

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	Georgia Wildlife Federation
Altamaha Riverkeeper (Georgia)	Goose Creek Association
Arkansas Wildlife Federation	Grassland Groupies (Kansas)
Atlanta Coyote Project	Grassworks (Wisconsin)
Beaverdam Creek Watershed Watch Group (Maryland)	Green State Solutions (Iowa)
Bird Conservancy of the Rockies	Harpeth Conservancy
Blue Ridge Land Conservancy	Hawaii Farmers Union United
Breathe Project	Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association
California Climate and Agriculture Network	Healthy Gulf
California Farmers Union	Heart of the Rockies Initiative
California Waterfowl Association	Idaho Wildlife Federation
Capital Region Land Conservancy	Illinois Council of Trout Unlimited
Carolina Farm Stewardship Association	Illinois Division, Izaak Walton League
Chemung Valley Audubon Society (New York)	Illinois Stewardship Alliance
Chesapeake Bay Foundation	Indiana Division, Izaak Walton League of America
Chesapeake Conservancy	Indiana Sportsmens Roundtable
Chesapeake Legal Alliance	Indiana Wildlife Federation
Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage	Iowa Environmental Council
Clean Fairfax	Iowa Wildlife Federation
Clean Water Liganore, Inc. (Maryland)	Island Grown Initiative
Climate Land Leaders	Izaak Walton League of America - Geneseo Chapter (IL)
Climate Reality Project Susquehanna Valley PA Chapter	Izaak Walton League of America – Grand Island (NE)
Coastal Enterprises, LLC	Izaak Walton League of America- Oregon Division
Colorado Wildlife Federation	Kalmiopsis Audubon Society (OR)
Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA)	Kansas Farmers Union
Conservation Coalition of Oklahoma	Kansas Wildlife Federation
Conservation Resource Alliance (Michigan)	Lancaster Clean Water Partners
Coosa River Basin Initiative	Lancaster Farmland Trust
Cypress Chapter Inc. of the Izaak Walton League of America	Land For Good
Delaware Nature Society	Land Stewardship Project (Minnesota)
Delaware Valley Ornithological Club	Louisiana Hypoxia Working Group
Environmental Law & Policy Center	Louisiana Wildlife Federation
Farm to Table – New Mexico	Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper Association
Florida Division of the Izaak Walton League of America	Maine Farmland Trust
Florida Keys Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America	Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association
Florida Wildlife Federation, Inc.	Maryland Bird Conservation Partnership
Food and Agriculture Committee, Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter	Maryland Ornithological Society
Foodshed Capital	Mass Audubon
Forever Maryland	Michael Fields Agricultural Institute
Friends of Family Farmers (Oregon)	Michigan Audubon
Friends of the Mississippi River	Michigan Farmers Union
Gallatin Valley Land Trust	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