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FY2018 and FY2019 Appropriations for Agricultural Conservation

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SUMMARY

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FY2018 and FY2019 Appropriations for Agricultural Conservation

The Agriculture appropriations bill funds the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) except for the Forest Service. The FY2018 Consolidated Appropriations Act (P.L. 115-141, Division A), and both of the FY2019 agriculture bills reported by the House and Senate Appropriations Committees (H.R. 5961, S. 2976) include funding for conservation programs and activities at USDA.

Congress passed the FY2018 Consolidated Appropriations Act on March 23, 2018, which included agriculture appropriations under Division A. For FY2019, the House and Senate Appropriations Committees reported agriculture bills in May 2018. The Senate amended and passed its version as Division C of a four-bill minibus on August 1, 2018 (H.R. 6147). In the absence of a final appropriation, Congress enacted a continuing resolution through December 7, 2018 (P.L. 115-245, Division C).

Agricultural conservation programs include both mandatory and discretionary spending. Most conservation program funding is mandatory and is authorized in omnibus farm bills. Other conservation programs—mostly technical assistance—are discretionary and are funded through annual appropriations.

The largest discretionary program is the Conservation Operations (CO) account, which funds conservation planning and implementation assistance on private agricultural lands across the country. The enacted FY2018 appropriation provided $874 million for CO, an increase from the FY2017 enacted amount ($864 million). The FY2019 House-reported and Senate-passed bills would further increase funding for CO above FY2018 levels to $890 million and $879 million, respectively. Other discretionary spending is primarily for watershed programs. The largest—Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations (WFPO)—was funded at $150 million in FY2018. Both the House-reported and Senate-passed bills would fund WFPO at the $150 million level in FY2019.

Most mandatory conservation programs are authorized in omnibus farm bills and do not require an annual appropriation. However, Congress has reduced mandatory conservation programs through changes in mandatory program spending (CHIMPS) in the annual agricultural appropriations law every year since FY2003. The enacted FY2018 omnibus marks the first appropriation since FY2002 that does not include CHIMPS to mandatory conservation programs. For FY2019, both the House and Senate appropriation bills do not include reductions to mandatory conservation programs, because most programs' authorizations expired on September 30, 2018, making these programs ineligible for reduction.

While this is infrequent, the Agriculture appropriations bill may also serve as a vehicle for amendments to authorized programs that permanently alter or create programs. The FY2018 enacted appropriation included two such amendments—one to WFPO and one to farm bill conservation program reporting requirements. The WFPO amendment increased the size threshold required for congressional approval. Under the amended language, the Senate and House Agriculture Committees must approve WFPO projects that include an estimated federal contribution of more than $25 million for construction, an increase from the previous $5 million threshold. Additionally, the FY2018 appropriation exempted farm bill conservation programs from select federal reporting requirements, including obtaining a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and System for Award Management (SAM) registration.

Agriculture appropriations bills may also include policy-related provisions that direct how the executive branch should carry out the appropriation. The FY2018 enacted appropriation and both the FY2019 House-reported and Senate-passed bills include policy provisions for conservation programs that range from reports to Congress to suggested natural resource priorities.

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The Agriculture appropriations bill—formally known as the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act—funds all of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), excluding the U.S. Forest Service. Congress passed the FY2018 Consolidated Appropriations Act on March 23, 2018 (P.L. 115-141). The House and Senate Appropriations Committees have reported Agriculture appropriations bills for FY2019 (H.R. 5961, S. 2976). The Senate amended and passed its version as Division C of a four-bill minibus (H.R. 6147). The final appropriation for FY2019 is pending, and current funding is authorized under a continuing resolution (P.L. 115-245) through December 7, 2018. The enacted FY2018 appropriation and both FY2019 House-reported and Senate-passed bills include funding for conservation programs and related activities at USDA.

This report provides a brief overview of the conservation-related provisions in the FY2018 Agriculture appropriations act and FY2019 Agriculture appropriations bills. For a general analysis of the FY2018 appropriations for agriculture, see CRS Report R45128, *Agriculture and Related Agencies: FY2018 Appropriations*, and for FY2019, see CRS Report R45230, *Agriculture and Related Agencies: FY2019 Appropriations*.

