

Conservation and Climate Smart Partnership Act

Introduced by Senators Todd Young (R-IN), Tina Smith (D-MN), Mike Braun (R-IN), and Brian Schatz (D-HI)

House Companion Introduced by Representatives Dan Newhouse (R-WA), Abigail Spanberger (D-VA), and Chellie Pingree (D-ME)

American farmers rely on prosperous and fruitful natural resources to grow and harvest their crops. For centuries, farmers have adopted and implemented various strategies to both protect the environment and produce high yields. Unfortunately, factors outside of their control can cause unanticipated hurdles like market disruptions, adverse weather events, and unfair trade practices.

The reality is that the organic matter found in our soil is significantly less than 50 years ago. It takes roughly 500 years to produce one inch of topsoil, and the world relies on topsoil to produce 95% of all food. With the global population expected to reach 9 billion people by 2050, food and feed production must increase by 70%. Farmers are facing growing pressure from policymakers to reduce emissions. If cover crops were adopted on 25% of cropland combined with no-till practices, CO2 emissions could be reduced by 150 million metric tons per year, according to American Farmland Trust.

Productivity and conservation go hand in hand; but, farmers need access to individualized tools to meet their specific needs. Land-grant institutions are uniquely situated to use the extension network to reach farmers and provide boots on the ground. The Conservation and Innovative Climate Partnership Act provides the missing link between innovative research and those who farm for a living. Without creating a burdensome mandate, a punitive measure, or more bureaucratic government, the Conservation and Innovative Climate Partnership Act will infuse an intact system with resources and connective opportunities to boost innovation while enabling farmers to be successful. Farmers are already responsible stewards of the land and the federal government should build on the successes currently taking place in agriculture communities across the United States.

The Conservation and Innovative Climate Partnership Act would do the following:

- Enable partnerships between land-grant institutions and local farmers to increase uptake of conservation and innovative climate practices
- Allow farmers to voluntarily adopt practices that suite their individualized needs
- Require land-grant institutions to partner with a non-profit, state, or federal entity
- Allow the partnership to conduct a variety of activities to support farming communities like workshops, distribution of digital materials, and tests to measure the effectiveness of conservation and climate smart practices
- Provide \$13 million in funding for 4-year grants, with a maximum grant of \$400,000

Supporters: Purdue University, Indiana Corn Growers Association, Indiana Soybean Alliance, Indiana Farm Bureau, Agribusiness Council of Indiana, Citizens for Responsible Energy Solutions, Corteva, Environmental Defense Fund, Washington State University, University of Maine, Virginia State University, and Virginia Tech