

March 12, 2020

The Honorable John Thune
United States Senate
Washington, D.C., 20510

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
United States Senate
Washington, D.C., 20510

Dear Senators Thune and Stabenow,

We are writing to express our support for the Cover Crop Flexibility Act of 2020. This bipartisan bill encourages wider use of cover crops by removing roadblocks for farmers who have prevented planting claims and supports research to better understand the risk management benefits of agricultural conservation practices. We believe that this bill is directly aligned with the AGree Coalition's work to assess the risk reduction benefits of practices that reduce erosion and runoff and improve soil health.

The Cover Crop Flexibility Act of 2020 removes a disincentive within the federal crop insurance program that can discourage farmers from planting cover crops after taking a prevented planting claim. This change will allow farmers who are prevented from planting to seed cover crops and thereby salvage minimal value from their fields, while improving soil health and reducing their long-term risk.

The Cover Crop Flexibility Act also directs USDA to conduct a study to examine the extent that cover crops reduce risks of prevented planting and other crop insurance losses. If the study finds risk reductions, it allows USDA to adjust prevented planting factors to provide policies with appropriate lower premiums for farmers using cover crops. This research will increase our understanding about the risk-reduction benefits of cover crops and ensure that federal crop insurance policies acknowledge the connection between conservation, soil health, and agricultural risk.

We are united in support of innovative policies such as the Cover Crop Flexibility Act of 2020 that remove disincentives and increase adoption of farming practices that secure multiple benefits for soil health, risk management, and farm profitability. Thank you for your leadership.

Sincerely,



Deborah M. Atwood
Executive Director of the AGree Economic and Environmental Risk Coalition