Conservation Appropriations

USDA administers a number of agricultural conservation programs that assist private landowners with natural resource concerns. These include working land programs, land retirement and easement programs, watershed programs, technical assistance, and other programs. The two lead agricultural conservation agencies within USDA are the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), which provides technical assistance and administers most conservation programs, and the Farm Service Agency (FSA), which administers the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).[1]

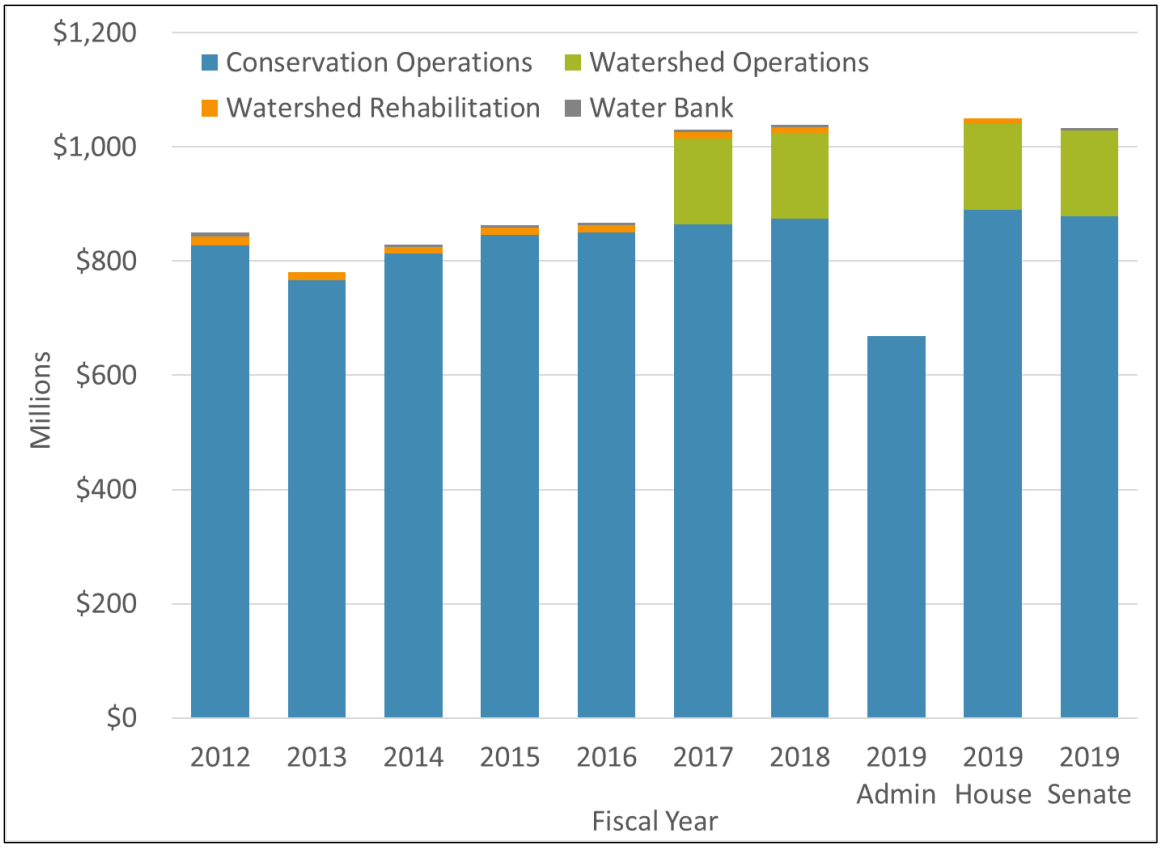
Most conservation program funding is mandatory, obtained through the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) and authorized in omnibus farm bills (about $5.3 billion of CCC funds for conservation in FY2018).[2] Other conservation programs—mostly technical assistance—are discretionary spending and are funded through annual appropriations (about $1 billion annually).

For the first time since FY2002, the enacted FY2018 appropriation did not include reductions to mandatory conservation programs. It did, however, include legislative changes that affect farm bill programs and watershed programs. Similarly, both FY2019 House-reported and Senate-passed bills do not include reductions to mandatory conservation programs. However, pending farm bill reauthorization, most of these programs expired on September 30, 2018, and therefore are not eligible for reduction. The FY2018 appropriation included a slight increase from FY2017 levels for discretionary conservation programs. The FY2019 House-reported appropriations bill includes a slight increase, while the FY2019 Senate-passed appropriations bill includes a slight decrease (see **Table 1** and **Figure 1**).

