



Citizens' Climate Lobby

Increased TSP Access Act of 2023

([S.1400](#) / [H.R.3036](#))

The bipartisan Increased TSP Access Act of 2023 has been introduced by Sens. Mike Braun (R-IN) and Michael Bennet (D-CO) in the Senate and Reps. James Baird (R-IN-04) and Abigail Spanberger (D-VA-07) in the House. The bill would address the current Technical Service Providers (TSPs) shortage, which is impacting the ability of agricultural producers to fully utilize current conservation and climate programs.

As extreme weather events increase in frequency and strength, we are seeing increasingly devastating effects throughout our agricultural and food systems. Farmers, ranchers and forest-owners are on the front lines of climate change and can also mitigate its effects through resilient and climate-smart practices.

TSPs help producers to access USDA conservation programs through one-on-one assistance. For example, TSPs can help producers to develop grazing management plans, nutrient management plans and sustainable forestry plans. TSPs will be key to leveraging the recent \$20 billion investment in agricultural conservation programs and conservation technical assistance.

USDA's current TSP program has failed to adequately train and certify TSPs, even though the 2018 Farm Bill included language (Section 2502) that would allow USDA to approve non-Federal entities to certify TSPs. The Increased TSP Access Act would address the TSP shortage by expanding on the framework first envisioned in the 2018 Farm Bill.

- **Non-Federal Certifying Entities:** The bill directs USDA to establish a process to approve non-Federal certifying entities within 180 days of enactment. The bill ensures that USDA's process will allow agricultural retailers, conservation organizations, cooperatives, professional societies and service providers to become certifying entities. It also puts clear deadlines on USDA to ensure that the agency is responsive in administering the program.
- **Streamlined Certification:** The bill directs USDA to establish a streamlined certification process for TSPs who hold appropriate specialty certifications (including certified crop advisors) within 180 days of enactment. This guarantees that applicants with other certifications aren't burdened with duplicative training, but are still trained in the competencies needed to serve as a TSP.
- **Parity in Compensation:** The bill ensures that TSPs—who are often paid using conservation program dollars—are paid the fair market rate for their services.

The Increased TSP Access Act was referred to the House Agriculture Committee, Subcommittee on Conservation, Research and Biotechnology, and to the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry on May 2, 2023, where it awaits consideration.