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IRA OFFERS OPPORTUNITY TO SHIFT FROM COST-SHARE TO REASONABLE RETURN FOR AG PRODUCERS

Producer-Led RIPE Urges Better Deal for Farmers and Ranchers

WASHINGTON, Aug. 17, 2022 — [Rural Investment to Protect our Environment \(RIPE\)](#), a producer-led nonprofit advancing a unique, bipartisan climate policy plan that works for farmers, ranchers and the public, applauds the inclusion of \$20 billion for climate-smart agricultural practices in the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) but urges legislators to shift funds away from the cost-share model in favor of payments that provide producers with a reasonable return for conservation.

RIPE advocates for the implementation of the research-backed RIPE100 policy, which would allow farmers and ranchers to earn payments that reflect the benefits they deliver to soil health, water, air and climate combined, with a price floor above implementation cost, economic risks and future climate policy costs.

While the IRA offers significant funding to working land conservation programs, most producers will not seek to use them because the payment terms are limited to cost-share requirements.

Farmers and ranchers want to invest in conservation practices, but a cost-share model leaves them to bear risks without a market opportunity. Most producers are unable to assume those costs and struggle with the enrollment process in current conservation programs.

“No one expects clean energy companies to invest at a cost-share, so why are farmers expected to?” said RIPE Executive Director Aliza Drewes. “We believe that new funds intended for climate-smart agriculture should set payment levels to cover the full cost of practice implementation, potential climate policy costs such as increased input costs like fuel and fertilizer, and address economic losses during the transition to new practices. Senior policymakers in both parties have told us they are open to this pathway, but they need to hear from producers that this is what they want.”

“It’s encouraging that Congress sees conservation as worthy of this \$20 billion investment,” said RIPE board Vice President Eunie Biel, a dairy farmer who also serves on the Minnesota Farmers Union full board. “As producers, we can build on this momentum and ask legislators to transform some of this funding from cost-share to a reasonable return.”

To make the RIPE100 policy a reality, producers must urge their commodities and trade organizations to take action and advocate that new money for climate-smart conservation payments be moved from cost-share to reasonable return.

For information, visit RIPEroadmap.org.