

9114
Ag 8/1
G 79/3

Y4
Ag 8/1
G 79/3
GREAT PLAINS CONSERVATION PROGRAM

GOVERNMENT

Storage

HEARINGS

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CONSERVATION AND CREDIT

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-FIRST CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON

H.R. 561, H.R. 2062, H.R. 3854, and H.R. 10134

APRIL 17 AND 18, 1969

Serial D

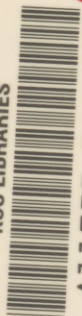
Printed for the use of the Committee on Agriculture



U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

WASHINGTON : 1969

28-621



COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

W. R. POAGE, Texas, *Chairman*

JOHN L. McMILLAN, South Carolina, <i>Vice Chairman</i>	PAGE BELCHER, Oklahoma, <i>Ranking Minority Member</i>
THOMAS G. ABERNETHY, Mississippi	CHARLES M. TEAGUE, California
WATKINS M. ABBITT, Virginia	MRS. CATHERINE MAY, Washington
FRANK A. STUBBLEFIELD, Kentucky	WILLIAM C. WAMPLER, Virginia
GRAHAM PURCELL, Texas	GEORGE A. GOODLING, Pennsylvania
MASTON O'NEAL, Georgia	CLARENCE E. MILLER, Ohio
THOMAS S. FOLEY, Washington	ROBERT B. MATHIAS, California
ELIGIO DE LA GARZA, Texas	WILEY MAYNE, Iowa
JOSEPH P. VIGORITO, Pennsylvania	JOHN M. ZWACH, Minnesota
WALTER B. JONES, North Carolina	THOMAS S. KLEPPE, North Dakota
G. V. MONTGOMERY, Mississippi	ROBERT D. PRICE, Texas
B. F. SISK, California	JOHN T. MYERS, Indiana
BILL ALEXANDER, Arkansas	KEITH SEBELIUS, Kansas
BILL D. BURLISON, Missouri	MARTIN B. MCKNEALLY, New York
ALLARD K. LOWENSTEIN, New York	WILMER D. MIZELL, North Carolina
JOHN R. RARICK, Louisiana	
ED JONES, Tennessee	

JORGE L. CORDOVA, Puerto Rico
Resident Commissioner

Mrs. CHRISTINE S. GALLAGHER, *Clerk*
WILLIAM C. BLACK, *General Counsel*
HYDE H. MURRAY, *Associate Counsel*
L. T. EASLEY, *Staff Consultant*

CONSERVATION AND CREDIT SUBCOMMITTEE

W. R. POAGE, Texas, *Chairman*

FRANK A. STUBBLEFIELD, Kentucky	CHARLES M. TEAGUE, California
ELIGIO DE LA GARZA, Texas	GEORGE A. GOODLING, Pennsylvania
BILL ALEXANDER, Arkansas	WILEY MAYNE, Iowa

(II)