[1] For more information on individual conservation programs, see CRS Report R40763, *Agricultural Conservation: A Guide to Programs*.

[2] For more information on the CCC, see CRS Report R44606, *The Commodity Credit Corporation: In Brief*.

Figure 1. Discretionary Appropriations for Agricultural Conservation Programs



Source: CRS, from previous appropriations acts, the FY2019 President's Budget Request, H.R. 5961, and H.R. 6147.

Discretionary Conservation Programs

NRCS administers all discretionary conservation programs. The largest program and the account that funds most NRCS activities is Conservation Operations (CO). The CO account primarily funds Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA), which provides conservation planning and implementation assistance through field staff placed in almost all counties within the United States and territories. Other components of CO include the Soil Surveys, Snow Survey and Water Supply Forecasting, and Plant Materials Centers.

Table 1. FY2017-FY2019 Agricultural Conservation Funding

(budget authority in thousands of dollars)

	FY2017	FY2018				FY2019			
Program	**P.L. 115-31**	**Admin. Request**	**House H.R. 3354**	**Senate S. 1603**	**P.L. 115-141**	**Admin. Request**	**House-Reported H.R. 5961**	**Senate-Passed H.R. 6147**	**Enacted**
Conservation Operations	864,474	766,000	858,911	874,107	874,107	669,033	890,293	879,107	—
Conservation Technical Assistance	759,211	667,675	760,211	768,844	774,444	575,862	790,912	773,844	—
Soil Survey	80,802	79,696	80,000	80,802	80,802	74,438	80,500	80,802	—
Snow Survey	9,380	9,265	9,300	9,380	9,380	9,316	9,400	9,380	—
Plant Material Center	9,481	9,364	9,400	9,481	9,481	9,417	9,481	9,481	—
Watershed Projects (Watershed Operations)	5,600	0	0	5,600	5,600	0	0	5,600	—
Total Conservation Operations	864,474	766,000	858,911	874,107	847,107	669,033	890,293	879,107	—
Watershed Operations	150,000	0	40,000	150,000	150,000	0	150,000	150,000	—
Watershed Rehabilitation Program	12,000	0	10,000	0	10,000	0	10,000	0	—
Water Bank	4,000	0	0	4,000	4,000	0	0	4,000	—
Total NRCS Discretionary	**1,030,474**	**766,000**	**908,911**	**1,028,107**	**1,038,107**	**669,033**	**1,050,293**	**1,033,107**	**—**

Source: CRS, using appropriations text and report tables.

Notes: Amounts are nominal discretionary budget authority in thousands of dollars unless labeled otherwise. Excludes amounts in supplemental appropriations acts and proposed rescission language.

The enacted FY2018 appropriation provided $874 million—more than the FY2017 enacted amount ($864 million). The FY2019 House-reported and Senate-passed bills would further increase funding for CO above FY2018 levels to $890 million and $879 million, respectively. The Trump Administration's FY2019 budget request ($699 million) is below the House-reported and Senate-passed bills for FY2019 due to a proposed consolidation of mandatory and discretionary accounts to pay for conservation technical assistance.[3] The proposal to consolidate funding has been made by USDA through multiple Administrations but never adopted by Congress (see text box below). The FY2018 enacted appropriation and both FY2019 bills direct CO funding for a number of conservation programs (**Table 1**). Report language further directs funding to selected activities (**Table 2**).

The enacted FY2018 appropriation also contains funding for watershed activities, including $150 million for Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations (WFPO)—a program that assists state and local organizations with planning and installing measures to prevent erosion, sedimentation, and flood damage.[4] This is the same level as appropriated in FY2017, which was the first appropriated funding for the WFPO program since FY2010. Beginning in FY2006, Administrations began requesting no funding for WFPO, citing program inflexibility and a backlog of congressionally earmarked projects. The Administration's FY2018 and FY2019 requests proposed no funding for the program. The FY2018 enacted appropriation and House-reported and Senate-passed FY2019 bills each include $150 million for WFPO.

Since FY2014, Congress has directed a portion of CO funds to select WFPO activities. Similar directive language ($5.6 million; see **Table 1**) is in the FY2018 appropriations, in addition to the $150 million made available for the program as a whole. The Senate-passed bill continues this directive language for watershed projects, while the House-reported bill does not.

