

Appendix B. Letter of Support to Secretary of Agriculture



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

PO Box 47600 • Olympia, WA 98504-7600 • 360-407-6000
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December 1, 2017

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am writing to request that the United States Department of Agriculture work with Congress, as it considers reauthorization of the Farm Bill in 2018, to restore greater funding authorization levels for the important the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

The State of Washington relies upon the CRP to conserve and improve soil health, protect water quality, and create and maintain wildlife habitat on highly erodible or environmentally sensitive land. The successful implementation of these voluntary agricultural conservation measures contributed to Washington's return to compliance with air quality standards in the 1990s.

The 2014 Farm Bill cut the acreage cap from 32 million acres to 24 million acres nationwide. This reduced the number of acres in Washington that could re-enroll in CRP. Over the next three years, contracts covering over 400,000 acres of CRP lands around the state will expire, placing 20 years of conservation management success at risk.

Without CRP, Washington will see increased soil erosion, unhealthy levels of particulate matter in the air, and an increase in sediment in area waters, degrading habitat for aquatic life. CRP is central to Washington State Department of Ecology's strategy to protect our natural resources and the health of our communities. I urge you to support our request that the 2018 Farm Bill reinstate funds for this essential and highly successful program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maia D. Bellon".

Maia D. Bellon
Director

cc: Members of the Washington Congressional Delegation
Sam Ricketts, Office of the Governor
Rob Duff, Office of the Governor

