

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 1234

Expressing support for regenerative agriculture and other conservation practices to support more sustainable and resilient agriculture, and compensating farmers for providing environmental services.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 19, 2022

Mr. KHANNA submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the
Committee on Agriculture

RESOLUTION

Expressing support for regenerative agriculture and other conservation practices to support more sustainable and resilient agriculture, and compensating farmers for providing environmental services.

Whereas regenerative agriculture is a system of farming and ranching principles and practices that increases biodiversity, enriches the soil, and purifies watersheds, all while increasing in-farm fertility;

Whereas our climate is in crisis;

Whereas communities are impacted negatively by global warming, the rapid loss of species and habitat, poor water quality, degradation of soil health, flooding, desertification, wildfires, and threats to our long-term food security;

Whereas global warming threatens national security and global stability, and is causing ethnic tension, warfare, and strife;

Whereas, in 2017, globally, there were 18,800,000 new disaster-related internal displacements, most of which were linked to natural hazards and the impacts of the climate crisis;

Whereas the climate crisis relates to how we use our land and natural resources;

Whereas regenerative agriculture, conservation practices, and sustainable agriculture policies can benefit both farmer profitability and environmental performance;

Whereas land-based climate solutions are essential to meeting international climate goals;

Whereas the special report of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change on limiting global warming to 1.5 degree Celsius finds that removal of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere is necessary to compensate for emissions from economic sectors that are difficult to decarbonize;

Whereas a study from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine found that land-based climate solutions are essential negative emissions technologies to accomplish net-zero greenhouse gas emissions;

Whereas the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change special report on Climate Change and Land states that about a quarter of the Earth's ice-free land area is subject to human-induced degradation;

Whereas the special report states further that over the period 1961 to 2013, the annual area of drylands in drought

has increased, on average, by slightly more than 1 percent per year;

Whereas the special report states further that avoiding, reducing, and reversing desertification through the implementation of climate-friendly practices on farms and ranches would enhance soil fertility and increase carbon storage in soils and biomass, while benefiting agricultural productivity and food security;

Whereas American farmers and ranchers are facing long-term economic challenges;

Whereas the number of farms in the United States has decreased in every year of the past decade;

Whereas farm debt is at its highest level since the farm crisis of the 1980s;

Whereas record levels of farmer debt and bankruptcies were caused by chronic overproduction, trade disputes, corporate consolidation, and a series of extreme weather events;

Whereas, according to the Department of Agriculture's 2020 Farm Sector Income Projections, direct government farm payments, with little focus on environmental improvements, are forecast at \$46,500,000,000 for 2020, a 107-percent increase;

Whereas American farmers and rural communities can lead the world to develop the new practices and products that will address climate change;

Whereas one of the most cost-effective ways to take on environmental challenges is to compensate farmers and ranchers for providing environmental services;

Whereas regenerative practices and sustainable agriculture works to restore ecosystems, combat climate change, build soil health, prevent erosion, and improve water quality;

Whereas the Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service conservation practices and enhancements include conservation tillage, cover crops, integrating crops and livestock, permaculture, resource-conserving crop rotations, management-intensive rotational grazing, agroforestry, and generating renewable energy;

Whereas the goal of the Conservation Stewardship Program, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, the Conservation Reserve Program, and other Federal conservation programs is not only to increase the adoption of environmental practices but also to solve critical resource concerns and achieve positive farm and environmental outcomes;

Whereas fair prices for environmental services will deliver economic benefits for farmers and their communities;

Whereas a fair price can be determined by bringing farmers, ranchers, public research institutions, and the Department of Agriculture in a collaborative decision-making process; and

Whereas further investment in regenerative agriculture can promote farmer innovation and American leadership in combating the climate crisis: Now, therefore, be it

- 1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—
- 2 (1) will support programs to pay farmers as en-
- 3 vironmental entrepreneurs to achieve environmental
- 4 outcomes on a whole farm basis, allowing them to

1 voluntarily use the regenerative and other conserva-
2 tion agriculture practices that work best on their op-
3 erations and provide the highest performance for en-
4 vironmental benefits;

5 (2) will enact legislation that will pay farmers
6 and ranchers in all 50 States and territories for eco-
7 logical services for climate change mitigation and ad-
8 aptation, including payments for innovations that in-
9 crease performance outcomes;

10 (3) will support and fund programs that pro-
11 vide resources to agricultural scientists and other
12 public interest scientists to work with farmers to
13 identify innovations, the replicability of regenerative
14 practices, and sustainable and resilient systems;

15 (4) will encourage efforts to provide assistance
16 to farmers and strengthen rural development by sup-
17 porting regional-, State-, and local-based Natural
18 Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agen-
19 cy, and Rural Development offices and staff; and

20 (5) expresses a sense of Congress that the Sec-
21 retary of Agriculture, in partnership with Depart-
22 ment of Agriculture research agencies, land grant
23 university scientists, the Office of the Chief Econo-
24 mist, and any other entity the Secretary of Agri-

1 culture deems necessary, should study and publish
2 reports publicly on—

3 (A) the value of reduced greenhouse gas
4 emissions secured through the capturing and
5 retention of carbon in agricultural soils;

6 (B) the metrics to measure integrated, sys-
7 tems-based, whole farm performance, climate
8 and environmental solutions outcomes;

9 (C) expanding public and private soil
10 health efforts to accelerate climate change ad-
11 aptation and mitigation;

12 (D) expanding water quality improvement
13 projects to focus on the tools of regenerative
14 practices and sustainable agriculture to include
15 climate adaptation and mitigation; and

16 (E) developing an integrated approach to
17 farmer-led clean energy efforts including on-
18 farm energy, energy storage, energy efficiency,
19 composting, and related measures.

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