CONTENTS

H.R. 561, a bill to amend section 16 of the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act, as amended, to extend the Great Plains conservation program.....	Page 1
H.R. 10134, a bill to amend the act of August 7, 1956 (70 Stat. 1115), as amended, providing for a Great Plains conservation program.....	2
Statement of:	
Andrews, Hon. Mark, a Representative in Congress from the State of North Dakota.....	11
Bauer, Lyle, area vice president, National Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Harper, Kans.....	51
Berg, Norman A., Associate Administrator, Soil Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.....	20
Denney, Hon. Robert V., a Representative in Congress from the State of Nebraska.....	54
DeVaney, C. H., assistant legislative director, American Farm Bureau Federation.....	43
Evans, Hon. Frank E., a Representative in Congress from the State of Colorado.....	57
Kleppe, Hon. Thomas S., a Representative in Congress from the State of North Dakota.....	7
Mahon, Hon. George H., a Representative in Congress from the State of Texas.....	3
Martin, Hon. David T., a Representative in Congress from the State of Nebraska.....	45
McDonald, Angus, director of research, National Farmers Union.....	59
Mize, Hon. Chester, a Representative in Congress from the State of Kansas.....	58
Pace, Harrison W., vice president, Texas Association of Conservation Contractors, Midland, Tex.....	31
Price, Hon. Robert, a Representative in Congress from the State of Texas.....	18
Purcell, Hon. Graham, a Representative in Congress from the State of Texas.....	56
Sebelius, Hon. Keith G., a Representative in Congress from the State of Kansas.....	47
Shriver, Hon. Garner E., a Representative in Congress from the State of Kansas.....	49
Skubitz, Hon. Joe, a Representative in Congress from the State of Kansas.....	50
Steed, Hon. Tom, a Representative in Congress from the State of Oklahoma.....	19
White, Hon. Richard Crawford, a Representative in Congress from the State of Texas.....	14
Wold, Hon. John S., a Representative in Congress from the State of Wyoming.....	59
Correspondence submitted to the subcommittee:	
Campbell, Hon. J. Phil, Acting Secretary of Agriculture, letter of April 17, 1969, report on H.R. 10134.....	20
Mitchell, Hayes, Jr., Highland Hereford Breeders Association, Marfa, Tex., letter of April 9, 1969.....	17
Mize, Hon. Chester, a Representative in Congress from the State of Kansas, and Congressmen, Keith Sebelius, Garner Shriver, Joe Skubitz, and Larry Winn, letter of April 18, 1969.....	48
Scott, John W., master, National Grange, telegram of April 28, 1969.....	60
Smith, H. N., State conservationist, Soil Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, letter of March 7, 1969.....	16
Additional material submitted to the subcommittee:	
Report of Texas Conservation Contractors' Association compiled by Harrison W. Pace.....	32
Wind erosion conditions—Great Plains.....	9

GREAT PLAINS CONSERVATION PROGRAM

THURSDAY, APRIL 17, 1969

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CONSERVATION AND CREDIT
OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10 a.m., in room 1301, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. W. R. Poage (chairman) presiding.

Present: Representatives Poage, Stubblefield, de la Garza, Teague of California, and Mayne.

Also present: Christine S. Gallagher, clerk; William C. Black, general counsel; John H. Knebel, assistant counsel.

Mr. POAGE. The committee will please come to order

We have met this morning to consider the extension of the Great Plains conservation program. There are a large number of bills introduced on that subject. There is H.R. 561, which, I believe, has 10 or 12 authors—I see one of the authors with us; H.R. 2062 has about the same number of authors; and then we have a separate bill by Mr. Olsen; and we have a bill by Mr. Kleppe and Mr. Andrews. Mr. Andrews was here a minute ago, and Mr. Kleppe has changed his status from a member of the committee to witness. That bill has several sponsors. I understand it goes a little further than most of the rest of them.

(H.R. 561, introduced by Mr. Purcell for himself and Mr. Rogers of Colorado, Mr. Evans of Colorado, Mr. Aspinall, Mr. Steed, Mr. White, Mr. Burleson of Texas, Mr. Fisher, and Mr. Mahon; H.R. 2062, introduced by Mr. Battin for himself and Mr. Brotzman, Mr. Sebelius, Mr. Shriver, Mr. Skubitz, Mr. Mize, Mr. Winn, Mr. Denney, Mr. Martin, Mr. Lujan, Mr. Foreman, Mr. Andrews of North Dakota, Mr. Kleppe, Mr. Belcher, Mr. Camp, Mr. Berry, Mr. Price of Texas, and Mr. Wold; and H.R. 3854, introduced by Mr. Olsen, are similar bills the text of which follows, followed by the text of H.R. 10134, introduced by Mr. Kleppe for himself and Mr. Andrews of North Dakota, Mr. Brotzman, Mr. Price of Texas, Mr. Sebelius, Mr. Winn, Mr. Berry, and Mr. Denney.)

[H.R. 561, 91st Cong., first sess.]

A BILL To amend section 16 of the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act, as amended, to extend the Great Plains Conservation Program

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That section 16 of the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act, as amended, is amended (a) by changing the date "December 31, 1971" appearing in the third sentence of paragraph (1) of subsection (b) to "December 31, 1981"; and (b) by changing the dollar amount "\$150,000,000" appearing in the proviso of the first sentence of paragraph (7) of subsection (b) to "\$250,000,000."

