

What Farmers Stand to Lose in the Farm Bill If Congress Eliminates Conservation Investments

\$18 billion in vital resources available to farmers and ranchers are at risk if Congress revokes funding for conservation agriculture programs in the Farm Bill reauthorization.

As Congress considers reauthorizing the Farm Bill, vital resources that are available to farmers and ranchers today are at risk — specifically the \$18 billion investment from the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) popular conservation programs. This issue brief provides a first look at what farmers stand to lose in each state if these investments are eliminated by Congress.

EQIP

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

Payments to cover a portion of the cost of conservation practices.

CSP

Conservation Stewardship Program

Five-year annual contract payments to improve conservation on the entire farm.

ACEP

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program

Legal rights in the farmland to preserve farming or restore wetlands.

RCPP

Regional Conservation Partnership Program

Conservation on multiple farms on a regional basis with private partner contributions.

The Risks Associated With Repurposing IRA Conservation Funds

In the IRA, Congress invested an additional \$18 billion in American farmers and farmland. These investments are available for 10 years and use the Farm Bill programs operated by the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). NRCS programs — like EQIP and CSP — help farmers protect and improve soil health, increase profits and productivity, and clean up public waters. Demand persistently exceeds the funds available.

Further demonstrating the popularity of these programs, the USDA has received a record level of applications from farmers and ranchers seeking assistance in the first year.¹ However, some have suggested using the reauthorization of the Farm Bill to eliminate the rest of this historic investment to gamble on crop prices in farm-support payments.

All farmers can seek assistance for conservation, but only some farmers benefit from farm-support payments. Because crop prices are uncertain and rise or fall based on the market, even fewer would be likely to receive more payments from this gamble.

Farmers need and demand this money now. Moving those dollars to other purposes would put the increased profitability and long-term benefits for many farmers and ranchers in jeopardy. It would also undermine producers' ability to confront a range of growing risks, such as increasing input costs, worsening weather, and changing market conditions.

¹ As USDA Sees Record Interest in Conservation and Clean Energy Programs, Swift Implementation of Inflation Reduction Act Funding Continues (2023). <https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2023/09/19/usda-sees-record-interest-conservation-and-clean-energy-programs>

How Much Farmers Stand to Lose

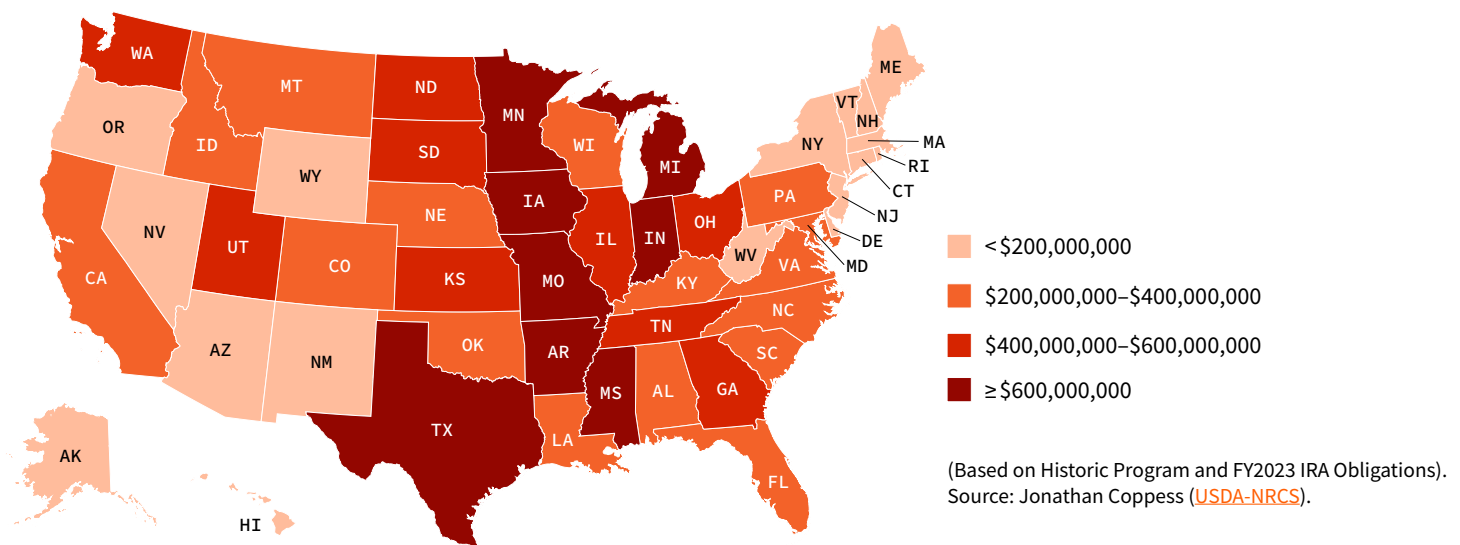
This map projects the total additional conservation spending provided through the Inflation Reduction Act. **If Congress eliminates the IRA investments, farmers in each state would stand to lose all of this projected funding.**

However, more than funding is at risk since these programs help producers make investments that are vital for the long-term health and sustainability of their operations and that can help mitigate the risks of farming. That is part of

the reason why demand for these conservation investments has historically been twice what Congress has funded, and why repurposing these funds hurts more farmers than farm-support payments could help.

