



Vote NOW to Make Our Commitment To Land Conservation *Permanent*

The conservation tax incentive has been a success in increasing the pace, quality and permanence of land conservation.

The conservation tax incentive has been a success in increasing the pace, quality and permanence of land conservation.

Since the enhanced incentive first passed in 2006, roughly one million acres have been conserved per year with easements managed by the nation's 1,700 community-based land trusts.

- Through a limited tax deduction, landowners are able to place their most prized assets – historical sites, forests, family farms and ranches – in protected easements to ensure a legacy of natural abundance, enjoyment and agricultural production for future generations.
- Land placed in easements can be farmed, grazed, hunted or used for recreation and the conservation of natural resources. It can also be passed on to heirs or sold. But the land is kept safe from future development ensuring that today's natural treasures don't become tomorrow's strip malls and convenience stores.
- Valuable open spaces or farmland can be protected by an easement for a fraction of the cost of buying it, making easements by far the most cost-effective approach to land conservation. For example, federal acquisition of land costs taxpayers roughly \$12,000 an acre compared to just \$400 an acre for an easement.
- The enhanced incentive expired last year, and conservation easement enrollments are expected to plunge by at least 300,000 acres per year, or roughly one-third.

The time is NOW to enact legislation to make the enhanced tax incentive permanent.

Only July 17, the House voted on H.R. 4719, "The America Gives More Act," which contains the Conservation Easement Incentive Act. The bill passed by a bipartisan vote of 277-130. This is the first time every member of Congress has gone on record making the easement incentive permanent. The Senate bill (S. 526) has wide bi-partisan support as well, but success is never certain.

- The enhanced incentive has expired several times since its first passage. The on-again, off-again nature of this makes it difficult to attract and educate would-be easement donors, since this process can take years to finalize and can cost tens of thousands of dollars.
- Making the enhanced incentive permanent is about ensuring a legacy. Land tells the story of our nation, providing both a window to the past and a key to a healthy and secure future.

- 65 national organizations – ranging from National Rifle Association, Ducks Unlimited and American Farm Bureau Federation to the Environmental Defense Fund and National Audubon Society – support permanent enactment of the enhanced incentive. America’s commitment to conservation is certain and the tax incentive that makes it possible should be permanent.

America’s commitment to conservation is certain and the tax incentive that makes it possible should be permanent.