



The impacts of rising global temperatures, including more frequent storms, longer droughts, and more damaging floods, pose serious threats to communities across the United States. NACD understands that there is an immediate need for significant action to address climate change and reduce the threats it poses to our communities, economies, ecosystems, and producers. Farmers, ranchers, and forestland owners are particularly vulnerable to many of these threats and are already taking meaningful actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, protect ecosystems, and make our communities more resilient. As lawmakers consider policies to mitigate the impacts of climate change, we recommend they support and expand the work being done by conservation districts and consider the following priorities.

The Role of Conservation Districts:

Conservation districts work with millions of cooperating landowners and operators across the country to manage and protect land, water, and forestry resources on private, public, and tribal land. Conservation districts promote practices such as prescribed fire, no till or reduced till, cover crops, nutrient management, residue management, use of buffers and perennial strips, integrated livestock, silviculture, and invasive species management that support the health of our ecosystems, benefit wildlife, improve soil health, and bolster carbon sequestration. These and other practices play a critical role in reducing harmful emissions, protecting infrastructure, and supporting healthy farm and forestry economies. NACD's Climate Action Task Force is working to assess current and emerging opportunities to engage on climate policy and ensure that any new proposals utilize the technical knowledge and expertise of conservation districts. NACD also founded the Soil Health Champions Network, which is a coalition of more than 300 farmers, ranchers, and forestland owners from across the nation working to increase the adoption of soil health practices that help to address climate change. NACD's Urban Conservation Initiative provides resources for conservation districts and their partners to help producers address natural resource concerns and implement climate-smart agriculture practices in urban communities.





Federal Policy Priorities:

Climate-smart agricultural and forestry practices, including those implemented in urban settings, are critical tools the federal government must bolster to meet the needs of growing populations and reduce the impact of rising temperatures. Significant resources are needed to increase access to programs that allow conservation districts and other facilitators to help producers implement proven, climate-smart agricultural practices. The federal government should significantly increase support for voluntary farm bill conservation programs at the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Additional resources to increase participation in these and other important USDA conservation programs, allow USDA to hire much-needed staff, and bolster Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) will help landowners implement proven conservation practices that meaningfully address climate change.

As Congress works to develop federal policies to support carbon sequestration on working lands, forestry infrastructure, and other climate-smart practices, it is important they secure buy-in at the local level. We believe that any federal policies supporting these initiatives must:

- Provide additional technical assistance to enhance the adoption of conservation practices.
- Provide payments to support carbon sequestration.
- Support the concept of “stacking” conservation credits, which allows producers to receive payments for different conservation practices administered on the same land.
- Utilize conservation districts as neutral, third-party verifiers of conservation practice adoption and carbon sequestration.
- Recognize and reward early adopters of carbon sequestration and conservation practices.
- Update the U.S. Forest Inventory and Analysis Program
- Recognize agricultural and forestry producers for their contributions to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and sequestering carbon through private or federal markets.