

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 27, 2023

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
Chairwoman  
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition,  
& Forestry  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Boozman  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition,  
& Forestry  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow and Ranking Member Boozman:

I am writing today to express the importance of the agricultural conservation and environmental protection provisions in both the Farm Bill and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). Both provide essential resources for Pennsylvanians across agricultural industries and rural communities, and cuts to either will compromise the progress we have made. As we work to write this year's Farm Bill, I want to share my strong support for the conservation title and a funding mechanism separate from the IRA.

The historic Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 invested in critical programs for the green economy, helping to fulfill our country's climate goals – including several important agricultural programs.

The IRA provided new, critical support for the USDA's conservation programs within the Natural Resources Conservation Service. This support included increased investment in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), which provides technical and financial assistance to agriculture producers and forest landowners to improve water and air quality and increase soil health; and the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), which provides agricultural land easements and protects agricultural viability.

These programs acutely impact Pennsylvania, our 50,000 farms, our more than seven million acres of farmland, and the producers that power our robust agriculture business. Farmers in Pennsylvania use these extremely popular<sup>1</sup>, voluntary programs to support their agricultural conservation practices. I hear from producers across the commonwealth about the value that these programs, and EQIP especially, bring to their operations, but how difficult it is to receive funds due to the large number of farmers applying. Further, the voluntary conservation efforts on working lands that these programs like EQIP encourage are critical to achieving crucial and necessary climate mitigation goals. Cutting these popular programs, as I've heard some of my colleagues discuss, would be devastating to farmers and would negatively impact the environmental quality of agricultural land.

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<sup>1</sup> Sara Wyant, "A closer look at EQIP — one of NRCS's most popular conservation programs," *Agweek*, December 6, 2020, <https://www.agweek.com/opinion/columns/a-closer-look-at-eqip-one-of-nrcss-most-popular-conservation-programs>.

JOHN FETTERMAN  
PENNSYLVANIA

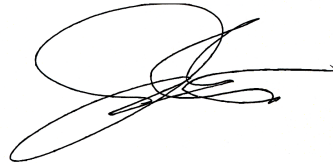
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For these reasons, I strongly oppose any measures that would essentially cannibalize Inflation Reduction Act conservation funding in order to pay for the Farm Bill conservation efforts. The bottom line is that to both support our nation's agricultural producers and mitigate climate change, we must maintain the Inflation Reduction Act programs and include separate robust agriculture conservation funding in the upcoming Farm Bill.

For our farmers and our climate, we can and must do both.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'John Fetterman', with a large, stylized initial 'J' and 'F'.

John Fetterman  
United States Senator