

# CLIMATE

## CLIMATE RESILIENCY FOR AGRICULTURE

Farmers and ranchers continue to adapt to a changing climate that protects and enhances our nation's natural resources, while sustaining a resilient agricultural and food supply chain. Existing conservation programs serve as a key tool in addressing climate change.



### BACKGROUND

Most farmers and ranchers are already using climate smart strategies to reduce emissions, sequester carbon and improve resiliency. Investing further in research, incentive programs for voluntary practices and technical assistance will equip more farmers and ranchers with additional options to protect and conserve natural resources through on-farm practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase carbon sequestration and adjust to a changing climate. NASDA also believes in maintaining fairness and equity within the agriculture community through climate solutions.

### FOOD AND AGRICULTURE CLIMATE ALLIANCE

In November 2020, NASDA along with several other national organizations representing farmers, ranchers, forest owners, the food sector and environmental advocates formed the Food and Agriculture Climate Alliance (FACA). This alliance is dedicated to working together to define and promote shared climate policy priorities. The FACA unveiled 40+ policy recommendations to guide the development of federal climate legislation.

### CONSERVATION

NASDA believes the nation's environmental efforts should emphasize and further enlist the voluntary support and participation of farmers, ranchers and forest landowners. According to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, 140 million acres (15 percent of all farmland) are enrolled in U.S. Department of Agriculture conservation programs. Indeed, many of the most innovative conservation programs have been state conceived and led. Voluntary, locally led, incentive-based conservation practices are highly successful and offer continuing opportunities for sustained environmental quality enhancement.

NASDA has worked extensively to promote natural resource conservation over the course of the organization's history. In 2020, NASDA renewed a five-year memorandum of understanding with the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service that fulfills the goal of helping agricultural producers maintain the viability of their operations and sustain and conserve natural resources for future generations. NASDA encourages the collaboration of governments (federal and state), corporations and philanthropic communities to sustain and grow the already successful incentive-based agriculture conservation programs and pursue research on innovative conservation methods.



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## LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY ACTION

### Growing Climate Solutions Act (S. 1251/H.R. 2820)

NASDA supports this bill as it:

- Establishes a voluntary Greenhouse Gas Technical Assistance Provider and Third-Party Verifier Certification Program.
- Reduces barriers of entry for producers into climate markets.
- Requires accountability from USDA to publish protocols for qualifications for eligible entities.

The Senate passed the Growing Climate Solutions Act on June 24, 2021. The House bill currently has 70 bipartisan cosponsors.



### USDA's Agricultural and Forestry Partnership Program

The partnership program is USDA's newest climate initiative looking to partner with stakeholders who produce commodities in a climate-smart manner. NASDA submitted comments on the program that focus on:

- Recognizing and supporting regional differences in climate-smart agricultural commodity production.
- The importance of supporting the independence and stability of private carbon markets.
- Partnering with NASDA members to ensure long-term success.

## NASDA'S ASKS

- **Increase total EQIP funding** as well as increases in the EQIP federal matching contribution percentage.
- **Congressional support for the Growing Climate Solutions Act.**
- **Support and funding for voluntary, incentive-based climate smart agricultural programs**, including support through Farm Bill programs.
- **Recognition of agriculture's unique role** in building climate resiliency and adaptation.
- **Congressionally funded research programs** and forecasting tools that help agriculture adapt to climate change effects, including increased pests and disease, increases in extreme weather events and more.
- **Expand federal tools**, including the soil health provision in the 2018 Farm Bill, to incentivize and measure soil health improvements. Soil health incentives can encourage farmers to adopt practices that increase carbon levels. Improved protocols for measuring the gains in soil carbon from soil health improvements can support development of markets for soil carbon capture and storage.

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