

January 18, 2018

The Honorable Pat Roberts  
Chairman, Senate Committee on  
Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry

The Honorable K. Michael Conaway  
Chairman, House Committee on  
Agriculture

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on  
Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry

The Honorable Collin Peterson  
Ranking Member, House Committee on  
Agriculture

Dear Chairmen Roberts and Conaway and Ranking Members Stabenow and Peterson,

We the undersigned conservation, wildlife, sportsmen, scientific, landowner, taxpayer, and agriculture organizations, representing millions of members across the country, strongly support the American Prairie Conservation Act (S. 1913, H.R. 3939), introduced on Wednesday, October 4<sup>th</sup> by Senators Thune (R-SD), Klobuchar (D-MN), Rounds (R-SD), and Bennet (D-CO) and Representatives Noem (R-SD) and Walz (D-MN).

The bipartisan, bicameral American Prairies Conservation Act would enact a nationwide “Sodsaver” protection to reduce taxpayer-funded incentives to convert critical grassland resources to cropland.

The 2014 Farm Bill included a Sodsaver provision that reduces crop insurance premium subsidies on newly broken native sod, ensuring that taxpayer dollars do not create incentives for more native prairie land to be plowed under. Most of the land that is currently being converted from native ecosystems to cropland is marginal, highly erodible, or prone to flooding. These environmentally sensitive lands provide critical ecological services, including habitat for grassland-dependent wildlife species, flood mitigation, erosion control, water filtration, and other ecological benefits. In addition to providing ecosystem services, native grasslands are a critical resource for American ranchers.

While the Sodsaver provision was an important step forward in protecting native prairie in 2014, it is currently only applied to the six states in the Prairie Pothole Region, leaving native grasslands in the rest of the country without this much-needed protection.

The American Prairies Conservation Act will slow the conversion of native grasslands to cropland by extending the Sodsaver provision to the entire country, thereby reducing premium subsidies by 50 percentage points on acres that are broken from native sod. Sodsaver also includes two important components that prevent gaming of the system to increase revenue insurance coverage. One keeps newly broken sod isolated from other crop acres when calculating insurable yields. The other requires insurance to be based on the county average yield until there is a multi-year yield history for the converted land. The bill also requires that USDA track and report annually on the conversion of native prairie to cropland, giving taxpayers better information on the ongoing loss of grassland.

The undersigned organizations applaud Senators Thune, Klobuchar, Rounds, and Bennet and Representatives Noem and Walz for their leadership in preserving grazing land, ranching opportunities, and critical wildlife habitat and other natural resources through the American Prairies Conservation Act. We strongly urge you to include this provision in the 2018 Farm Bill.

Sincerely,

**National Groups:**

Aerulean Plant Identification Systems, Inc.  
American Bird Conservancy  
American Birding Association  
ArcherAdvantage  
Bird Conservation Network  
Bluestem Communications  
Center for Rural Affairs  
Clean Water Action  
Community Food and Justice Coalition  
Conservation Imaging, Inc.  
Defenders of Wildlife  
Earthjustice  
ECOAN  
Endangered Species Coalition  
Environment America  
Environmental Working Group  
Food Animal Concerns Trust  
GreenLatinos  
Hip Hop Caucus  
International Bird Rescue  
Izaak Walton League of America  
Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future  
League of Conservation Voters  
National Audubon Society  
National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative  
National Center for Appropriate Technology  
National Farmers Union  
National Latino Farmers & Ranchers Trade Association  
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition  
National Wildlife Federation  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
North American Falconers Association  
North American Grouse Partnership  
Pollinator Partnership  
Prairies Forever  
River Network

R Street Institute  
 Rural & Agriculture Council of America  
 Soil and Water Conservation Society  
 Taxpayers for Common Sense  
 The Bee & Butterfly Habitat Fund  
 The Land Improvement Contractors of America  
 The Nature Conservancy  
 The Ohio State University  
 The Wildlife Society  
 The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation  
 Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership  
 Union of Concerned Scientists  
 U.S. Public Interest Research Group  
 Watchable Wildlife, Inc.  
 Wild Farm Alliance  
 Women, Food and Agriculture Network  
 World Wildlife Fund

