



UNITED STATES SENATE COMMITTEE ON
**AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION,
& FORESTRY**

U.S. SENATOR DEBBIE STABENOW, CHAIRWOMAN

Conservation

The bill keeps *farmers farming and rural communities strong* by strengthening popular, voluntary conservation programs, increasing access to the great outdoors, and preserving farmland and natural habitat for future generations. It builds on the Inflation Reduction Act by making voluntary, farmer-focused conservation resources a permanent investment to confront the climate crisis into the future.

Confronting the Climate Crisis and Investing in Conservation:

The bill brings the conservation funding from the Inflation Reduction Act into the Conservation Title of the Farm Bill and maintains its focus on addressing the climate crisis. This funding will bolster the programs that put cash into farmers' pockets for popular, voluntary conservation practices on farms and ranches around the country.

For the first time, the bill permanently authorizes these practices, and provides dedicated funding for small farms, addresses the longstanding backlog in applications, and makes several key improvements, including:

- **Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP):** For the first time, the bill makes addressing the climate crisis a specific goal of RCPP, which leverages private and public dollars to bring together partners to address regional conservation issues. It streamlines contracts, allows for advanced payments and administrative funding, and removes obstacles that have slowed putting these resources to work – especially for easements.
- **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP):** The bill places a new focus on reducing methane, a potent greenhouse gas, and sets aside funding for small farms that have had difficulty accessing the program. It also ensures that organic farmers receive the same access and resources to EQIP as conventional farmers.
- **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP):** The bill improves the largest conservation program by acre by adding a new focus on transitioning farmers to be more resilient to the changing climate, reducing greenhouse

gases, and building soil health. It also provides a guaranteed payment to small farmers and removes burdensome paperwork requirements for organic producers.

- **Agriculture Conservation Easement Program (ACEP):** The bill ensures that land can be protected for future generations, places a new emphasis on wetland stewardship, and streamlines the process that allows land trusts and other entities to purchase land and sell it at a lower cost to producers.

Outdoor Recreation:

The bill strengthens access to hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation so that this generation and future generations can continue to explore and enjoy the great outdoors.

Regional Conservation:

The bill provides new authority to tackle pressing, regional conservation issues like water quality concerns in the Great Lakes, Chesapeake Bay, and the Gulf of Mexico.