In the Farm Bill reauthorization, Congress has a choice: protect the historic investments in farmers and conservation made by the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 or take those investments away from the overwhelming number of farmers seeking to access this money now.

How Much Farmers Stand to Lose in Conservation Funding²



	Total	EQIP	CSP	ACEP	RCPP		Total	EQIP	CSP	ACEP	RCPP
AL	301,808.55	163,923.01	74,194.08	4,213.06	59,478.40	MT	282,234.13	93,726.10	83,317.76	97,357.98	7,832.29
AK	74,394.27	73,620.51	3.81	769.95	0.00	NE	335,634.43	193,899.99	86,590.77	12,106.68	43,036.99
AZ	84,203.87	43,388.67	29,031.25	11,783.96	0.00	NV	20,680.45	15,125.91	3,501.37	2,053.18	0.00
AR	723,773.95	242,946.36	223,853.77	50,741.34	206,232.48	NH	39,323.69	24,461.45	3,990.69	10,871.56	0.00
CA	314,322.78	246,132.29	14,258.34	39,314.15	14,618.00	NJ	110,006.97	51,393.31	1,292.40	8,118.93	49,202.33
CO	229,937.60	144,906.88	59,240.34	21,807.94	3,982.43	NM	190,565.54	136,520.49	48,902.27	2,551.57	2,591.21
CT	42,758.62	34,148.61	223.97	8,048.13	337.91	NY	93,728.73	69,765.52	9,697.44	5,159.85	9,105.92
DE	77,094.03	44,335.90	3,678.94	5,375.90	23,703.29	NC	272,371.40	131,872.14	72,682.36	44,609.03	23,207.87
FL	256,825.58	129,222.97	29,250.27	82,265.61	16,086.72	ND	417,618.40	208,559.11	169,075.58	6,622.83	33,360.87
GA	429,130.19	271,763.75	123,180.99	13,929.84	20,255.62	OH	410,650.46	243,900.46	20,797.70	29,571.52	116,380.78
HI	64,100.11	30,765.58	52.03	0.00	33,282.49	OK	232,868.10	152,969.36	53,165.92	15,675.56	11,057.26
ID	230,258.10	98,673.91	20,242.93	8,084.23	103,257.03	OR	163,056.62	55,247.49	88,077.83	13,081.76	6,649.54
IL	496,076.78	120,387.16	117,602.94	23,513.38	234,573.30	PA	255,872.54	130,902.13	40,901.09	5,577.26	78,492.06
IN	609,230.28	273,993.65	71,236.84	59,319.21	204,680.56	RI	13,980.14	10,202.61	815.38	2,364.25	597.90
IA	1,035,614.66	285,615.82	82,965.11	119,335.40	547,698.33	SC	253,696.37	182,049.07	61,672.35	3,736.50	6,238.45
KS	586,559.88	316,690.38	115,515.07	25,807.89	128,546.55	SD	434,197.16	129,856.92	175,194.69	32,656.08	96,489.48
KY	289,906.21	146,326.15	36,542.09	31,102.72	75,935.25	TN	437,283.71	248,468.97	58,519.32	15,988.42	114,307.00
LA	374,144.65	155,884.12	92,665.31	47,007.33	78,587.89	TX	772,518.73	405,274.25	49,232.67	267,570.12	50,441.69
ME	66,584.80	52,185.99	5,637.80	715.10	8,045.91	UT	529,351.23	510,864.11	5,150.20	13,336.92	0.00
MD	285,784.56	53,486.75	2,113.51	80,789.89	149,394.41	VT	188,318.00	97,399.33	51,183.85	19,336.80	20,398.02
MA	45,804.76	35,859.71	1,704.51	8,240.53	0.00	VA	274,817.16	135,668.56	73,667.50	4,344.83	61,136.27
MI	702,182.13	192,592.23	46,547.77	7,086.46	455,955.68	WA	497,006.11	185,430.50	85,886.98	5,379.47	220,309.15
MN	638,652.77	216,120.32	154,051.81	12,092.96	256,387.69	WV	53,420.35	36,393.38	12,086.89	4,206.39	733.69
MS	638,802.70	238,626.01	306,655.34	34,074.33	59,447.01	WI	385,612.61	231,729.78	60,293.35	13,332.09	80,257.39
MO	650,378.59	297,208.38	75,790.80	34,692.49	242,686.92	WY	76,856.56	54,513.95	13,064.00	9,278.61	0.00

Data in thousands of dollars.

² The projections of these potential losses are based on historic spending for the eligible conservation practices and what was initially invested from the IRA in 2023.