



The National Association of State Foresters' 2023 Farm Bill Platform

State foresters know that farm bills, and particularly their Forestry Titles, are unique opportunities to support rural America's economic backbone and improve quality of life for all Americans.

Codify BIL/IIJA Flexible Funding for State Forest Action Plan Implementation

- Amend 2008 Farm Bill language for "statewide assessment and strategies for forest resources" by including a new funding authorization for implementation.
- This authorization should provide flexible funding for state Forest Action Plan implementation, allowing state forestry agencies to address the highest forest management priorities within their respective boundaries.

Expand Authorizations for Good Neighbor Authority

- Authorize counties and Federally Recognized Tribes to retain and reinvest GNA project revenues
- Remove the requirement that GNA project revenues must be spent solely on federal lands
- Remove or extend the sunset date for states to retain GNA project revenue

Improve the Landscape Scale Restoration Program

- Remove the language established in the 2018 Farm Bill designating the program as rural.
- The LSR rural requirement has eliminated opportunities for state forestry agencies to leverage their Urban and Community Forestry (U&CF) program work, and greatly restricted their ability to conduct hazardous fuels reduction projects under LSR in the areas with populations greater than 50,000 including many areas within the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI).

Support an "All-Lands" Approach to Reforestation

- Create an authorization of appropriations for the USFS Reforestation, Nurseries and Genetic Resources Program (RNGR).
- Provide support to federal, state, tribal, and private nurseries and seed orchards through technical assistance and research, providing collaborative agreements and cooperative efforts; and to support seed collection and storage and tree nursery expansion, including the purchase of land, building construction and equipment and workforce development.
- Amend the Reforestation Trust Fund (16 U.S.C. § 1606(a)) to provide financial support to the RNGR program and to state operated tree nurseries and seed orchards.

Enhance the Conservation Reserve Program

- Allow forest landowners with stands at maturity to harvest, reforest, and remain in the CRP program, or at the very least allow for re-enrollment of harvested forest CRP stands that are converted to a conservation priority ecosystem.
- Eliminate the single re-enrollment limitation for hardwood forest stands.

Bolster Post-Disaster Forest Landowner Assistance

- Improve post-disaster federal programming for forest landowners, particularly the Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP), to ensure forest landowners receive equal support from the federal government compared to other agriculture commodities and that timely and ecologically-proper timber salvage and reforestation takes place following natural disasters.
- Support fair post-disaster tax treatment for forest landowners through inclusion of the Disaster Reforestation Act

Promoting Cross-Boundary Wildfire Mitigation

- The 2018 Farm Bill created a new authority, which the Forest Service used to codify an existing mechanism for implementing cross-boundary hazardous fuels projects commonly known as 'Stevens Money'.
- The intent from the FIFB Coalition for section 8401 of the 2018 Farm Bill was to *supplement* existing mechanisms for implementing cross-boundary hazardous fuels projects—not *codify* existing mechanisms.

Amend the Definition of At-Risk Community

- Amend the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) to provide a more accurate and inclusive definition for "At-Risk Community" that includes communities not within the vicinity of federal lands.
- Amend 16 U.S.C. § 6511(1)) to allow for the utilization of state, regional, tribal, and territorial wildfire risk assessments in addition to federal assessments in identifying "At-Risk Communities."

Address Projected Risks of Forest Conversion

- Install programmatic recognition within the Forest Stewardship and Urban and Community Forestry Programs of the importance of supporting local planning decisions.
- Create a new authority and funding provision that provides special technical assistance services to local governments to utilize Resource Planning Act (RPA) data for growth management planning.
- Install a tax credit for land managed under a Forest Stewardship Plan to incentivize retention of working forest lands.

Extend and Enhance the 2014 Farm Bill Insect & Disease (I&D) Infestation Authority

- Extend the sunset date to initiate scoping in order to utilize certain Healthy Forest Restoration Act processes for priority projects in designated I&D treatment areas.
- Increase the Farm Bill I&D 3,000-acre categorical exclusion (CE) to 15,000 acres or larger.

Amend and Modernize the Eligibility Requirements for the Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) Program

- The current requirements are over forty years old, and do not adequately represent the full suite of today's volunteer fire departments who need funding to protect the communities they serve from wildfire. The eligibility requirements for this program need to be updated and the authorization language streamlined.

Enhance the Conservation Stewardship Program

- Under current regulation, forest landowners only have one bundle option: a set of enhancements aimed at improved wildlife habitat.
- Construct a "bundle" of enhancements around extending contracts for tree planting and optimizing carbon uptake in standing timber.
- This "bundle" could be constructed in a manner that also improves water quality and wildlife habitat.

Support Source Water Protection and Stormwater Management

- Amend 2018 Farm Bill language directing "10% of conservation program funding to be used for practices that protect source water for drinking water" to ensure higher priority on surface water/forests (as opposed to groundwater).

Address Administrative Barriers to Forestry

- Encourage the growth of forestry assistance through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) by requiring state offices/technical committees to assess and establish priority forestry practices.
- Encourage the expanded use of and financial support to State Forestry agencies to serve as Technical Service Providers (TSPs) for NRCS programs.

Support the Joint Chiefs Landscape Restoration Partnership Program

- Expand the Joint Chiefs program , as codified in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, to include an enhanced focus on invasive species control.
- Include a prioritization in Joint Chiefs and the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program for project proposals linked to a state's Forest Action Plan.
- Expand eligible activities to allow treatments for erosion control materials and resource concerns related to native wildlife species, such as feral ungulates, small mammal predator control, invasive ants, and other insects.

Modify the Regional Conservation Partnership Program

- Increase reimbursement rates pertaining to maximum program payment percentages.

Enhance and Extend the Feral Swine Eradication and Control Pilot Program

- Extend the 2018 Farm Bill Feral Swine Eradication and Control Pilot Program, and support inclusion of all interested states.

Utility Infrastructure Rights-of-Way Vegetation Management Pilot Program

- Extend the 2018 Farm Bill Utility Infrastructure Rights-of-way Vegetation Management Pilot Program.

Modify NRCS Conservation Practices to Include Helicopter Transport in the following practices

- Tree and shrub site preparation (490); Brush management (314); Herbaceous weed control (315); Tree/shrub establishment (612); Restoration and management of rare and declining habitats (643); and Upland wildlife habitat management (9645).

