

FARM BILL WISHLIST



Every five years, the U.S. Farm Bill comes up for renewal. This cycle, Scenic Hudson has focused its policy efforts on three key areas that address changing environmental conditions and the equitable distribution of funds and opportunities.

1 Expand Conservation Programs to Include Small Farms & Underrepresented Farmers

While the Farm Bill contains the biggest investment in land conservation in the U.S., it's not enough. More than half of the farms that apply for conservation funding are turned down, and lack of funds is a key reason. Money from the Inflation Reduction Act is helping to make up the gap. At a minimum, we want the current level of funding to remain, and we want new and underrepresented farmers to get better access to these programs.

Most farm subsidies benefit the largest 10% of farms. But small farms make up the vast majority of farms in the U.S. In the Northeast, the average size is 130 acres. It's time to balance the scales. We're asking for conservation rules to be modified to be more equitable for small farms enrolled in soil health programs.

2 Keep Urban Farms & Community Gardens Growing

The Northeast is home to the most populated areas in the country, and urban agriculture plays a significant role in providing nutritious food and growing community. Startup and labor costs are often more expensive in urban settings, so we are asking for additional support for local communities and organizations who operate community gardens and urban farms, especially in underserved communities.

3 Promote Soil Health & Regenerative Practices

An important way to fight climate change is to build healthy soils and farm in a way that replenishes the land instead of depleting it. We are advocating to expand and increase technical support for soil health initiatives to help farmers, researchers, groups, and organizations — like nonprofits and Soil and Water Conservation Districts — advance their knowledge and practices.

