliance  
Healthy Food Strategies  
Latino Farmers & Ranchers International, Inc.  
Marbleseed  
National Bison Association

National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition  
National Young Farmers Coalition  
Pesticide Action Network (national, and CA, MN, IA, HI)  
Simple Mills  
Soil and Water Conservation Society  
Union of Concerned Scientists  
Waterkeeper Alliance  
Wild Farm Alliance

### **Northeast and Mid-Atlantic Businesses and Organizations**

Coastal Enterprises, Inc. (ME)  
Lon Lon Agro LTD (MD)  
Maine Farmland Trust  
New Entry Sustainable Farming Project (MA)  
Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group  
Pasa Sustainable Agriculture (regional)  
Pittsburgh Food Policy Council (PA)  
Plow and Stars Farm (MD)  
Virginia Association for Biological Farming  
Waterkeepers Chesapeake Fair Farms Initiative (MD, VA, WV, PA, DE, NY)

### **Midwest and South Businesses and Organizations**

Carolina Farm Stewardship Association (NC, SC)  
Climate Land Leaders (IA, MN, SD, WI, IL)  
Crosshatch Center for Art and Ecology (MI)  
Farmworker Association Of Florida  
Friends of the Mississippi River (MN)  
Illinois Stewardship Alliance  
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (MN)  
Kansas Rural Center  
Lake Erie Waterkeeper (OH, MI, IN, PA)  
Michigan Food and Farming Systems  
Midwest Farmers of Color Collective (MN, WI)  
Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association (OEFFA)  
Ohio River Foundation  
Practical Farmers of Iowa  
ReImagine Appalachia (KY, OH, PA, WV)  
SPROUT (LA)

### **Western Businesses and Organizations**

Amigos Bravos (NM)  
California Association of RCDs  
California Climate & Agriculture Network (CalCAN)  
California Environmental Voters  
Colorado Blueprint to End Hunger  
Farm to Table - New Mexico  
Flatirons Farmers Coalition (CO)  
Friends Farm (CO)  
Gooding Farm (CO)  
Grow Your Own Meal, Inc. (CO)  
Long Table Farmstead (CO)  
MiiR (WA, ID)  
New Mexico Acequia Association  
New Mexico Food & Agriculture Policy Council  
Nourish Colorado  
Off Beet Farm (CO)  
Oregon Climate & Agriculture Network  
Rincon-Vitova Insectaries, Inc (CA)  
Rocky Mountain Farmers Union (CO, NM, WY)  
Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition (regional)  
San Miguel County (CO)  
The Acequia Institute (CO)  
Treehouse Farm Collective (CO)  
UpRoot Colorado (CO)  
Wild Wellspring Farm (CO)