

# Empowering States for Emission-Free Power: Unleashing IRA's Agriculture and Forestry Initiatives

Though only 10% of US emissions in 2021 ([Sources of Greenhouse Gas Emissions | US EPA](#)), reducing emissions from agriculture is vital for states and the U.S. to reduce their climate pollution. The agriculture sector could reduce greenhouse gas emissions by making their electricity sources more renewable, reducing methane emissions from livestock and rice production, and adopting climate-smart agricultural practices. The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) has financial and technical assistance to support all of those efforts as well as others to promote conservation.

Land use and forestry offset 12% of US emissions in 2021 ([Sources of Greenhouse Gas Emissions | US EPA](#)), showcasing the importance of protecting and expanding forests and other lands to meet U.S. climate goals. As wildfires and extreme temperatures are on the rise in the United States, investment in land management to protect natural resources and grow the land sink is more vital than ever. To reduce emissions and protect natural resources, key policies include reforestation, conservation, ecosystem restoration, and mitigating risk from extreme weather events and ecosystem degradation.

**Altogether, these policies amount to over \$30 billion in funding, excluding cross-cutting measures such as the Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG).**

## Highlights

- ▶ IRA provides new funding for farmers and landowners to implement climate-smart agriculture and conservation programs previously inaccessible
- ▶ \$5 billion in funding for forest health treatments to protect communities from wildfire and other environmental hazards (i.e. Forest Legacy Program, State and Private Landscape-scale Restoration Program)
- ▶ IRA provides billions in funding for conservation projects (i.e. Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP))
- ▶ Rural electric cooperatives can utilize nearly \$10 billion in funding in the form of loans and competitive grants for deploying and purchasing clean energy
- ▶ IRA's additional \$18.05 billion bolsters and extends many of the 2018 Farm Bill's conservation programs.

## Implementation Opportunities in the Inflation Reduction Act

1. States can ensure that conservation, climate, and other farm bill investments address previous inequities and reach historically underserved and underfunded agricultural producers and communities.
2. Intensifying wildfires and other extreme weather events highlight the need to prioritize protecting our natural resources, IRA funding can be directed toward protecting vulnerable forests before and after a disaster occurs.
3. To complement federal assistance, states can encourage partnerships to help eligible groups get the technical assistance needed to create programs, apply for grants, and successfully implement policies.
4. Outreach, education, and technical assistance will be essential for eligible groups to take advantage of the \$30 billion set aside for climate-smart agricultural practices and forest and land-use conservation and management programs.
5. Focusing on equity, states, local governments, and partner organizations can prioritize reaching rural communities that are traditionally left behind to promote awareness of IRA benefits and assist with applications for IRA funds
6. States, tribal organizations, and local governments can take advantage of IRA funding to implement their own conservation and land-use management policies (ex. Pennsylvania's [Riparian Buffer Initiative](#))

# Key Provisions of the Inflation Reduction Act

## Provision

## Challenges

## Opportunities



**Environmental Quality Incentives Program (sec. 21001(a)(1) - \$8.5 billion)**

Many agricultural producers lack the knowledge and funding to institute climate-smart agricultural practices

Federal, state, and local government officials, as well as partner organizations, can address barriers to engagement through educational programs and information campaigns to ensure eligible farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners are aware of this program



**Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (sec. 21001(a)(3) - \$1.4 billion)**

Encroaching development and extreme weather events (ex. wildfires) threaten natural land resources including farmland

Eligible groups (state and local agencies, land trusts, tribal groups and private landowners) utilize land easements to directly conserve vital land resources and protect carbon sinks directly



**Regional Conservation Partnership Program (sec. 21001(a)(4) - \$5 billion)**

Ensuring as many local regions are represented and involved in the program

Strategic partnerships help ease capacity constraints that often prevent producers, landowners, and communities from applying for grants and programs while providing expert technical assistance



**Wood Innovations Grant Program (sec. 23002(a)(5) - \$100 million)**

Innovative wood products (ex. mass timber and biomass) can mitigate climate change but must be sourced sustainably

Expanding funding for this grant program can stimulate and expand the U.S. wood products market while retaining its focus on promoting long-term management of forest lands; brings innovation to a growing resource in the fight against climate change



**Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP - sec. 21001(a)(2) - \$3.3 billion)**

Many farmers and ranchers lack the technical and financial capacity to implement conservation efforts

Federal, state, and local government officials can amplify the impact of this program through outreach and education to farmers and ranchers, providing guidance for conservation plan development



**Forest Legacy Program (sec. 23003(a)(1) - \$700 million)**

Forest land loss from urbanization, industries, and extreme weather events like wildfires threaten vital carbon sinks

States can leverage this program to conserve the most ecologically and economically important forests that are vulnerable to conversion to non-forest uses.



**Landscape-scale Restoration Program (23002(a)(1-4), \$450 million)**

Private and underserved landowners can be financially incentivized to turn their forests into timber but retaining those forests as sinks is vital

State forestry departments and local leaders can help private landowners, with specific focus on underserved landowners, apply for available grants from these programs to make their forests climate resilient



**USFS Urban and Community Forestry (sec. 23003(a)(2) - \$1.5 billion)**

The lack of adequate tree coverage in urban areas worsens air quality and heat.

To promote equity, the urban forestry program should prioritize funding for LMI and disadvantaged communities, give states and local governments an opportunity to provide technical assistance for these competitive grants, and ensure all are involved in the program



**Rural Energy for America Program (REAP - sec. 22002 - \$2 billion)**

Rural businesses and agricultural producers are often left behind and have unique energy needs

Administered by the USDA, this program supports rural businesses and agricultural producers in investing in energy efficiency improvements and renewable energy



**Assistance for Distressed Borrowers (sec. 22006 - \$3.1 billion)**

American farmers are currently struggling to keep up with rising costs

Government officials can direct significant funding to small farms in the \$3.1 billion allocated by the IRA to help struggling farm loan borrowers facing financial risk to address the historical inequities in farm bill funding

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## Additional Information

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