[H.R. 10134, 91st Cong., first sess.]

A BILL To amend the Act of August 7, 1956 (70 Stat. 1115), as amended, providing for a Great Plains conservation program

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Act of August 7, 1956 (70 Stat. 1115), as amended, is hereby further amended by striking subparagraph (b) (1) of said Act and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

"(1) the Secretary is authorized within the amounts of such appropriations as may be provided therefor, to enter into contracts of not to exceed ten years with owners and operators of land in the Great Plains area having such control as the Secretary determines for the contract period of the farms, ranches, or other lands covered thereby. Such contracts shall be designed to assist farm, ranch, or other land owners or operators to make, in orderly progression over a period of years, changes in their cropping systems or land uses which are needed to conserve, develop, protect, and utilize the soil and water resources of their farms, ranches, and other lands and to install the soil and water conservation measures and carry out the practices needed under such changed systems and uses. Such contracts may be entered into during the period ending not later than December 31, 1981, on farms, ranches, and other lands in counties in the Great Plains area of the States of Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, and Wyoming, designated by the Secretary as susceptible to serious wind erosion by reason of their soil types, terrain, and climatic and other factors. The land owner or operator shall furnish to the Secretary a plan of farming operations or land use which incorporates such soil and water conservation practices and principles as may be determined by him to be practicable for maximum mitigation of climatic hazards of the area in which such land is located, and which outlines a schedule of proposed changes in cropping systems or land use and of the conservation measures which are to be carried out on the farm, ranch, or other land during the contract period to protect the farm, ranch, or other land from erosion and deterioration by natural causes. Such plan may also include practices and measures for enhancing fish and wildlife and recreation resources, for promoting the economic use of land, and for reducing or controlling agricultural related pollutants harmful to soil and water resources. Approved conservation plans of land owners and operators developed in cooperation with the soil and water conservation district in which their lands are situated shall form a basis for contracts. Under the contract the land owner or operator shall agree—

"(i) to effectuate the plan for his farm, ranch, or other land substantially in accordance with the schedule outlined therein unless any requirement thereof is waived or modified by the Secretary pursuant to paragraph (3) of this subsection;

"(ii) to forfeit all rights to further payments or grants under the contract and refund to the United States all payments or grants received thereunder upon his violation of the contract at any stage during the time he has control of the land if the Secretary determines that such violation is of such a nature as to warrant termination of the contract, or to make refunds or accept such payment adjustments as the Secretary may deem appropriate if he determines that the violation by the owner or operator does not warrant termination of the contract;

"(iii) upon transfer of his right and interest in the farm, ranch, or other land during the contract period to forfeit all rights to further payments or grants under the contract and refund to the United States all payments or grants received thereunder unless the transferee of any such land agrees with the Secretary to assume all obligations of the contract;

"(iv) not to adopt any practice specified by the Secretary in the contract as a practice which would tend to defeat the purposes of the contract;

"(v) to such additional provisions as the Secretary determines are desirable and includes in the contract to effectuate the purposes of the program or to facilitate the practical administration of the program. In return for such agreement by the land owner or operator the Secretary shall agree to share the cost of carrying out those conservation practices

and measures set forth in the contract for which he determines that cost sharing is appropriate and in the public interest. The portion of such cost to be shared shall be that part which the Secretary determines is necessary and appropriate to effectuate the physical installation of the conservation practices and measures under the contract;"

Sec. 2. Subparagraph (b) (2) is amended to read:

"(2) the Secretary may terminate any contract with a land owner or operator by mutual agreement with the owner or operator if the Secretary determines that such termination would be in the public interest, and may agree to such modification of contracts previously entered into as he may determine to be desirable to carry out the purposes of the program or facilitate the practical administration thereof or to accomplish equitable treatment with respect to other similar conservation, land use, or commodity programs administered by the Secretary;"

Sec. 3. Subparagraph (b) (7) of said Act is amended to read:

"(7) there is hereby authorized to be appropriated without fiscal year limitations, such sums as may be necessary to carry out this subsection: *Provided*, That the total cost of the program shall not exceed \$300,000,000 and for any program year payments shall not exceed \$25,000,000. The funds made available for the program under this subsection may be expended without regard to the maximum payment limitation and small payment increases required under section 8(e) of this Act, and may be distributed among States without regard to distribution of funds formulas of section 15 of this Act. The program authorized under this subsection shall be in addition to, and not in substitution of, other programs in such area authorized by this or any other Act."

