

# LAND CORE

Advancing soil health policies & programs  
that create value for farmers, businesses,  
and communities.

## LAND CORE SOIL HEALTH BILL TRACKER ALERT - 11/23/2021

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Here's your [Land Core Federal Bill Tracker](#) update, with the latest on soil health legislation and related activities in Congress.

There have been major movements on the reconciliation and infrastructure packages, so let's start with a status update on those bills.

### **Reconciliation - Passed in the House: [H.R.5376](#) - Build Back Better Act**

- Passed in the House on the morning of 11/19 (Yeas and Nays: 220 - 213).
- The [\\$1.75 trillion bill](#) includes a historic [\\$28.29](#) billion for voluntary conservation programs (including EQIP and CSP, as well as a new fund to pay farmers up to \$25/acre for establishing cover crops).
- This has been called "the largest investment in conservation since the dust bowl", and would help meet unmet farmer demand for support to build soil health, increase resilience, and help tackle climate change (by nearly doubling current funding levels).
- The bill allocates a total of \$89.44 billion to agriculture, which also includes \$2 billion for ag research, \$18 billion for rural investment, \$27.15 billion for forestry programs, and \$12 billion in debt relief for farmers.
- Biden's [announcement](#) of the new framework explicitly recognizes the role of soil conservation in combating climate change and building resilience.
- While there were cuts to many portions of the bill (down from the original \$3.5 trillion version), the provisions for climate-smart agriculture were left nearly unchanged.
- Refer to tracker - [Core tab](#).

### **Infrastructure - Became Public Law: [H.R.3684](#) - Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act**

- The bipartisan infrastructure package was signed into law by President Biden during a ceremony at the White House on November 15 (following House passage on November 8).
- The bill, which has been called "the single largest federal investment in American history", authorizes \$1 trillion, including \$550 billion in new spending, primarily for roads, bridges, transit programs, rail, and drinking and wastewater infrastructure.

- In addition to the \$127 billion for roads, bridges, ports and waterways (which are important infrastructure for farmers and ag exporters), some of the provisions that are especially relevant to the ag & forestry sectors include: \$40 billion for broadband internet infrastructure, \$3.3 billion to the Forest Service and Interior Department to fight wildfires, \$300 million to USDA for the Emergency Watershed Restoration Program, removal of the \$30 million cap on the Reforestation Trust Fund, and billions in funding for water infrastructure for the West, among others.
- Refer to tracker - [Passed tab](#).

#### New Bills:

- [H.R.5724/S.3064](#) - **White House Conference on Food, Nutrition, Hunger, and Health Act** - On October 26, Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ) and Rep. James McGovern (D-MA-2) introduced this bipartisan, bicameral bill to convene a second national White House Conference on Food, Nutrition, Hunger, and Health. The first conference, held in 1969, led to the creation and expansion of SNAP, WIC, the National School Breakfast and Lunch Program, and other programs. If held, the Conference would be aimed at finding solutions to end hunger by 2030, cut nutrition insecurity in half by 2025, and cut diet-related illnesses in half by 2030; and would create an opportunity to move major conversations around soil health and local/regional food systems forward. Refer to tracker - [Core tab](#).

#### Reintroduced Bills:

- [H.R.2612](#) - **Restoring Environments, Soils, Trees and Operations to develop the Rural Economy (RESTORE) Act of 2021** - Sponsored by Rep. Doug LaMalfa (R-CA-1), this Republican bill, which would enable "landscape-scale" forest management projects to bypass NEPA impact assessments, was referred to the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Courts, Intellectual Property, and the Internet on October 19. Refer to tracker - [Ancillary tab](#).
- [S.1459](#) - **Protecting Unique and Beautiful Landscapes by Investing in California (PUBLIC) Lands Act** - Sponsored by Sen. Alex Padilla (D-CA), this Democrat bill, which would protect over one million acres of public lands and over 500 miles of rivers in California including through targeted grazing for wildfire management and ecological services, was referred to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining on October 19. Refer to tracker - [Ancillary tab](#).
- [H.R.5173](#) - **Urban Agriculture and Community Food Security Act** - Sponsored by Rep. Bobby Rush (D-IL-1), this Democrat bill, which would establish two new urban agriculture programs and expand the Community Food Project Grant Program, was referred to the House Agriculture Subcommittee on Conservation and Forestry on October 5. Refer to tracker - [Ancillary tab](#).

#### New Cosponsors (of [Core Bills](#)):

- [H.R.2670](#) - **The Civilian Climate Corps for Jobs and Justice Act** (one of several CCC proposals) - Rep. Grace Napolitano (D-CA-32), Rep. Marie Newman (D-IL-3), Rep. Donald Payne (D-NJ-10).
- [H.R.2803](#) - **Agriculture Resilience Act** (to mitigate climate change and build resilience in the agriculture sector) - Rep. Ted Lieu (D-CA-33), Rep. Seth Moulton (D-MA-6).

- [H.R.2820](#) - **Growing Climate Solutions Act** (to create a third-party verification program for carbon markets) - Rep. Anna Eshoo (D-CA-18), Rep. Al Lawson Jr. (D-FL-5), Rep. Grace Meng (D-NY-6).
- [H.R.4421](#) - **Farm System Reform Act** (to place a moratorium on new and expanding CAFOs & restore country-of-origin labeling) - Rep. Albio Sires (D-NJ-8).

#### Hearings Held:

- [Immediate Challenges to Our Nation's Food Supply Chain](#) - Held by the full House Agriculture Committee on November 3, this hearing identified key issues in America's food supply chain, including distribution and export issues, rising production costs, consolidation, and opportunities to increase resilience including through local and regional food systems.
- [A Look at the Renewable Economy in Rural America](#) - Held by the House Agriculture Subcommittee on Commodity Exchanges, Energy, and Credit on November 16, this hearing addressed developments and challenges for the renewable economy in rural America, including biofuels and bio-based products, land used for wind and solar projects, and technologies like anaerobic digestors.
- [A hearing to examine several wildfire bills](#) was held by the full Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources on October 21.

Are we missing anything? Let us know if there is a bill of interest that we have not added.

Our Bill Tracker Alerts summarize the latest updates to our federal bill tracker and highlight relevant activity in Congress. Share this with a friend or colleague, [join the email alerts list](#), and tell us [what you think](#).

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