

Pass a Five-year Farm Bill Now

Support Landowner-lead Conservation Efforts through Agricultural Land Easements

Land trusts across America have worked diligently with members of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees to shape a responsible consolidation of the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) and Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) into the more streamlined Agricultural Land Easements Program (ALE). We endorse the structure for ALE laid out in the 2013 bill approved by both the Senate and the House, and are hopeful to see fully funded in the final 2013 Farm Bill package.

Passing a five-year Farm Bill now is our most urgent goal. We do hope any conference agreement will include Senator Bennet's revenue neutral cost-share waiver amendment that will increase the effectiveness of this important investment. By lending your voice for the ALE program, you will help to secure hundreds of thousands of acres of environmentally and economically important landscapes across America. Please don't further cut this funding!

A Sound Investment of Federal Funds

While we understand that that the 2013 Farm Bill negotiations are taking place in a climate of demanding fiscal constraints, federal funding spent on natural resources only comprises a mere **1.26%** of the budget, yet promises some of the most rewarding returns for all of society. Federal investment in ALE should not be looked at as an expense, but an investment that pays many dividends, including economic ones.

In fact, federal investments in strategic land conservation programs supports the continued viability of agricultural communities and produces ripple effects that go far beyond just the protection of our farm and ranch lands. These productive landscapes provide food and shelter for wildlife, help control flooding, protect wetlands and watersheds, and help to maintain air quality.



*"It's the psychology
of being stable.
What you don't want to do is
plant an orchard that gets
surrounded by houses that
conflict with our
agricultural practices."*

*Bruce Talbott ~ 5th Generation
Colorado Fruit Producer*

Invest in Communities

- ◆ These dollars represent a direct investment into local communities all across the country, establishing a support system for agricultural markets and suppliers, while fostering tourism through the preservation of scenic landscapes and wildlife amenities.
- ◆ Easement purchases provide capital for new farmers and ranchers, and those who need to invest in expansion and improvements, which makes the industry all the more appealing for future generations.
- ◆ Conservation easements on productive lands ensure a reliable base of agricultural producers for the long term, providing processing facilities the assurance they need to invest in capacity for the future.

Invest in Secure Futures

- ◆ With the world's population projected to reach nearly ten billion by 2050, saving American farm and ranch land through Agricultural Land Easements should be a top priority investment for future food and economic security.
- ◆ Purchasing agricultural easements has been crucial to willing farmers and ranchers who would otherwise be forced to sell their land for development to fund their retirement. Working lands easements provide capital for farmers and ranchers to invest in rejuvenating their operations, while also helping to transition these businesses from one generation to the next. When landowners relinquish development rights by selling a conservation easement, it is easier for the next generation of agricultural producers to inherit or buy the land by lowering estate tax valuation to primarily reflect their agricultural value.

Support your Constituents with Sound Policy

Continued support for Agricultural Land Easements will help to secure food and fiber, wildlife habitat, clean water, and our rural heritage — **a good investment for future generations** of farmers, ranchers, and all Americans. With your help, we can ensure the wide-ranging benefits of agricultural land remain available for the long term.

“Farmland preservation programs provide more incentives for young people to come to the farm, and stay at the farm, and transition to the farm.”

Mark Doherty
Peterson Farms/Michigan

Questions?

Russ Shay

202-800-2230

Lynne Sherrod

970-487-9924

Land Trust Alliance

Dave White/Consultant

406-451-5451

“If we don't preserve that land and we have to rely on other nations like we do for our oil, we are at a serious disadvantage.”

Albert Sommers
Wyoming Rancher

Economic Benefits of Agricultural Land Easements

Is there a tie between conserved working landscapes and positive economic benefits to the surrounding communities? In a newly released publication funded by USDA/NRCS, **The Power of Leveraging Local and Federal Dollars to Strengthen Agricultural Land Easement Investments**, four case studies featuring success stories from across the country illustrate a direct and quantifiable link.

Download it at: www.lta.org/policy/FRPPbenefits