The enacted FY2018 appropriation includes $10 million for the Watershed Rehabilitation program—a reduction from the FY2017 level of $12 million. The Watershed Rehabilitation program repairs aging dams previously built by USDA under WFPO. The Administration proposed no funding in FY2018 and FY2019. The FY2019 House-reported bill includes $10 million for Watershed Rehabilitation, while the FY2019 Senate-passed bill does not fund the program. The 2014 farm bill (P.L. 113-79) provided additional mandatory funding for the program ($250 million in FY2014) to remain available until expended.

Funding Technical Assistance for Mandatory Conservation Programs

Most conservation technical assistance provided by NRCS is funded through the CTA program within CO. The funds are used to support voluntary conservation efforts at the local level through NRCS field staff. Technical assistance is also a part of the farm bill conservation programs, which are funded through a mandatory authorization. Most technical assistance activities within mandatory programs are in support of delivering some level of financial assistance as part of a contract or agreement. These activities could include providing designs, standards, and specifications needed to install scheduled conservation practices and activities. Generally, technical assistance prior to a producer entering into a contract for financial assistance is considered to be part of CTA. It is not until after a producer signs a contract for financial assistance that technical assistance is funded from the individual mandatory program rather than CTA. Once the financial assistance contract is complete, most mandatory program funds are no longer available to support ongoing assistance in maintaining the conservation plans, practices, and activities implemented under the financial assistance program.

[3] Technical assistance is currently funded through both mandatory and discretionary sources. Because the amount of funding for technical assistance from mandatory funding sources is generally not reported, it is unknown whether the Administration's FY2019 proposal to consolidate funding from mandatory and discretionary sources would represent an increase or decrease in overall funding for conservation technical assistance.

[4] For additional information, see CRS Report RL30478, *Federally Supported Water Supply and Wastewater Treatment Programs*.

Issues with the process of funding technical assistance for mandatory programs date back to the mid-1990s. Multiple Congresses and Administrations have proposed funding technical assistance in different ways than the current method. The Administration's FY2019 budget request includes a proposal to create a consolidated account that would include transferred funding from mandatory conservation programs as well as discretionary appropriations for the purposes of providing technical assistance to farm bill conservation programs. This is not a new concept: It was also included in the FY2018 (Trump) and FY2017-FY2014 (Obama) presidential budget requests.

Mandatory Conservation Programs

Mandatory conservation programs are generally authorized in omnibus farm bills and receive funding from the CCC and thus do not require an annual appropriation.[5] But Congress used annual agriculture appropriations acts to reduce mandatory conservation programs through changes in mandatory program spending (CHIMPS) every year from FY2003 to FY2017.[6] The enacted FY2018 omnibus marks the first appropriation since FY2002 that does not include CHIMPS to conservation programs. This allowed all mandatory conservation programs to utilize their full authorized level of funding in FY2018, minus sequestration.[7] Additionally, prior-year CHIMPS concerning programs that are authorized to remain available until expended (e.g., Watershed Rehabilitation) remained available for obligation in FY2018.

Nearly all mandatory conservation programs authorized in the 2014 farm bill (Agricultural Act of 2014; P.L. 113-79) expired on September 30, 2018.[8] One exception is the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), whose authority was extended to FY2019 in the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 (BBA; P.L. 115-123).[9] Similar to FY2018, the FY2019 House-reported and Senate-passed bills do not include reductions to mandatory conservation programs. Most are not authorized in FY2019 and therefore are ineligible for reduction.

Amendments to Conservation Programs

Generally, Congress employs two separate types of legislative measures—authorization and appropriations. Authorization acts establish, continue, or modify agencies or programs.

[5] For authorized funding levels for mandatory conservation programs, see CRS Report R40763, *Agricultural Conservation: A Guide to Programs*.

[6] For additional background, see CRS In Focus IF10041, *Reductions to Mandatory Agricultural Conservation Programs in Appropriations Law*.

[7] For additional discussion on sequestration, see Appendix A of CRS Report R45230, *Agriculture and Related Agencies: FY2019 Appropriations*.

[8] For additional information on the expiration of the 2014 farm bill, see CRS Report R45341, *Expiration of the 2014 Farm Bill*.