<b>Regional Groups:</b>	<b>Region:</b>
<b>Burroughs Audubon Society of Greater Kansas City</b>	Greater Kansas City (KS, MO)
<b>Delmarva Ornithological Society</b>	Delmarva Peninsula (DE, MD, VA)
<b>Environmental Law &amp; Policy Center</b>	Midwest
<b>Gulf Restoration Network</b>	Gulf Region
<b>Kansas City Native Plant Initiative</b>	Greater Kansas City (KS, MO)
<b>NatureCITE</b>	Midwest
<b>Northwest Section of The Wildlife Society</b>	Northwest
<b>Operation Migration USA</b>	WI, IL, IN, KY, TN, GA, AL, FL
<b>Ozark Regional Land Trust</b>	Ozarks Region (MO, AR)
<b>Platte Land Trust</b>	Greater Kansas City (KS, MO)
<b>Prairie Fire Tours</b>	Northern Great Plains
<b>Quad City Audubon Society</b>	Quad Cities (Southeast IA, West Central IL)
<b>Save The River / Upper St. Lawrence Riverkeeper</b>	St. Lawrence River
<b>Southeastern Grasslands Initiative</b>	Southeast
<b>Southeast Section of The Wildlife Society</b>	Southeast
<b>Western Landowners Association</b>	West
<b>State and Local Groups:</b>	<b>Region:</b>
<b>Wild At Heart</b>	Arizona
<b>Arkansas Wildlife Federation</b>	Arkansas
<b>California Bay Area Chapter of The Wildlife</b>	California - Bay Area

<b>Society, Conservation Affairs Committee</b>	
<b>Endangered Habitats League</b>	California (southern)
<b>Malibu Monarch Project</b>	California
<b>Natural Heritage Institute</b>	California
<b>Pesticide Action Network</b>	California
<b>Audubon Society of Greater Denver</b>	Colorado - Denver
<b>Colorado Chapter of The Wildlife Society</b>	Colorado
<b>Cypress Chapter, Florida, Izaak Walton League of America</b>	Florida
<b>Florida Division, Izaak Walton League of America</b>	Florida
<b>Florida Keys Chapter, Izaak Walton League of America</b>	Florida - Florida Keys
<b>Florida Wildlife Federation</b>	Florida
<b>Center for Family Farm Development, Inc.</b>	Georgia
<b>Idaho Wildlife Federation</b>	Idaho
<b>Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation</b>	Illinois
<b>Chicago Audubon Society</b>	Illinois (northeastern)
<b>Illinois Chapter of The Wildlife Society</b>	Illinois
<b>Illinois Council of Trout Unlimited</b>	Illinois
<b>Illinois Division, Izaak Walton League Of America</b>	Illinois
<b>Illinois Stewardship Alliance</b>	Illinois
<b>Prairie Rivers Network</b>	Illinois
<b>Indiana Division, Izaak Walton League of America</b>	Indiana
<b>1000 Friends of Iowa</b>	Iowa
<b>Iowa Wildlife Federation</b>	Iowa
<b>Kansas Chapter of The Wildlife Society</b>	Kansas
<b>Kansas Rural Center</b>	Kansas
<b>Kansas Wildlife Federation</b>	Kansas
<b>Envision Franklin County</b>	Kentucky - Franklin County
<b>Kentucky Waterways Alliance</b>	Kentucky
<b>Maryland Ornithological Society</b>	Maryland
<b>The Monarch Alliance</b>	Maryland
<b>Michigan Audubon</b>	Michigan
<b>Michigan Wildlife Conservancy</b>	Michigan
<b>Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council</b>	Michigan
<b>Wild Ones, Kalamazoo Chapter</b>	Michigan (southwest)
<b>Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis</b>	Minnesota
<b>Cass County, MN Chapter, Izaak Walton League of America</b>	Minnesota - Cass County Chapter

