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The Impact of the Federal Funding Freeze

on Pasa's Climate-Smart program and the farmers it serves from Maine to South Carolina

Pasa Sustainable Agriculture's Climate-Smart Farming & Marketing Program supports farms from Maine to South Carolina. Contracted through USDA's Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities program, this pilot project has already delivered \$1,878,529 in direct funding to 143 farms across 15 states. An additional 663 farms in 238 counties are actively engaged in the program, with \$1,701,928 in shovel-ready projects awaiting contract signature and funding disbursement. Planned was \$19,890,000 in additional support to continue to install conservation practices over the next three years, as well as \$13,000,000 in tailored, on-farm technical assistance. These investments are aimed at ensuring that farmers are able to adopt sustainable practices that protect soil health, improve water quality, enhance productivity, increase food system resilience, and contribute to economically viable farm businesses.

Detailed information on the impact in each state starts on page 2.

The urgent need for action

The indefinite freeze on committed funding disrupts these efforts, leaving farmers uncertain about the future of their businesses. Without immediate resolution, Pennsylvania farmers, and the broader regional food system, face significant financial and operational setbacks. To preserve the integrity of federal commitments and prevent lasting economic, environmental, and social harm, we urge swift action from states to advocate for this program alongside other USDA Partnership for Climate Smart Commodity programs nationwide.

Farmer impact story

One Pennsylvania farmer enrolled in the program had planned to install a wildlife exclusion fence to prevent crop loss; establish windbreaks that would both protect crops and produce additional harvests; and plant conservation cover to support honey bee forage. These steps were part of a carefully planned investment in the farm's future and would have allowed them to expand their offerings and secure reliable harvests. This farmer worked over several months with a local fencing company, spending more than 40 hours designing and quoting a fence that was approved for funding.

“Now, with the federal funding freeze, my contract is stalled, leaving me unable to move forward. Losing time on critical projects means losing years of future production. This doesn't just affect my farm—it affects my suppliers, the businesses I work with, and my customers who rely on my produce.”

Why this program must be saved

Strengthening farm businesses and regional economies

By providing technical assistance in conservation planning, Pasa and its partners in each state help farmers mitigate risks and expand operations, improving long-term financial viability. Technical Assistance Providers provide one-on-one support to farmers in addressing soil erosion, pest pressure, crop planning, livestock productivity, and water quality through site analyses, field-based recommendations, and access to environmental data. These services are critical in helping farms withstand extreme weather events like flooding and drought, helping to maintain their economic vitality and build local and regional food security. Without these resources, farmers may struggle to implement effective solutions, leading to lost revenue, higher production costs, and reduced resilience to market disruptions.

These funds also have a multiplier effect on the local economy. Dollars allocated to farm projects flow into rural communities, supporting contractors, agribusinesses, supply chain workers, and retail businesses. Additionally, the loss of this funding threatens already high food prices, as farmers face greater financial risks and climate-induced losses, costs inevitably passed on to consumers.

Environmental resilience

Pasa's program plays a crucial role in advancing conservation efforts that benefit Pennsylvania's environment and beyond. By investing in soil health, sustainable water management, and biodiversity, the program reduces agricultural runoff, improves carbon sequestration, increases water and air quality, and enhances ecosystem resilience. These climate-smart investments safeguard both farm productivity and environmental integrity, ensuring a sustainable food system for future generations.

The impact state by state

In Connecticut, 20 farms in 7 counties are actively engaged in the program. Over the next three years, \$600,000 in potential funding is poised to support farmers in the state.

In Delaware, 1 farmer is awaiting up to \$30,000 in potential funding for their farm conservation project.

In Massachusetts, the program has already delivered \$62,780 in direct funding to 8 farms. Statewide, 79 farms in 11 counties are actively engaged in the program, with \$13,312 in shovel-ready projects awaiting contract signature and funding disbursement. Over the next three years, \$2,370,000 in potential funding is poised to support farmers in the state.

In Maryland, the program has already delivered \$26,580 in direct funding to 2 farms. Statewide, 41 farms in 15 counties are actively engaged in the program, with \$47,506 in shovel-ready projects awaiting contract signature and funding disbursement. Over the next three years, \$1,230,000 in potential funding is poised to support farmers in the state.

In Maine, the program has already delivered \$257,854 in direct funding to 27 farms. Statewide, 29 farms in 13 counties are actively engaged in the program, with \$73,338 in shovel-ready projects awaiting contract signature and funding disbursement. Over the next three years, \$870,000 in potential funding is poised to support farmers in the state.

In North Carolina, while the flooding from Hurricane Helene initially delayed participation, 36 farms in 25 counties are actively engaged in the program. Over the next three years, \$1,080,000 in potential funding is poised to support farmers in the state.

In New Hampshire, the program has already delivered \$29,537 in direct funding to 4 farms. Statewide, 11 farms in 6 counties are actively engaged in the program, with \$13,640 in shovel-ready projects awaiting contract signature and funding disbursement. Over the next three years, \$330,000 in potential funding is poised to support farmers in the state.

In New Jersey, 47 farms in 12 counties are actively engaged in the program. Over the next three years, \$1,410,000 in potential funding is poised to support farmers in the state.

In New York, the program has already delivered \$264,629 in direct funding to 21 farms. Statewide, 107 farms in 42 counties are actively engaged in the program, with \$636,028 in shovel-ready projects awaiting contract signature and funding disbursement. Over the next three years, \$3,210,000 in potential funding is poised to support farmers in the state.

In Pennsylvania, the program has already delivered \$1,033,635 in direct funding to 61 farms. Statewide, 202 farms in 53 counties are actively engaged in the program, with \$641,335 in shovel-ready projects awaiting contract signature and funding disbursement. Over the next three years, \$6,060,000 in potential funding is poised to support farmers in the state.

In Rhode Island, 4 farms in 2 counties are actively engaged in the program. Over the next three years, \$120,000 in potential funding is poised to support farmers in the state.

In South Carolina, 12 farms in 9 counties are actively engaged in the program. Over the next three years, \$360,000 in potential funding is poised to support farmers in the state.

In Virginia, the program has already delivered \$37,410 in direct funding to 5 farms. Statewide, 21 farms in 23 counties are actively engaged in the program, with \$59,260 in shovel-ready projects awaiting contract signature and funding disbursement. Over the next three years, \$630,000 in potential funding is poised to support farmers in the state.

In Vermont, the program has already delivered \$116,924 in direct funding to 12 farms across 13 Vermont counties. Statewide, 49 farms in 13 counties are actively engaged in the program, with \$213,451 in shovel-ready projects awaiting contract signature and funding disbursement. Over the next three years, \$1,470,000 in potential funding is poised to support farmers in the state.

In West Virginia, 4 farms in 6 counties are actively engaged in the program. Over the next three years, \$120,000 in potential funding is poised to support farmers in the state.