



# BALANCING FOOD, FARM, AND ENVIRONMENT ACT OF 2013

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The Farm Bill's conservation title was intended to reward farmers financially for taking actions to protect the environment and benefit the public good. Those goals have remained incredibly popular. Polls show that rural and urban Americans alike understand the importance of conservation and believe that the conservation title's role in the Farm Bill should be maintained or increased. Conservation programs are so popular, the USDA reports that conservation programs have an average of four times more applications than availability.

The conservation title we designed in the 1980s no longer addresses America's most important priorities and forces a one-size-fits-all policy on a varied landscape. The Balancing Food, Farm, and Environment Act (the Balancing Act) updates the Farm Bill's conservation title to reflect the needs of a changing agricultural system and a new set of federal government priorities. Specifically the legislation:

- Streamlines twenty three conservation programs into eleven;
- Puts more money into the hands of small and midsize farmers and increases access to technical assistance funding to help them maximize the taxpayers' investment;
- Encourages local and regional partnerships to tackle local conservation needs, and allows them to implement performance-based standards, rather than process-based standards;
- Prioritizes long term protection to get better results for taxpayers and provide more security to farmers;
- Provides investments to help farmers deal with our most pressing conservation issues, including improving water quality and watershed restoration, protecting critical wildlife habitat, and transitioning to less antibiotic and pesticide intensive farming practices

The Balancing Act acknowledges our current budget environment by focusing federal dollars where they have the most impact, encouraging local and private investment, and limiting the amount of payments that can go to any one producer.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century deserves a new conservation title. We can support our farmers and reduce red tape, while targeting federal dollars to ensure better results. We can achieve better conservation outcomes that keep our water clean, our soil healthy, and help our wildlife thrive, while ensuring that people have access to affordable, responsibly-raised food. The Balancing Act lays the groundwork for a conservation title that works for farmers, taxpayers, and all Americans who depend on a safe, healthy, domestic food supply.

*Supported by: Defenders of Wildlife, National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, Environmental Working Group, Food Democracy Now, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, Organic Consumers Union, Union of Concerned Scientists US, Wild Farm Alliance, Women Food and Agriculture Network, Stonyfield Farm, Organic Valley, Roots of Change, New Jersey Conservation Foundation, Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, Pesticide Action Network North America, Slow Food USA, Slow Food California*

*For more information on Congressman Blumenauer's agenda for agricultural reform, please visit his website at [www.blumenauer.house.gov](http://www.blumenauer.house.gov) or contact Tyler Frisbee at (202) 225-4811.*