



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

## SOIL HEALTH FEDERAL BILL TRACKER UPDATE - MAY & JUNE 2023

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Here's your Soil Health Federal Bill Tracker update (visit the [Land Core Bill Tracker](#) to see all tracked soil health bills). With many marker bills being introduced, this is a longer update than usual. We hope it provides a helpful snapshot of Farm Bill proposals! [Sign up](#) to get these updates directly in your inbox.

### Reintroduced Bills

*(These bills were also introduced in the 117th Congress)*

#### **H.R. 4163 - NO EMITS Act of 2023**

*Sponsor: Rep. Gallagher (R-WI-8), bipartisan*

The “Naturally Offsetting Emissions by Managing and Implementing Tillage Strategies” Act would establish a Soil Health Transition Incentive Program under EQIP that provides longer 5-7 year contracts, payments and technical assistance to producers who are transitioning their farms to soil health cropping systems; double funding for the On-Farm Conservation Innovation Trials and add livestock production as a covered activity; establish a State Assistance for Soil Health Program under CSP to provide matching grants to States or tribes for state soil health programs; and carve out 1 percent of the overall conservation title funding to provide technical assistance to producers to mitigate and adapt to climate change. [See in tracker.](#)

#### **H.R. 3844 - Sustainable Agriculture Research Act**

*Sponsor: Rep. Neguse (D-CO-2), bipartisan*

Adds the explicit goals of addressing carbon sequestration and reduction of emissions, as well as the increased adoption of precision agriculture technology and on-farm renewable energy production, to the Agriculture Advanced Research and Development Authority (AgARDA) program. [See in tracker.](#)

#### **H.R. 3814 - Future of Agricultural Resiliency and Modernization (FARM) Act**

*Sponsor: Rep. Harder (D-CA-9), Democrat only*

Establishes two new grant programs at USDA to help farmers implement "climate-friendly farming methods and technologies": the FARM Fund, to provide grants to help farmers adopt new practices and technology, and the Pyrolysis Program, to support pilot programs for the development of biocarbon products. [See in tracker.](#)

**H.R. 4066 - To direct the Secretary of Agriculture to provide additional payments under the environmental quality incentives program for implementation of a nutrient management practice, and for other purposes**

*Sponsor: Rep. Harder (D-CA-9), Democrat only*

Provides \$750 million to USDA to cover up to 100% of the cost of implementing nutrient management practices under EQIP contracts. [See in tracker.](#)

**New Bills Introduced in May & June**  
*(Introduced for the first time in the 118th Congress)*

**H.R. 3871 - Research for Healthy Soils Act**

*Sponsor: Rep. Gluesenkamp Perez (D-WA-3), bipartisan*

This bill reauthorizes the high-priority research and extension initiatives, administered by NIFA, until 2028, and adds a new focus for high-priority research and extension grants to study the agricultural impacts of microplastics in land-applied biosolids on farmland. [See in tracker.](#)

**S. 2180 - Small Farm Conservation Act**

*Sponsor: Sen. Michael Bennet (D-CO), Democrat only*

Modifies EQIP to create a new subprogram dedicated to helping “small farmers” and ranchers access and receive adequate financial and technical assistance, streamline the application and approval process for small farmers and ranchers, establish a National subprogram Coordinator and one in each State, create a bonus payment for farms under 50 acres employing soil health practices, allow small farms to enroll on a continuous basis instead of waiting for the annual ranking period, and require the NRCS to train field staff on conservation tailored for small-scale agriculture and to conduct outreach. [See in tracker.](#)

**H.R. 3972 - Flood Resiliency and Land Stewardship Act**

*Sponsor: Rep. Hinson (R-IA-2), bipartisan*

This bill adds “the prevention and mitigation of the effects of flooding and drought, and the improvement or expansion of flood resiliency” as a purpose of the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). [See in tracker.](#)

**S. 2241 - Advancing Research on Agricultural Climate Impacts Act**

*Sponsor: Sen. Smith (D-MN), bipartisan*

This bill directs USDA to conduct research relating to measurement, monitoring, reporting, and verification (MMRV) of greenhouse gas emissions and carbon sequestration. Specifically, it develops consistent and standardized soil carbon measurement methodologies, develops MMRV tools through AFRI, establishes a Soil Carbon Inventory and Analysis Network led by NRCS and ARS to analyze changes in soil carbon and greenhouse gas emissions, develops modeling tools, and conducts on-farm demonstrations. [See in tracker.](#)

**H.R. 3902 - Growing Opportunities for Innovative Farming Act**

*Sponsor: Rep. Espaillat (D-NY-13), Democrat only*

This bill provides a 10% set-aside for socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers within the \$25 million annually provided for grants to support urban agriculture and innovative production within the Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production. [See in tracker.](#)

### **H.R. 3904 - Crop Insurance for Future Farmers Act**

*Sponsor: Rep. Feenstra (R-IA-4), bipartisan*

This bill amends the Federal Crop Insurance Program (FCIP) to extend the definition of a beginning farmer or rancher (from five crop years experience, increased to ten crop years), and to introduce a new structure for determining the amount of assistance, specified in percentage points, for beginning farmers and ranchers. [See in tracker.](#)

