



# Citizens' Climate Lobby

## Growing Climate Solutions Act Provisions

### (Consolidated Appropriations Act)

The bipartisan Growing Climate Solutions Act (GCSA) was introduced by Sen. Mike Braun (R-IN) and Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) in the Senate, and Rep. Abigail Spanberger (D-VA) and Rep. Don Bacon (R-NE) in the House. The GCSA was reported out of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee on 4/22/2021. On 6/24/21, it passed the Senate with [92 Yeas and 8 Nos](#). Of the 92 Yeas, 47 of them were Republican, 44 Democrat, and 1 Independent, further emphasizing the immense bipartisan support for this legislation.

Most of the text and provisions within the Growing Climate Solutions Act were advanced in the bipartisan end-of-the-year omnibus. The [Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2022](#) passed the Senate with 68 Yeas and 29 Nos and the House with 225 Yeas and 201 Nos. President Biden [signed](#) the bill on 12/23/22. While there are few impacts to the overall effect of the original Growing Climate Solutions Act provisions, there are changes within the final text of the bipartisan omnibus legislation. Here are the differences between what was in the Growing Climate Solutions Act and what was in the final omnibus text:

### **Growing Climate Solutions Act**

- Establishes a *Greenhouse Gas Technical Assistance Provider and Third-Party Verifier Certification Program* through which the USDA will be able to provide transparency, legitimacy, and informal endorsement of third-party verifiers and technical service providers that help private landowners generate carbon credits.
- Enables the USDA to publish protocols and standards for existing carbon credit markets widely used across agriculture and forestry and help connect landowners to private sector actors who can assist the landowners in implementing the protocols and monetizing the climate value of their sustainable practices.
- Empowers third-party entities certified under the program to claim the status of being “USDA Certified.” The certification lowers barriers to entry in the credit markets for farmers looking to implement practices that capture or reduce carbon emissions, improve soil health, and make operations more sustainable.
- Provides the Secretary of Agriculture with an advisory council of agriculture experts, scientists, producers, and others. The advisory council shall advise the Secretary and ensure that the certification program remains relevant, credible, and responsive to the needs of farmers, forest landowners, and carbon market participants alike.
- Instructs the USDA to produce a report to Congress to advise about the further development of this policy area including: barriers to market entry, challenges raised by farmers and forest landowners, market performance, and suggestions on where the USDA can make a positive contribution to the further adoption of voluntary carbon reducing and sequestering practices in agriculture and forestry.



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## Final Omnibus Bill Text

- Establish a Greenhouse Gas Technical Assistance Provider and Third-Party Verifier Program through which the USDA will be able to provide information for third party verifiers and technical service providers to private landowners so they may more easily generate carbon credits and access carbon markets.
- Enable the USDA to publish best practices for activities that prevent, reduce, or mitigate greenhouse gas emissions used across agriculture and forestry and help connect landowners to private and public sector actors who can assist the landowners in implementing the protocols and monetizing the climate value of their sustainable practices.
- It would also direct USDA and the EPA to conduct an assessment and report on carbon markets, the numbers of carbon credits, barriers to enter these markets and the need for greater education on carbon markets along with other information.
- Elevate participation in voluntary carbon markets by socially disadvantaged, limited resource, or veteran farmers

## Not Included:

- Third-party entities certification under the program to claim the status of being “USDA Certified”. The certification was replaced with a “registration” option instead. Restrictions were included to ensure USDA couldn’t use an internal fund to implement the program or expand it unilaterally.
- Previously, the Secretary of Agriculture would recognize that covered entities certified under the Program shall maintain expertise in the protocols and adhere to the requirements. In the final text, this requirement was removed.

Additionally attached to the Growing Climate Solutions Act is the SUSTAINS Act, which authorizes the Natural Resources Conservation Service to accept contributions of non-federal funds to support a broader range of conservation programs. The Growing Climate Solutions Act and the SUSTAINS Act demonstrate the strong desire for Republicans and Democrats to come together on climate solutions. Citizens' Climate Lobby applauds the inclusion of the key provisions of the Growing Climate Solutions Act within the end-of-the-year omnibus package. We look forward to continued bipartisan action on climate.