

July 9, 2025

The Honorable Susan M. Collins  
Chairwoman  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
S-128 The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Vice Chair  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
S-128 The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 2051

Dear Chairwoman Collins, Vice Chair Murray, and Honorable Members of the Committee,

Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) at the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) provides necessary and invaluable aid to farmers and ranchers to adopt conservation practices. These funds support local conservation districts and USDA offices which 68-73% of farmers and ranchers identified as their most trusted source of information in a recent nationwide poll. Investments in CTA benefit all Americans by bolstering soil health, improving water quality, and protecting wildlife habitat – **we encourage you and your colleagues to fully fund CTA in the FY26 appropriations package.**

Implementing conservation practices often requires changes to how a farm or ranch manages its natural resources. CTA ensures NRCS staff are available to provide critical advice and technical expertise in the process. Local staff also help producers navigate program applications and legal requirements so they can access USDA programs and receive financial assistance. This personalized and complimentary service structure supports producers in overcoming barriers to more effective land stewardship.

Local staff, funded by CTA, serve as the bridge between producers and USDA conservation programs. In 2024, USDA invested \$3.8 billion to two flagship NRCS programs, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), including \$747 million on over 5.8 million acres in the Midwest. These voluntary, incentive-based programs are persistently oversubscribed, with EQIP and CSP accepting only 43% and 53% of applications, respectively, in 2024.

Adequate funding for CTA enables farmers and ranchers to adopt practices that improve soil health, water quality, and wildlife habitat, while meeting their operations' unique needs and improving bottom lines. Continued support for America's producers, and the nation's lands, is necessary for a healthy agricultural economy and ensuring food security for future generations.

The undersigned organizations recognize producer demand and desire for conservation technical assistance and its critical role in getting conservation practices on the ground. **As such, we write in strong support of maintaining or increasing appropriated FY2026 CTA funding levels from the \$776.5 million appropriated in FY2025.** We urge you to invest in this vital support for farmers and ranchers across the country.

Sincerely,

**National Organizations**

American Bird Conservancy  
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies  
Ducks Unlimited  
Izaak Walton League of America  
National Association of Conservation Districts  
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition  
National Wildlife Federation  
North American Grouse Partnership  
The Nature Conservancy  
Pheasants Forever  
Quail Forever  
Rural Coalition  
Union of Concerned Scientists

**Regional Organizations**

A House Unbuilt  
Green Lands Blue Waters  
League of Women Voters Upper Mississippi  
River Region ILO  
One Mississippi  
The Center for Rural Affairs  
Waterkeepers Chesapeake

**State Organizations**

Clean Wisconsin  
Conservation Coalition of Oklahoma  
Conservation Federation of Missouri

Friends of Hackmatack National Wildlife  
Refuge  
Friends of the Mississippi River  
Indiana Association of Soil and Water  
Conservation Districts  
Indiana Sportsman's Roundtable  
Institute for Ag and Trade Policy  
Iowa Coldwater Conservancy  
Iowa Environmental Council  
Iowa Wildlife Federation  
Izaak Walton League of America - Illinois  
Division  
Izaak Walton League of America - Indiana  
Division  
Izaak Walton League of America - Iowa  
Division  
Izaak Walton League of America - Minnesota  
Division  
Izaak Walton League of America - Nebraska  
Division  
Izaak Walton League of America - Ohio  
Division  
Izaak Walton League of America - South  
Dakota Division  
Izaak Walton League of America - Wisconsin  
Division  
Kansas Wildlife Federation  
Kentucky Waterways Alliance  
Latino Farmers and Ranchers International,  
Inc.  
Minnesota Conservation Federation

Montana Wildlife Federation

Nebraska Farmers Union

Nebraska Wildlife Federation

North Dakota Wildlife Federation

Northern Prairies Land Trust

South Dakota Association of Conservation  
Districts

South Dakota Grasslands Coalition

South Dakota Wildlife Federation

Sustainable Iowa Land Trust

The Land Conservancy of McHenry County

CC: Senator Alsobrooks, Senator Baldwin, Senator Banks, Senator Britt, Senator Boozman, Senator Cassidy, Senator Capito, Senator Coons, Senator Cramer, Senator Daines, Senator Duckworth, Senator Durbin, Senator Ernst, Senator Fetterman, Senator Fischer, Senator Gillibrand, Senator Graham, Senator Grassley, Senator Hagerty, Senator Hawley, Senator Heinrich, Senator Hoeven, Senator Husted, Senator Hyde-Smith, Senator Johnson, Senator Kaune, Senator Kennedy, Senator Klobuchar, Senator Lankford, Senator Marshall, Senator McConnell, Senator McCormick, Senator Merkley, Senator Moran, Senator Moreno, Senator Mullin, Senator Murkowski, Senator Murphy, Senator Ossoff, Senator Paul, Senator Peters, Senator Reed, Senator Ricketts, Senator Rounds, Senator Schmitt, Senator Sheehy, Senator Shaheen, Senator Schatz, Senator Smith, Senator Thune, Senator Van Hollen, Senator Warner, Senator Young.