Mr. POAGE. Following our custom, we will be glad to hear from any of our congressional colleagues who want to be heard even before we hear from the Department. I see that Congressman Mahon is with us. I believe he is the senior witness this morning.

George, we would be glad to hear from you.

STATEMENT OF HON. GEORGE H. MAHON, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS

Mr. MAHON. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am honored and pleased to have the opportunity to appear before this committee on the Great Plains program.

I have a written statement which I would like to revise and submit.

Mr. POAGE. Without objection, it will be included in the record. (The document referred to follows:)

STATEMENT OF HON. GEORGE H. MAHON, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate this opportunity to appear before the Committee in support of H.R. 561, a bill to extend and expand the Great Plains Conservation Program.

In January I joined eight other Members of Congress in introducing H.R. 561. Additionally, eighteen other Members of Congress from the Great Plains area introduced an identical proposal, H.R. 2062.

Of course, the current authority for the Great Plains Conservation Program expires on December 31, 1971. The critical conservation needs of the program area in this ten-state area cannot be met by that date. There is need to have this authority extended and there is a need to increase our commitment to the protection and development of the great natural resources of this area—the bread basket of our nation.

The original legislation provided an appropriation authority of \$150 million which is nearing exhaustion. The appropriation authority needs to be increased and this bill calls for an authorization of \$250 million over a ten-year period.

The Great Plains Conservation Program, designed by Congress in 1956 to provide a means of minimizing the hazards of farming and ranching brought on by erratic climate, is a special program for an urgent need in a specific region in

ten Great Plains States. It meets the specific conservation needs of much of the Great Plains area where, due to special climatic conditions, the watershed and other conservation programs are not adaptable as in other parts of the country. It must be continued after December 1971 along with all other conservation programs now in operation throughout the nation.

Since the first contract was signed, in Texas, in December, 1957, there have been over 10,000 agreements signed in Texas. This is nearly one-third of the 32,000 contracts signed in all ten Great Plains States. In the Congressional District I represent, there have been over 2,600 contracts signed involving some 2.3 million acres. There are 1,000 contracts still active covering 1 million acres in the District I represent.

The Great Plains Conservation Program has done a tremendous job of helping landowners and operators avert many of the hazards that come with recurring droughts common to the Great Plains area. But the program benefits all the people of this area and people of our nation generally. The potential of this area to future food and fiber needs of our country and the world is apparent to all farsighted men.

A number of people state that Great Plains Conservation Program contracts have helped bankers and other financial institutions and leaders to better understand the needs and benefits of a conservation program, thereby making it easier for them to obtain credit to operate and to make improvements.

Soil and Water Conservation District supervisors in my District have stated that the Great Plains Conservation Program has been instrumental in introducing a number of badly needed new conservation practices. Results have been remarkable but much remains undone.

Mr. Chairman, prudence dictates that we guard our natural resources. Our land has been blessed with abundances, but it is up to us to protect and develop this richness. I urge that your Committee give every favorable consideration to the extension and expansion of the Great Plains Conservation Program.

Mr. MAHON. As the committee knows, we have had a Great Plains program covering parts of 10 States since about 1956. The program expires by law at the end of 1971. A sum of \$150 million was authorized for this program and indications are that the authorized funding will be fully utilized by that date.

The bill which I have introduced along with others provides for authorization for the next 10 years in the amount of \$250 million, an increase over the present authorization figure. This program is a long-range program. It has been of great value in improving the agricultural environment of our country. As a matter of policy, the program is operated with considerable reference to the local soil conservation districts. I don't believe this is provided in the current law, but I think one of the bills that has been introduced proposes to put into law the actual policy and practice of the Soil Conservation Service working closely with the soil conservation district officials in the administration of this program.

