

Fact Sheet

Climate Stewardship Act

S. 1072 / H.R. 2534



Family Farm
Action Alliance



Family
Farm
Action

Led in the U.S. Senate by Senators Booker (D-NJ) and Gillibrand (D-NY) and U.S. House of Representatives by Congresswoman Spanberger (D-VA-7) in the 117th Congress, the Climate Stewardship Act expands the ability of farmers and ranchers to implement climate stewardship practices, while also increasing reforestation and wetlands restoration.

BACKGROUND

Farmers and ranchers need only look out their back doors to see that extreme weather events are having a direct impact on their way of life. Increasingly severe and unpredictable weather patterns, shorter planting windows, crops frosting over before harvest, calves born in blizzards, emptying aquifers — these are only a few of the realities climate change is forcing farmers and ranchers to grapple with.

Farming and ranching require access to capital, and with the current limitation on financial tools, farmers and ranchers find themselves on a treadmill of short-term financing, with little room for strategic spending or investment to shift their practices. Globalized concentration of agrifood sectors constrains what farmers can put in their budgets — from the purchase of inputs needed to farm, the management practices, and the markets farmers sell products to. This further impacts rural communities, which rely on thriving farms with accessible markets. Independent farmers and ranchers are hard-pressed to keep their farms afloat, let alone implement climate solutions.

Despite these challenges, the agriculture sector has the opportunity to implement real climate change mitigation and climate stewardship practices. Long-term climate solutions require a long-term investment, and the Climate Stewardship Act does just that.

The Climate Stewardship Act finally allows farmers and ranchers to be part of the climate solution through increased support of USDA programs, including CSP, CRP, EQIP, RCPP, LAMP, and FR SAN. This legislation recognizes the unique stresses of farming, and community reliance on farmers by establishing mandatory funding for the Farm and Ranch Assistance Network (FR SAN), and appropriating an additional \$500 million to the Local Agriculture Market Program.

THE CLIMATE STEWARDSHIP ACT:

- > Supports voluntary climate stewardship practices on over 100 million acres of farmland
- > Reestablishes the Civilian Conservation Corps
- > Invests in renewable energy for farmers and rural small businesses
- > Establishes mandatory funding for the FR SAN
- > Provides additional \$500 million for LAMP
- > Reforests landscapes and expands urban tree cover with 15 billion newly-planted trees
- > Restores two million acres of coastal wetlands

AGRICULTURE AS A CLIMATE CHANGE SOLUTION

Farmers and ranchers are part of the climate solution. The voluntary conservation practices supported in this legislation alone could reduce or offset agricultural emissions by one-third by 2025.¹ Regenerative soil management, like cover crops and reduced tillage, has the ability to sequester up to 2.5 metric tons of CO2 per acre annually according to USDA-NRCS. This demonstrates that farmers and ranchers have the tools and practices to mitigate climate change — with just a little federal support, they can get the job done.

Farmers need the autonomy to implement the tried and true practices that increase on-farm resiliency and improve their bottom lines.



RENEWABLE ENERGY, LABOR, AND THRIVING COMMUNITIES

A thriving agrifood system relies on a healthy and thriving ecosystem. The soil health, wetland restoration, community food project support, living-wage job creation, and rural and urban reforestation provided in this legislation ensure communities, farmers, and the environment can expect a healthy, resilient future.

This legislation offers a job creation opportunity founded in the U.S. tradition of grit and ingenuity. The Civilian Conservation Corps established by this bill would provide training and job placement that will improve rural and urban renewable energy infrastructure, build a more resilient climate, and reinvigorate the economy with skilled tradespeople and conservationists.

A thriving food and farm sector, new jobs, community food projects, and a healthy ecosystem are all interdependent outcomes — and all are possible through the climate stewardship practices proposed by this legislation.

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¹https://www.booker.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/with_fds_new_deal_as_blueprint_sen_booker_and_rep_spanberger_reintroduce_climate_change_bill_focused_on_investing_in_farm_conservation_programs_reforestation_and_wetlands_restoration1.pdf

