



# 2018 Farm Bill Priorities



The Association of Clean Water Administrators (“ACWA”) is the independent, nonpartisan, national organization of state, interstate, and territorial water program managers, who on a daily basis implement the water quality programs of the Clean Water Act.

The Farm Bill provides critical funding to incentivize installation of much needed practices on private lands to protect and improve water quality. ACWA members across the country understand how critical conservation title programs are to achieving local, statewide, regional, and national water quality goals. In many watersheds, non-point pollution sources such as agricultural runoff and urban stormwater are leading contributors to water quality impairments, especially with regard to nutrient pollution. In recent years, ACWA members have increasingly partnered with agricultural groups and USDA staff to successfully reduce non-point source pollution. The 2018 Farm Bill is key to allowing these partnerships to flourish and continuing the adoption of practices that improve water quality.

ACWA supports provisions in the 2018 Farm Bill that will:

- Ensure conservation title programs continue to prioritize water quality improvement and have robust funding for projects that protect and/or improve water quality, including programs that reduce nutrient runoff from working lands.
- Encourage watershed-based and statewide partnerships to address water quality issues such as nutrient pollution through collaboration between diverse water quality interests, such as state clean water, drinking water, and agriculture organizations, and point and non-point sources.
- Promote federal interagency collaboration and partnerships to address non-point source pollution to waterbodies.

- Incorporate flexibility to promote working lands while preserving conservation benefits to reduce costs and increase practice adoption under agricultural conservation easement programs.
- Increase the share of acres in the continuous Conservation Reserve Program (“CRP”) to target and increase specific conservation practices that provide proven water quality benefits (e.g., buffers, wetlands, and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (“CREP”)).
- Streamline programs that complicate landowner sign-up, make it difficult to engage a substantial number of landowners within a watershed, and increase administrative burden for NRCS and FSA staff to deliver these programs.
- Increase conservation technical assistance to promote and deliver practices that protect and improve water quality and streamline the certification process for third party technical assistance providers.
- Support the work of land grant universities and the Agricultural Research Service that provides improved understanding of conservation practice performance and delivery to protect and improve water quality.
- Streamline and enhance the flexibility of the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (“RCPP”). For example, RCPP should be enhanced in the following ways:
  - Enable utilities to participate as a project lead, not just an eligible partner;
  - Broaden what is eligible toward local match, including in-kind work;
  - Allow projects to go beyond one grant cycle before reevaluation; and
  - Streamline quantification and reporting of RCPP outcomes.