### **H.R. 3955 - Increasing Land Access, Security, and Opportunities Act**

*Sponsor: Rep. Budzinski (D-IL-13), bipartisan*

This bill would authorize and expand USDA's Increasing Land, Capital, and Market Access Program with appropriations of \$100 million per year for the next five years, to provide grants to eligible entities to strengthen land, capital, and market access outcomes for historically underserved farmers, ranchers, and forest owners and for producers operating in high-poverty areas. [See in tracker.](#)

### **S. 2618 - America Grows Act**

*Sponsor: Sen. Durbin (D-IL), bipartisan*

This bill permanently funds, at specified levels, several agencies that perform agriculture research within the USDA: the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), the Economic Research Service (ERS), the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). It also exempts the funding from sequestration and from the budgetary effects from the PAYGO rule. [See in tracker.](#)

### **H.R. 3580 - To amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to increase funding for the conservation stewardship program, and for other purposes**

*Sponsor: Rep. Kelly (R-MS-1), Republican only*

This bill would reauthorize funding levels for the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) at \$1.8 billion annually, and authorize \$5.02 billion of "unobligated balances" from Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funds to be used for CSP in general. [See in tracker.](#)

### **S. 2155 / H.R. 4239 - Rebuild Rural America Act**

*Sponsors: Sen. Gillibrand (D-NY), Rep. Budzinski (D-IL-13), Democrat only*

This bill would establish the "Rural Future Partnership Fund" that would create a \$50 billion block grant program for long-term rural economic development projects, and the "Rural Innovation and Partnership Administration" at USDA to provide information on available federal resources, technical assistance and data to help rural communities implement rural revitalization plans. See in tracker ([Senate](#) / [House](#)).

### **S. 2035 - Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program Enhancement Act of 2023**

*Sponsor: Sen. Rounds (R-SD), bipartisan*

This bill removes the limitation on coverage under the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program for crops and grasses used for grazing, and requires USDA to promulgate regulations within 90 days of the bill's enactment to implement the amendments made. [See in tracker.](#)

## **Bills Moving Forward**

*(Includes bills that were introduced earlier)*

## Referred to Subcommittees

### **S. 1400 / H.R. 3036 - Increased TSP Access Act**

*Sponsors: Sen. Braun (R-IN), Rep. Baird (R-IN-4), bipartisan, referred to the Agriculture Subcommittee on Conservation, Research, and Biotechnology (6/1/2023)*

This bill would direct USDA to establish a streamlined certification process for Technical Service Providers (TSPs) who hold appropriate specialty certifications (including certified crop advisors) within 180 days of enactment; allow agricultural retailers, conservation organizations, cooperatives, professional societies, and service providers to become certifying entities within 180 days; and ensure that TSPs—who are often paid using conservation program dollars—are paid the fair market rate for their services. See in tracker ([Senate](#) / [House](#)).

### **H.R. 3478 / S. 1690 - COVER Act of 2023**

*Sponsors: Rep. Casten (D-IL-6), Sen. Brown (D-OH), bipartisan in House, House bill referred to the Agriculture Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities, Risk Management, and Credit (6/23/2023)*

The “Conservation Opportunity and Voluntary Environment Resilience Program” Act would establish the “Good Steward Cover Crop Program” to provide producers a \$5 per acre premium subsidy when they enroll in a covered insurance program and plant cover crops for conservation purposes. It would also create a Soil Health Pilot Program to provide additional, actuarially-sound premium subsidies for other soil health practices; as well as require a study on the impact of cover crops on yield stability and crop insurance payouts. See in tracker ([House](#) / [Senate](#)).

### **H.R. 2723 / S. 1205 - Local Farms and Food Act**

*Sponsor: Rep. Pingree (D-ME-1), bipartisan, House bill referred to the Agriculture Subcommittee on Nutrition, Foreign Agriculture, and Horticulture (5/15/2023)*

This bill would provide streamlined grants with a simplified application for certain Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program projects of \$100,000 or less; reduce match requirements for certain Value-Added Producer Grants and GusNIP; expand LAMP to cover a limited investment in physical infrastructure, such as cold storage or equipment to improve food safety; increase LAMP mandatory and discretionary funding; reauthorize the Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program, and allow for additional discretionary funding; and establish a separate review panel for GusNIP produce prescription grant applications to include health care experts. Bicameral legislation (S. 1205) is sponsored by Sen. Brown (D-OH). See in tracker ([House](#) / [Senate](#)).