<b>Central Minnesota Audubon Society</b>	Minnesota (central)
<b>Friends of the Mississippi River</b>	Minnesota
<b>Grow Monarch Habitat</b>	Minnesota - Minneapolis
<b>Land Stewardship Project</b>	Minnesota
<b>Minnesota Chapter of the Wildlife Society</b>	Minnesota
<b>Minnesota Conservation Federation</b>	Minnesota
<b>Minnesota Division, Izaak Walton League of America</b>	Minnesota
<b>Minnesota Prairie Chicken Society</b>	Minnesota
<b>Minnesota Sharp-tailed Grouse Society</b>	Minnesota
<b>W.J. McCabe (Duluth) Chapter, Izaak Walton League of America</b>	Minnesota - Duluth
<b>Walter Breckenridge Chapter, Izaak Walton League</b>	Minnesota - Brooklyn Park
<b>Wes Libbey Northern Lakes Chapter</b>	Minnesota
<b>Barker Horticultural Services LLC</b>	Missouri
<b>Conservation Federation of Missouri</b>	Missouri
<b>Missouri Coalition for the Environment</b>	Missouri
<b>Missouri Prairie Foundation</b>	Missouri
<b>Missouri River Bird Observatory</b>	Missouri
<b>Missouri Wildflowers Nursery</b>	Missouri
<b>Native Landscape Solutions, Inc</b>	Missouri
<b>St. Louis Audubon Society</b>	Missouri - Greater St. Louis Area
<b>Wild Ones, St. Louis Chapter</b>	Missouri - St. Louis
<b>Montana Wildlife Federation</b>	Montana
<b>Nebraska Chapter of The Wildlife Society</b>	Nebraska
<b>Nebraska Chapter Sierra Club</b>	Nebraska
<b>The Passaic River Coalition</b>	New Jersey (northern)
<b>Audubon New Mexico</b>	New Mexico
<b>Central New York Chapter, Izaak Walton League of America</b>	New York State (central)
<b>Wild Birds Unlimited of Syosset</b>	New York - Syosset
<b>North Dakota Birding Society</b>	North Dakota
<b>North Dakota Wildlife Federation</b>	North Dakota
<b>Central Ohio Chapter, Izaak Walton League of America</b>	Ohio (central)
<b>Headwaters, Ohio Chapter, Izaak Walton League of America</b>	Ohio - Headwaters
<b>Lorain County Ely Chapter</b>	Ohio
<b>Monroeville, Ohio, Izaak Walton League of</b>	Ohio - Monroeville

<b>America</b>	
<b>Ohio Division, Izaak Walton League of America</b>	Ohio
<b>Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association</b>	Ohio
<b>Western Reserve, Ohio Chapter Izaak Walton League of America</b>	Ohio - Western Reserve
<b>Oregon Chapter of The Wildlife Society</b>	Oregon
<b>Oregon Environmental Council</b>	Oregon
<b>Salem Audubon Society</b>	Oregon
<b>Juniata Valley Audubon Society</b>	Pennsylvania
<b>Sociedad Ornitológica Puertorriqueña Inc.</b>	Puerto Rico
<b>Beadle County, SD Chapter, Izaak Walton League of America</b>	South Dakota - Beadle County
<b>Dakota Rural Action</b>	South Dakota
<b>Prairie Hills SD Audubon Society</b>	South Dakota
<b>Rapid City, SD Chapter, Izaak Walton League of America</b>	South Dakota - Rapid City
<b>Sioux Falls, SD Chapter, Izaak Walton League of America</b>	South Dakota - Sioux Falls
<b>South Dakota Wildlife Federation</b>	South Dakota
<b>Cumberland-Harpeth Audubon Society</b>	Tennessee
<b>Harpeth Conservancy</b>	Tennessee
<b>Tennessee Clean Water Network</b>	Tennessee
<b>Tennessee Ornithological Society</b>	Tennessee
<b>Tennessee Wildlife Federation</b>	Tennessee
<b>Coastal Prairie Partnership</b>	Texas
<b>Houston Audubon</b>	Texas - Houston
<b>Native Prairies Association of Texas</b>	Texas
<b>Texas Conservation Alliance</b>	Texas
<b>Texas Hawking Association</b>	Texas
<b>Vermont Center for Ecostudies</b>	Vermont
<b>Arlington-Fairfax, VA Chapter, Izaak Walton League of America</b>	Virginia - Arlington-Fairfax
<b>Fredericksburg-Rappahannock, VA Chapter, Izaak Walton League of America</b>	Virginia - Fredericksburg
<b>Suffolk-Nansemond, VA Chapter, Izaak Walton League of America</b>	Virginia - Suffolk
<b>Virginia Association for Biological Farming</b>	Virginia
<b>Virginia Chapter of The Wildlife Society</b>	Virginia
<b>Virginia Division, Izaak Walton League of America</b>	Virginia
<b>Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition</b>	West Virginia

<b>Jefferson County, WV Chapter, Izaak Walton League of America</b>	West Virginia
<b>Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin</b>	Wisconsin
<b>Watertown, Wisconsin Chapter, Izaak Walton League of America</b>	Wisconsin - Watertown
<b>Wisconsin Wildlife Federation</b>	Wisconsin

Cc: Members of the Senate and House Committees on Agriculture