[9] EQIP was CHIMPed in the FY2017 appropriation (P.L. 115-31), and the CHIMP carried over into the first half of FY2018 under continuing resolutions. Because the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) uses the last year of authority to develop the funding baseline for farm bill reauthorization (i.e., FY2018), the reduced EQIP authority could have affected the overall farm bill baseline. With the BBA extension to FY2019 and the passage of the FY2018 appropriations without a CHIMP, the full EQIP authority was ultimately used to develop the CBO farm bill baseline, which is in turn used by authorizing committees to develop the next omnibus farm bill. For more information on the farm bill baseline and how it is developed, see CRS Report R44758, *Farm Bill Programs Without a Budget Baseline Beyond FY2018*.

Appropriations acts generally provide discretionary funding for authorized agencies and programs.[10]

While this practice is infrequent and subject to various procedural rules and limitations, the Agriculture appropriations bill may serve as a vehicle for amendments to authorized programs that permanently alter or create programs. These amendments generally have the force of law by amending the *U.S. Code* or by creating a permanent authorization. This is different from policy-related provisions (discussed in the "Policy-Related Provisions" section), which generally direct how the executive branch should carry out the appropriation and whose effect is typically limited to the current fiscal year.[11]

Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations

The FY2018 enacted appropriation included statutory amendments to the WFPO program. Section 761 of P.L. 115-141 amended the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act of 1954 (16 U.S.C. 1001 *et seq.*) by increasing the size thresholds required for congressional approval under the program. Under the amended language, approval by the Senate and House Agriculture Committees is required for individual projects that need an estimated federal contribution of more than $25 million for construction, an increase from the previous $5 million threshold. This amendment originated in the FY2018 Senate-reported bill (S. 1603, §754).

Conservation Program Requirements

The FY2018 appropriation also amended Title XII of the Food Security Act of 1985 (P.L. 99-198; often referred to as the "1985 farm bill") by adding a new section that exempts farm bill conservation programs from certain reporting requirements. Federal grant recipients must comply with government-wide financial management policies and reporting requirements when receiving federal grants and agreements. Many of these reporting requirements are not new for USDA programs and have been in place for a number of years.

Interested stakeholders raised concerns when a number of the farm bill conservation programs were designated as grants (rather than direct payments) under a 2010 regulation. This designation triggered the use of a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and System for Award Management (SAM) registration.[12] The DUNS number requirement and SAM registration did not affect individuals or entities that apply for conservation programs using a Social Security number. Rather, it applied only to those applying as an entity with a Taxpayer Identification Number or Employee Identification Number.

The amendment exempts producers and landowners who participate in farm bill conservation programs from the DUNS number and SAM registration requirement.[13] The amendment originated in the FY2018 Senate-reported bill (S. 1603, §740).

[10] For additional information, see CRS Report R42388, *The Congressional Appropriations Process: An Introduction*.

[11] For more information on the authorization and appropriations process, see CRS Report RS20371, *Overview of the Authorization-Appropriations Process*.

[12] For additional information on federal grant reporting requirements, see CRS Report R44374, *Federal Grant Financial Reporting Requirements and Databases: Frequently Asked Questions*.

[13] NRCS, *DUNS and SAM Update: 2018 Omnibus Act Nixes Requirement for Farmers*, March 23, 2018, https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/PA_NRCSConsumption/download?cid=nrcseprd1400413&ext=pdf.

Policy-Related Provisions

In addition to setting budgetary amounts, the Agriculture appropriations bill may also include policy-related provisions that direct how the executive branch should carry out an appropriation. These provisions may have the force of law if they are included in the text of an appropriations act, but their effect is generally limited to the current fiscal year (see **Table 2**). Unlike the aforementioned authorization amendments that may be included in appropriations, policy-related provisions generally do not amend the *U.S. Code* or have long-standing effects.

For example, the WFPO program has historically been called the "small watershed program," because no project may exceed 250,000 acres, and no structure may exceed more than 12,500 acre-feet of floodwater detention capacity or 25,000 acre-feet of total capacity. The FY2018 enacted appropriation also included a policy provision that waives the 250,000-acre project limit when the project's primary purpose is something other than flood prevention. This provision did not amend the WFPO authorization and therefore was effective only for the funds provided during the appropriation year.[14] Both the FY2019 House-reported and Senate-passed bills include similar language that would continue this waiver for funds provided in FY2019.

Table 2 compares some of the policy provisions that have been identified in the Farm Production and Conservation Programs (Title II) and General Provisions (Title VII) titles of the FY2018 and FY2019 Agriculture appropriations bills related to conservation. Many of these provisions were also included in past years' appropriations laws.

