



Priority Recommendations to Enhance Wildlife Benefits of the 2018 Farm Bill

The Farm Bill is our greatest opportunity to conserve native fish, wildlife and plants on private lands nationwide. Many species of conservation concern, including federally protected species, depend on private lands. Defenders of Wildlife, representing more than 1.8 million members and supporters, advocates for strong conservation programs in the 2018 Farm Bill that produce measurable outcomes for wildlife. **In reauthorizing the Farm Bill, Congress must also pass legislation without provisions that undermine or eliminate federal conservation laws or impair management of federal public lands.**

Defenders has identified the following priority recommendations for enhancing the wildlife benefits in the 2018 Farm Bill based on our years of experience in the field and our expertise in wildlife and habitat conservation.

Priority Recommendations for the 2018 Farm Bill

- Prioritize conservation of federally protected species, candidate species, state-listed species, and other priority species, such as “Species of Greatest Conservation Need” identified in the State Wildlife Action Plans, where appropriate.
- Develop Conservation Practices for predator deterrence and wildlife coexistence measures, and make them eligible for use under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program.
- Provide for assessment and evaluation of outcomes for Farm Bill conservation programs, as proposed in H.R. 4751, the Healthy Fields and Farm Economies Act.
- Maintain or increase discretionary funding or authorize mandatory funding for the Conservation Technical Assistance program to enhance customer experience.
- Encourage the Secretary to implement conservation programs to support habitat connectivity.
- Strengthen conservation programs to support climate change adaptation, adaptive management, and carbon sequestration and soil health.
- Increase the acreage enrolled in the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program under the Conservation Reserve Program.
- Require that a minimum of 10 percent of the acreage in each state annually enrolled in the Conservation Stewardship Program directly supports wildlife conservation.
- Establish that a minimum of 10 percent of Environmental Quality Incentives Program funding in each state is dedicated to wildlife conservation.
- Make tribal livestock associations eligible for the Livestock Indemnity Program.
- Reauthorize the Healthy Forests Reserve Program with mandatory funding.
- Maintain the statutory link between crop insurance and conservation compliance.
- Expand the sodsaver provision nationwide, as proposed in S. 1913 and H.R. 3939, the American Prairie Conservation Act.
- Amend the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act to require a nationwide assessment and evaluation of program delivery by Technical Service Providers every five years.
- Maintain the existing three funding pools—National, State, and Critical Conservation Areas—in the Regional Conservation Partnership Program, and responsibly apportion available funds among these pools.