Of course, this program, like most other programs, is subject to our fiscal problems. The budget request this year, as last year, has been reduced. The program is proceeding at a reduced pace because of the inflationary problems and fiscal problems otherwise. But I do think that it is urgently necessary that we continue the program. It is one of those programs that pays off. It is one of those programs, it seems to me, that our people from the agricultural areas can and will support. Also, our friends from urban areas, I believe, would feel that this is a program in the national interest, in the interest not only of agriculture, but in the interest of the consumer and the public generally.

That is about all I want to say, Mr. Chairman, because the committee is familiar with the details and in a position to decide what to do about it.

Mr. POAGE. The only problem that I have found with this program, other than that of financing it, has been its success. It has worked so well that everybody who is in any area that adjoins it wants to be included.

How far do you think we ought to go on that? There is a map of the area that is now included. And these bills, I think, all provide exactly the same thing which the existing law provides, and that is that it can be applied in any area in those States which the Secretary designates. There is constant pressure on Members of Congress to enlarge the area. And, of course, they keep constant pressure on the Department. Do you think it would be wise just to arbitrarily include all of those States? It makes it terribly difficult to say that you are going to include Palo Pinto County, which we do in Texas, and not include Parker County. And I know that there is no stopping point. If we include Parker County we would have to include Tarrant County, of course. Should we just extend the program to the total whole State?

Mr. MAHON. I think you would have to weigh that very carefully and consult with the soil conservation people and go into it in considerable depth. Of course, we all recognize this area here on the map as part of the old so-called Dust Bowl. It was the area that was being badly eroded by the elements. A marvelous job has been done in rehabilitating this particular area. As you point out, there are other areas in these States that could participate in this program. But at the time it was laid out, as I understand it, these were considered to be the most urgently needed areas.

Mr. POAGE. No, sir; these are not the ones where it was laid out, because that has been expanded every year.

Mr. MAHON. Yes; that is right.

Mr. POAGE. The point I am getting at is, it is just so difficult to try to hold back this expansion that I wonder if we should include all of these particular States as we do for a good many programs. You remember that the irrigation program applies to 17 States, and it applies to the entire State. Now, Texas is one of those States. And yet we get 50 inches of rainfall over in Orange County. But the eligibility is there, nevertheless, and it prevents a great deal of aggravation, it seems to me, by leaving them eligible. I don't think that anybody in Orange County, Tex., or not many of them, would get much out of the Great Plains program if it were made applicable to them. But should it be available to them?

Mr. MAHON. You have raised a very important question. Of course in legislation and in the administration of legislation a lot of compromises are necessary. I don't know how strong the justification might be, but if you should enlarge it to cover the entire portion of the 10 States involved you have just about doubled the territory. You would either have to greatly increase the funding authorization proposed by this bill, or you would have a much less meaningful program in the areas of the greatest need. I just don't know. I think the soil conservation people, whom I am sure will undoubtedly support the renewal of this program, might be able to be more helpful in this matter than I am.

It is a policy question which your committee, Mr. Chairman, will have to determine.

I do think it would be a mistake to water down the program or in any way cause it to be less effective in the future than it has been in the past. It has proved to be a good program. The long-range benefits are very considerable but much remains to be done in the present area. I am just not sure what you should do, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. POAGE. The people that live in those other areas say, well, there wouldn't be a great many people in this country that would take advantage of it. The percentage that went into the program on the gulf coast of Texas would obviously be much smaller than the percentage that go into the program up on the Plains themselves.

Mr. MAHON. That is right.

Mr. POAGE. And yet when you deny the program to those people they feel that they are discriminated against.

Fortunately for you, every one of your counties is in. But those of us who are in areas adjoining—as for instance, the Palo Pinto-Parker County line is the dividing line, and I represent the part that is not in, and they look across the line and say, there is no difference here than what is over in Palo Pinto County, and there is a lot of dissatisfaction.

You were born in Parker, weren't you?

Mr. MAHON. No; I can't claim that distinction. But my people lived there, my dad lived there.

Mr. POAGE. Mr. Teague.

