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FORMER USDA-APPOINTEE JOINS RURAL INVESTMENT TO PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT (RIPE) LEADERSHIP

Former Risk Management Agency Administrator Martin R. Barbre named vice president of engagement and government relations

WASHINGTON, Dec. 7, 2021 — Rural Investment to Protect our Environment (RIPE), a farmer-led nonprofit advancing a groundbreaking, bipartisan climate policy plan, is excited to announce that agriculture industry veteran and lifelong farmer Martin R. Barbre has been named vice president of engagement and government relations.



In his new role, Barbre is responsible for increasing farm leader and farm group engagement with RIPE as well as leading the government affairs team. Among other duties, he will lead the outreach team to strategize and partner with an expanded coalition of commodity and trade organizations to help advance the RIPE100 policy.

“The RIPE100 plan would incentivize more farmers to implement environmentally friendly conservation practices in a way that no other policy has done before,” Barbre said. “Farmers deserve to be paid for the total public value of their stewardship practices, and the RIPE100 plan will do exactly that. I am eager to work with farmers to build a policy that works for them and to increase legislative engagement on the policy.”

Barbre has a long career working on behalf of farmers. He is a past president of the National Corn Growers Association Corn Board, where he led negotiations for the 2014 Farm Bill on behalf of corn farmers across the country, and is a member of the Illinois Corn Growers Association. Barbre has chaired all committees of the Illinois Corn Board, was chair of the National Corn Growers Association Biotechnology Working Group and served on the White County Farm Bureau Board for 24 years.

Most recently, Barbre was CEO of MyAgData. Prior to that, he was appointed administrator of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Risk Management Agency by then-Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue. In his role, in which he served from April 2018 to January 2021, he met with producers across the country to learn how crop insurance worked for them and what could be done to improve their coverage. Barbre took that feedback to Washington, where he worked with RMA staff to update several policies to benefit farmers. His position as RMA administrator followed a previous appointment by Perdue to be a member of USDA’s Illinois Farm Service Agency State Committee.

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“Martin was a leader in forming the farmer-environmentalist coalition that successfully expanded crop insurance with conservation compliance, demonstrating the powerful potential of that coalition to transform partisan divides into constructive win-wins for farmers and the environment,” said RIPE Executive Director Aliza Wasserman-Drewes. “We are thrilled that he is joining our team to apply that model to shape a climate policy that works for farmers’ bottom line and delivers tremendous public benefits with a bipartisan model.”

A lifelong farmer, Barbre owns Chestin Farms LLC in southern Illinois with his son. Together, they farm 6,000 acres of corn, soybeans and wheat using conservation practices such as cover crops and no-till farming. Barbre splits his time between the farm and western Kentucky.

About RIPE

Rural Investment to Protect our Environment (RIPE) is a farmer-led nonprofit advancing a national bipartisan, comprehensive climate policy that invests in voluntary agricultural stewardship practices that provide a reasonable return to farmers and the public. Through \$100 per acre payments, the RIPE100 plan would reward farmers for the total public value of their conservation practices, including no-till, cover crops and more. In addition to climate change mitigation, the voluntary federal program would pay for improved soil health, cleaner water, biodiversity and other environmental services. For RIPE policy updates, position statements and more information, visit RIPEroadmap.org.