

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 29, 2026

The Honorable Brooke Rollins
Secretary U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Rollins,

We write to you as Co-Chairs of the House Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition (SEEC) Climate and Agriculture Task Force, dedicated to advancing regenerative agriculture with strong standards and building climate-resilient food systems policies. With the unveiling of the Regenerative Agriculture Pilot Program at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), we urge you to use this program to enhance the adoption of regenerative agriculture practices that help make America's farms and food supply chain more resilient.

In the midst of a rapidly changing climate, and as farmers are facing skyrocketing input costs, the need for regenerative agriculture solutions for America's farms is more urgent than ever. This year, farmers across the nation faced one of the hottest and driest summers on record¹. At the same time, farms have been facing a soil crisis, with over a third of our agricultural soils in the U.S. Corn Belt severely degraded² and an overall topsoil loss rate of 4.6 tons per acre, representing a total of 1.7 billion tons of soil lost each year.³ Topsoil loss, extreme flooding, drought, erosion and depleted water resources are costing American farmers — at minimum — a staggering \$44 billion dollars annually.⁴

Regenerative agriculture poses both a mitigation and adaption technique to address the widespread impacts of extreme weather on American farms. Improving soil health through regenerative agriculture can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, bolster resilience to extreme weather events, reduce the need for chemical inputs, and increase yields and farmer profits. Restoring soil health through practices like cover cropping, perennial planting, and expanded biodiversity measures can enhance drought resilience, improve water and nutrient retention, and build long-term economic and food security for our farmers and the American people.

¹ <https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/news/national-climate-202608>

² <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7923383/>

³ https://alluvialsoillab.com/blogs/soil-analysis/how-climate-change-is-transforming-north-american-soil?srsId=AU7gw4VCitf6t-zksG35V4G-1S_gXI6MYfFsf6qhkBbJ219ANbvOIIUv

⁴ <https://scientificdiscoveries.ars.usda.gov/tellus/stories/articles/ars-doubles-down-on-soil-erosion-understanding-modeling>

We request additional information we believe is critical to understanding the success of the program:

1. To date, what funding amounts have been awarded to farmers under the new Regenerative Agriculture Pilot Program at the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service? How many contracts have been awarded?
2. Please share a breakdown of the practices supported through the program, and how much funding supported each practice.
3. Please provide information about demand – were there more applications than funds available?
4. How did USDA rank applications?
5. What outreach was done by USDA to ensure farmers were aware of the program?
6. Will USDA solicit feedback from farmers who applied for the program and farmers who received funding through the program?
7. How is USDA measuring regenerative outcomes?
8. Does USDA intend to provide another round of funding? If so, will additional practices be added to the primary practice list?
9. The pilot announcement noted the establishment of a Chief's Regenerative Agriculture Advisory Council that gives farmers, consumers, and private partners a seat at the table, ensuring NRCS programs remain practical, transparent, and responsive to real-world needs. Have members of the council been appointed?

To successfully deploy this program, we urge you to ensure that the NRCS is fully staffed and equipped with the knowledge and resources to guide producers through the program. In addition, we recommend a commitment to an approach that provides clear metrics of success for producers and consistent soil health measurement methodologies.

We reiterate that the Regenerative Agriculture Pilot Program is an exciting new opportunity for our farmers that, if deployed successfully, can help protect and strengthen America's farms. We are committed to working with you to ensure that NRCS has the tools and capabilities to assist our farmers in successfully deploying the Regenerative Agriculture Pilot Program.

Sincerely,



Rep. Chellie Pingree
SEEC Climate & Agriculture
Task Force Co-Chair



Rep. Kim Schrier, M.D.
SEEC Climate & Agriculture
Task Force Co-Chair