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Diverse Agriculture Interests Support the Agriculture Data Act of 2018

Food and agriculture groups endorse legislation to study the impacts of farm practices

Washington, DC, April 12, 2018 – A bipartisan coalition of 28 producers, national and state commodity groups, supply chain companies, and environmental and conservation groups have signed a letter to U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Pat Roberts (R-KS) and Ranking Member Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) urging them to support the [Agriculture Data Act of 2018](#) (S. 2487). The coalition applauds Senators John Thune (R-SD) and Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) for introducing the legislation. The bill would strengthen the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) management of producer data so that it can be used to study the impacts of farm conservation practices such as cover crops, no-till farming, and more, while protecting the privacy of farmers.

The signatories agree that the Agriculture Data Act of 2018 will increase understanding about how on-farm conservation practices impact farm and ranch profitability, soil health, water quality, crop yields, and risk. Importantly, the bill will allow USDA to utilize existing data to support research and analysis that will strengthen the crop insurance program and ensure that it remains defensible.

“The wide support for this legislation illustrates that the ag community recognizes the need to better leverage USDA’s vast data resources for the benefit of American producers and trusted agricultural researchers while protecting producer privacy,” Former Deputy Secretary of USDA and AGree Co-Chair Jim Moseley said. “We applaud Senators Thune and Klobuchar for legislation that will enable USDA to work across its many agencies and support credentialed researchers in connecting the dots between conservation practices, crop yields, and soil health. This is common sense legislation that we urge members of both the Senate and House Agriculture Committees to support.”

The cosignatories of the letter include: the American Farmland Trust, American Soybean Association, Applied GeoSolutions, Robert Blair (Three Canyon Farms, ID), Cargill, Danone North America PBC, Kristin Weeks Duncanson (Duncanson Growers, MN), Environmental Defense Fund, Dave Gagner (National Fish and Wildlife Foundation), Illinois Corn Growers Association, Bruce Knight (Strategic Conservation Solutions), Doug Lawrence (Blackwoods Group, LLC), Carl Mattson (George Mattson Farms, MT), Stephanie Mercier (Farm Journal Foundation), Minnesota AgriGrowth Council, Minnesota Corn Growers Association, Jim Moseley (AGree Co-Chair and farmer, IN), National Corn Growers Association, National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, National Wildlife Federation, The Nature Conservancy, Ohio

Corn and Wheat Growers Association, Laurie Ristino (Vermont Law School), Rural Advancement Foundation International, Soil Health Institute, Unilever, Josh Woodard (Cornell University), and Fred Yoder (Solutions from the Land, Yoder Ag Services, OH).

The legislation will create a secure data warehouse to collect and aggregate agricultural data, improve procedures for greater data interoperability, create opportunities for producers to voluntarily elect to participate in additional research and data generation activities, and introduce strong safeguards prohibiting the sale of data and requiring published research to release only aggregated data to provide anonymity to individual farmers.

The Agriculture Data Act of 2018 builds upon recommendations developed by AGree's [Conservation and Crop Insurance Task Force](#) (Task Force), a group of leading researchers, academics, former USDA leaders, producers, and representatives from farm-based and environmental NGOs. The task force has worked since 2013 to develop innovative strategies to remove roadblocks and increase adoption of conservation practices through federal crop insurance and conservation programs.

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