Table 2. Selected Conservation Policy Provisions in the FY2018 and FY2019 Appropriations Bill Text

FY2018	FY2019	
Enacted, P.L. 115-141	**House-reported, H.R. 5961**	**Senate-passed, H.R. 6147**
Conservation Operation. Directs $5.6 million of CO to WFPO projects providing water to rural communities (**Title II**).	No comparable provision.	Same as FY2018 enacted (**Title II**).
Watershed Operations. Limits the application of the 250,000-acre limitation in WFPO to only activities where the primary purpose is flood prevention (**Title II**).	Similar to FY2018 enacted (**Title II**).	Similar to FY2018 enacted (**Title II**).
Directs $50 million of available funds to be allocated to projects that commence promptly, address select regional priorities, or are authorized under the Flood Control Act of 1944 (**Title II**).	Similar to FY2018 enacted (**Title II**).	Similar to FY2018 enacted (**Title II**).
Watershed Rehabilitation. Directs $5 million to states with high-hazard dams that have incurred fatal flooding events (**Title II**).	Similar to FY2018 enacted (**Title II**).	No comparable provision.
Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA). Allows AMA funds to remain available until expended (**§707**).	Similar to FY2018 enacted (**§707**).	Similar to FY2018 enacted (**§707**).

[14] The provision applies to the $150 million appropriated in FY2018 and any funds previously provided. Since WFPO funding is available until expended, it is possible that the waiver could carry forward into future fiscal years but only for funds made available in FY2018 and before.

Conservation Reserve Program. Provides $1 million for a CRP bottomland hardwood tree pilot program (**§743**).	No comparable provision.	Similar to FY2018 enacted (**§739**).
Water Bank. Provides $4 million for the Water Bank program (**§745**).	No comparable provision.	Similar to FY2018 enacted (**§741**).
Hardwood Tree Pilot. Provides $600,000 for a pilot program for nonindustrial private forest lands in Gulf Coast states impacted by Hurricane Katrina in 2005 (**§767**).	No comparable provision.	No comparable provision.
No comparable provision.	No comparable provision.	**Ocelots.** Requires a report to Congress on ocelot (wild cat) conservation through NRCS programs (**§762**).

Source: CRS.

The explanatory statement that accompanies the final appropriation—and the House and Senate report language that accompanies the committee-reported bills—may also provide policy instructions. These documents do not have the force of law but often explain congressional intent, which the agencies are expected to follow (see **Table 3**). The committee reports and explanatory statement may need to be read together to capture all of the congressional intent for a given fiscal year.[15]

Table 3 compares some of the policy provisions that have been identified in the FY2018 and FY2019 Agriculture appropriations reported language related to conservation. The FY2018 enacted report language column includes references to the House (H) and Senate (S) report language, as well as the enacted (E) explanatory statement to better capture congressional intent for FY2018. Many of these provisions have been included in past years' appropriations laws. Some provisions in report language and bill text address conservation programs not authorized or funded within the annual appropriation (i.e., mandatory spending for farm-bill-authorized programs).

Table 3. Selected Conservation Policy Provisions in the FY2018 and FY2019 Appropriations Report Language

FY2018	FY2019	
Enacted Report Language[0]	**House Committee Report, H.Rept. 115-706**	**Senate Committee Report, S.Rept. 115-259**
Conservation Operations. Directs NRCS to provide flexibility to state conservation officers in determining human resource needs (**E**).	No comparable provision.	No comparable provision.

[15] According to the FY2018 Explanatory Statement, "The explanatory statement is silent on provisions that were in both the House Report (H.Rept. 115-232) and Senate Report (S.Rept. 115-131) that remain unchanged by this agreement, except as noted in this explanatory statement.... The House and Senate report language that is not changed by the explanatory statement is approved and indicates congressional intentions. The explanatory statement, while repeating some report language for emphasis, does not intend to negate the language referred to above unless expressly provided herein." U.S. Congress, House Committee on Appropriations, *Committee Print on H.R. 1625/Public Law 151-141, Book 1—Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018*, 115th Congress, 2nd session, 29-456 (Washington, DC: GPO, 2018), https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CPRT-115HPRT29456/pdf/CPRT-115HPRT29456.pdf.

