Perspectives from the Field/Conservation: U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry - Testimony of Brad Doyle (Arkansas Farm Bureau



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The United States Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry held a May 13th hearing titled:

Perspectives from the Field, Part 4: Conservation ("Hearing").

United States Senator John Boozman (Arkansas) serves as the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry.

Mr. Brad Doyle, who is a member of the Arkansas Farm Bureau, was one of the five witnesses. Mr. Doyle's testimony addressed in part:

- Congressional support for agriculture for the past 90 years.
- Review of the first farm bill (1985) which provided the first federally-funded land retirement program.
- Described the conservation title as providing a mechanism to provide financial and technical support for farmers and ranchers who voluntarily implement conservation practices to preserve land, water and air quality; provide wildlife habitat; and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Notes Arkansas received $188 million in FY 2020 from the Conservation Stewardship Program.
- Provided an overview of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program ("EQUIP") which provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers to address natural resource concerns.
- References the Inflation Reduction Act which provided $18.05 billion for working land programs to allow more producers to access such programs to implement conservation practices.
- Stated that Congress must act on a new farm bill to provide farmers with an adequate safety net.
- Expressed concern that the current state of the U.S. agricultural economy reveals a widening and unsustainable gap between the prices farmers are paid for their products and the prices they must pay to produce them (referencing a third consecutive year of tighter negative margins for farmers).
- States that American farm families urgently need durable, forward-looking policy solutions that update reference prices in ARC and PLC to reflect today's actual production costs; expanding crop insurance options that better protect against margin loss; increase funding for working lands conservation programs like EQIP and CSP; doubling export development funding through MAP and FMD; and modernizing disaster assistance to deliver timely, predictable relief.

The other witnesses at the Hearing included:

- Mr. Gary Blair
- President, National Association of Conservation Districts, Starkville, MS.
- Mr. Lynn Tjeerdsma
- Member, Board of Directors, Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever, Platte, SD.
- Mr. Chad Ellis
- Chief Executive Officer, Texas Agricultural Land Trust, San Antonio, TX
- Mrs. Megan Dwyer
- Director of Conservation and Nutrient Stewardship, Illinois Corn Growers Association, Coal Valley, IL.

A link to the Hearing information including the witness testimonies can be found here.