### **H.R. 2720 - Strengthening Organic Agricultural Research (SOAR) Act of 2023**

*Sponsor: Rep. Newhouse (R-WA-4), bipartisan, referred to the Agriculture Subcommittee on Conservation, Research, and Biotechnology (5/15/2023)*

This bill would reauthorize the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (OREI) and increase funding throughout the life of the Farm Bill (from \$50 million in 2023 to \$100 million in 2028); authorize a competitive grant program for the Organic Transitions Program (ORG), encourage partnerships with land grant universities for transition, and authorize appropriations for the grants; and require USDA-ERS to conduct and provide Congress with an economic impact analysis on organic production and market data, and authorize additional appropriations for the Organic Production and Market Data Initiatives (ODI). [See in tracker.](#)

### **H.R. 1459 / S. 720 - PRECISE Act**

*Sponsor: Rep. Hinson (R-IA-2), bipartisan, House bill referred to the Agriculture Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities, Risk Management, and Credit (4/4/2023)*

The Producing Responsible Energy and Conservation Incentives and Solutions for the Environment (PRECISE) Act would include precision agriculture technologies within USDA's Conservation Loan and Guaranteed Loan program, with up to a 90% guarantee; include cost share and practice payments for precision agriculture technologies under EQIP and CSP; fund 100% of precision agriculture projects through joint participation of conservation cost share programs and the Conservation Loan Program; and require USDA to emphasize the use of third-party providers for technical assistance for soil health planning. See in tracker ([House](#) / [Senate](#)).

### **H.R. 1646 / S. - New Markets for State-Inspected Meat and Poultry Act of 2023**

*Sponsor: Rep. Mooney (R-WV-2), Republican only, referred to the Agriculture Subcommittee on Livestock, Dairy, and Poultry (4/19/2023)*

This bill would allow meat and meat food products inspected by State Meat and Poultry Inspection programs to be sold in interstate commerce. See in tracker ([House](#) / [Senate](#)).

### **H.R. 2378 - Farmers' Market and Food Bank Local Revitalization Act of 2023**

*Sponsor: Rep. Kaptur (D-OH-9), Democrat only, referred to the House Agriculture Subcommittee on Nutrition, Foreign Agriculture, and Horticulture (4/23/2023)*

This bill would reauthorize the Seniors Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) and allow for a stepped increase in funding up to \$100 million annually by 2028, while also increasing the income limit for eligibility and minimum individual benefit; reauthorize and increase minimum individual benefit under the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program; provide funds for the construction or repair of farmers' markets; and establish a pilot program in which food banks can receive grants to contract with local farmers for food procurement and nutritional assistance delivery. [See in tracker](#).

### **H.R. 2814 - PRIME Act**

*Sponsor: Rep. Massie (R-KY-4), bipartisan, referred to the Agriculture Subcommittee on Livestock, Dairy, and Poultry (5/15/2023)*

The Processing Revival and Intrastate Meat Exemption Act (PRIME) Act would amend the Federal Meat Inspection Act to exempt from inspection the slaughter of animals and the preparation of carcasses conducted at a custom slaughter facility. [See in tracker](#).

### **H.R. 2719 - Conservation and Innovative Climate Partnership Act**

*Sponsor: Rep. Newhouse (R-WA-4), bipartisan, referred to the Agriculture Subcommittee on Conservation, Research, and Biotechnology (5/15/2023)*

This bill would establish a competitive grant program under which the Secretary of Agriculture provides grants to land-grant colleges and universities to support agricultural producers in voluntarily adopting "conservation and innovative climate practices", and provide \$13 million in funding for 4-year grants, with a maximum grant of \$400,000. [See in tracker](#).

### **H.R. 2975 - ENABLE Conservation Act of 2023**

*Sponsor: Rep. Schrier (D-WA-8), bipartisan, referred to the Agriculture Subcommittee on Conservation, Research, and Biotechnology (6/1/2023)*

The Eliminating Needless Administrative Barriers Lessening Efficiency (ENABLE) for Conservation Act of 2023 permanently establishes the State Acres For Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) initiative under the

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), and expands the types of land that can be enrolled under the SAFE initiative. It also allows for the SAFE initiative to be waived from the county acreage cap if it meets USDA goals. [See in tracker](#).

### **H.R. 2429 / S. 1118 - Open Access Evapotranspiration Data Act**

*Sponsor: Rep. Lee (D-NV-3), bipartisan, referred to the Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife, and Fisheries (5/8/2023)*

This bill proposes to establish the Open Access Evapotranspiration (OpenET) Data Program under the authority of the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the United States Geological Survey. The main goal of the proposed OpenET Data Program is to provide satellite-based evapotranspiration data, to improve the quantification of evaporation and water consumption. This data is to be made available to users across large landscapes over certain periods of time, with priority for Landsat scale (30–100m) when available. See in tracker ([House](#) / [Senate](#)).

### **Approved by Committee**

### **H.R. 1697 / S. 734 - Promoting Precision Agriculture Act**

*Sponsor: Rep. Davis (D-NC-1), bipartisan, House bill was ordered to be Reported by Voice Vote (5/11/2023)*

This bill would direct USDA, in consultation with the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), to support the development of voluntary, consensus-based, industry-led interconnectivity standards, guidelines, and best practices for precision agriculture. See in tracker ([House](#) / [Senate](#)).

[GO TO BILL TRACKER →](#)

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Bill tracker alerts summarize updates to our soil health federal bill tracker. View this update [on our website](#).

*In case you missed it, we recently completely redesigned our bill tracker, with a major design update that brings the tracker from a simple spreadsheet to an interactive web-based tool! Learn more in our latest [press release](#).*

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