FY2018	FY2019	
Enacted Report Language[0]	**House Committee Report, H.Rept. 115-706**	**Senate Committee Report, S.Rept. 115-259**
Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP). Encourages NRCS to work with state and local partners to address ecological needs (**H**). Concerned about delays and deed terms (**S**).	Similar to FY2018 enacted.	No comparable provision.
Cheat Grass Eradication. Encourages NRCS to assist with cheat grass eradication, control, and fuel reduction (**H**).	Similar to FY2018 enacted.	No comparable provision.
Community Colleges. Encourages NRCS to collaborate with community colleges on conservation technology (**H**).	Similar to FY2018 enacted.	No comparable provision.
Floodplain Buyouts. Encourages NRCS to consider the unintended consequences of floodplain buyouts (**H**).	Similar to FY2018 enacted.	No comparable provision.
Harmful Algal Blooms. Supports NRCS's soil erosion prevention efforts (**H**).	Similar to FY2018 enacted.	No comparable provision.
Herbicide Resistance. Encourages NRCS to ensure staff are aware of herbicide resistant weed challenges (**H**).	Similar to FY2018 enacted.	No comparable provision.
Irrigation. Encourages NRCS to expand irrigation infrastructure assistance (**H**).	No comparable provision.	No comparable provision.
Locally Led Conservation. Encourages collaboration between NRCS and state, local, tribal, and partners (**H**).	Similar to FY2018 enacted.	No comparable provision.
Milkweed. Encourages NRCS to increase benefits for milkweed and monarch butterfly habitat (**H**).	Similar to FY2018 enacted.	No comparable provision.
Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). Encourages NRCS to consider organic producers' needs under RCPP (**H**). Concerned about technical assistance reimbursement (**S**).	Similar to FY2018 enacted.	No comparable provision.
Resource Conservation and Development Councils (RC&Ds). Encourages NRCS to continue working with RC&Ds (**H & S**).	Similar to FY2018 enacted.	No comparable provision.
Sage Grouse Initiative. Supports the initiative (**H**).	Similar to FY2018 enacted.	No comparable provision.
Continuous CRP. Encourages the enrollment of State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement practices under CRP (**S**).	No comparable provision.	Similar to FY2018 enacted.
Wetlands Mitigation. Encourages USDA to use a 1-to-1 acre ratio for wetlands mitigation requirements (**S**).	No comparable provision.	Similar to FY2018 enacted.
Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) Program. Encourages USDA to establish pilot projects related to food safety (**S**).	No comparable provision.	Similar to FY2018 enacted.
Salton Sea. Encourages NRCS to work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the State of California to restore the Salton Sea (**S**).	No comparable provision.	No comparable provision.
Technical Assistance. Directs NRCS to record and report total technical assistance levels to Congress (**S**).	No comparable provision.	Similar to FY2018 enacted.

FY2018	FY2019	
Enacted Report Language[0]	**House Committee Report, H.Rept. 115-706**	**Senate Committee Report, S.Rept. 115-259**
CRP Commodity Food Plots. Directs the CCC to amend CRP policies and practices to permit current and future participants to plant but not harvest agricultural commodity crops as wildlife food plots on up to 10% of the enrolled land (**S**).	No comparable provision.	Similar to FY2018 enacted.
No comparable provision.	**National Marine Sanctuaries (NMS).** Encourages NRCS to continue to collaborate with NMS.	No comparable provision.
No comparable provision.	**Irrigation Water Use.** Encourages USDA to develop new conservation and irrigation techniques to reduce agricultural water use.	No comparable provision.
No comparable provision.	No comparable provision.	**Conservation Practices.** Encourages NRCS to prioritize EQIP practices that score highly on the Conservation Practices Physical Effects matrix.
No comparable provision.	No comparable provision.	**NRCS Staffing.** Directs NRCS to provide staffing levels to Congress.
No comparable provision.	No comparable provision.	**Program Duplication.** Directs NRCS to report to Congress on program duplication identified in inspector general reports.

Source: CRS.

Note:

a. Provisions listed in the enacted FY2018 Explanatory Statement are cited as (**E**) and may be found at U.S. Congress, House Committee on Appropriations, *Committee Print on H.R. 1625/Public Law 151-141*, *Book 1—Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018*, 115th Congress, 2nd session, 29-456 (Washington, DC: GPO, 2018), https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CPRT-115HPRT29456/pdf/CPRT-115HPRT29456.pdf. Provisions listed in the House report (H.Rept. 115-232) are cited as (**H**). Provisions listed in the Senate report (S.Rept. 115-131) are cited as (**S**). All provisions within this column appear under Title II of the cited report.

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