



National Association of State Departments of Agriculture

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Statement for the Record

U.S. House Committee on Agriculture

RE: A 2022 Review of the Farm Bill: The Role of USDA Programs in Addressing Climate Change

March 16, 2022

Submitted by: Ted McKinney, Chief Executive Officer

On behalf of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA), we appreciate the opportunity to submit this statement outlining the priorities of state departments of agriculture on policies related to the roles of USDA programs in addressing climate change. We request that this statement be included in the record.

NASDA represents the commissioners, secretaries, and directors of the state departments of agriculture in all 50 states and 4 U.S. territories. State departments of agriculture serve as advocates for the productive use of America's farmland while also being a trusted resource to our nation's farmers and ranchers who want to participate in USDA's conservation programs. In fact, many producers are the direct beneficiaries of the successes of innovative state conservation programs in addition to USDA's programs.

In this role, NASDA encourages the Committee to ensure Congress and USDA work in partnership with state departments of agriculture to make the next Farm Bill the most impactful yet. NASDA members recognize the achievements of current conservation programs but also recognize many of these programs have become oversubscribed. As the Committee begins hearings on the 2023 Farm Bill, NASDA has recommendations to improve USDA's conservation programs.

NASDA recommends the Committee include the following policies as it begins consideration of the 2023 Farm Bill:

- Protect the voluntary status of the current conservation programs, while creating voluntary, incentive-based climate smart agricultural programs that are practical and provide benefits for farmers and ranchers.
- Invest in the successful conservation programs such as EQIP, ACEP, CSP, and RCPP.

- Streamline the process, reduce barriers to access, and increase flexibility for conservation programs, which will allow state partners to achieve the best outcomes.
- Enact policies that credit ongoing efforts of many farmers and ranchers that have previously adapted climate smart strategies to reduce emissions, sequester carbon, and improve resiliency.
- Implement climate policies that focus on advancing science-based outcomes.
- Promote fairness and equity within the agriculture community through climate solutions.

Since 2020, NASDA has been a founding member of the Food and Agriculture Climate Alliance. This alliance is dedicated to working together to promote voluntary, incentive-based, science-based, and bipartisan solutions to climate change. NASDA supports the recommendations from the Food and Agriculture Climate Alliance.

NASDA stands ready to assist this Committee as it begins consideration of the 2023 Farm Bill.

Please contact Zachary Gihorski (Zach.Gihorski@nasda.org) if you have any questions or would like any additional information.