Mr. TEAGUE. Just one comment, Mr. Mahon. I expect to continue to support this program. I would like to take this opportunity, however, to point out the fact that we had two very severe floods in California this year. I am sure you are aware of that fact. We had over 70 inches of rain in part of my congressional district. We had flood damage estimated at around \$60 million to farmland, bridges, plants, harbors, and so forth. So I would like to express the hope that you will be as generous and sympathetic to our problems as you possibly can when we apply, as we are and will continue to do, for assistance under other Federal programs, in your capacity as chairman of the Committee on Appropriations.

Mr. MAHON. I think you have a good point there. This tremendous economic loss to the Nation is most regrettable. We have to continue to seek ways and means to prevent possible recurrences of losses of this magnitude. Of course, we have been working on public works projects of one kind or another through the years, and they have been of tremendous value. But there is a lot of work that remains to be done. I think we have to look in a sympathetic way as to the problems which you have outlined.

Mr. POAGE. Thank you very much.

We greatly appreciate your attendance here, Mr. Mahon. We know your great interest in this, because you are right in the heart of the real area for which this was originally established. And we appreciate having you come before us.

Mr. MAHON. The program is well received by the people. Of course, there are participation requirements and there are a lot of restraints and restrictions imposed, which I think have contributed to the success of the program.

Thank you.

Mr. POAGE. Thank you, Mr. Mahon.

The next witness was to be Mr. Andrews. He was here.

I understand he has gone to another meeting and will be back in a few minutes.

Next we have listed Congressman White. I don't believe he has come in.

And then we have our own colleague, Congressman Kleppe.

Tom, we would be glad to hear from you.

Congressman Kleppe is the author of one of these bills.

**STATEMENT OF HON. THOMAS S. KLEPPE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA**

MR. KLEPPE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, colleagues and members of the committee, I probably should say I feel a little wrong at being in this position in this committee room, but on the basis of the subject matter today, I am very appreciative of the opportunity to appear here in support of H.R. 561 and related bills to extend the Great Plains conservation program for an additional 10 years beyond its present expiration date of December 31, 1971.

As a matter of explanation, on January 6, 1969, I joined with several of my colleagues from the Great Plains States in introducing H.R. 2062, which is identical with H.R. 561. On April 15, 1969, just 2 days ago, I introduced for myself, Mr. Andrews of North Dakota, Mr. Berry, Mr. Brotzman, Mr. Denney, Mr. Price of Texas, Mr. Sebelius, and Mr. Winn, H.R. 10134 which embodies relatively minor changes in the earlier legislation. H.R. 10134 is identical with S. 1790, introduced April 14 in the Senate by Mr. Young of North Dakota and cosponsored by Mr. Mundt, Mr. Tower, Mr. Curtis, Mr. Dole, Mr. Allott, and Mr. Dominick.

It is my understanding that reports on these measures have been requested from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and I just received a copy of that report 1 minute ago.

As I indicated in my statement, I anticipate that the response will be favorable.

Sponsorship by most Members of Congress from the 10 Great Plains States is indicative of the broad support this program enjoys. It is, as you know, a long-range program. A great beginning has been made but the job cannot be completed by the end of 1971. It is extremely important to all of the people of this area that this program go forward in the 1970's without interruption.

During the 13 years of its operation, the Great Plains program has brought more than 32,000 farm and ranch operators under conservation plan contracts involving more than 57 million acres.

In North Dakota alone—and I would like to add here that of the 30 counties in North Dakota in this program, 29 of them are in my district, in the west district. I think this evidences more need in the western part of North Dakota than in the eastern part. However, it is applicable there too.

But in North Dakota alone there are more than 3,600 farmers participating in this program. They have voluntarily placed more than 4,800,000 acres under conservation plans. Of this total, more than 315,000 acres have been removed from crop production and placed in grass. Other practices involved installation of strip cropping programs, the planting of shelter belts, the establishment of grassed waterways, land

leveling, improvement of livestock watering facilities, and the countless other practices which will conserve and stabilize our most precious resource, the soil.

A total of \$150 million was provided initially for operation of the Great Plains program. This limit has now been virtually reached. Under both H.R. 10134 and S. 1790, an additional authorization of \$150 million is provided. This is \$50 million more than the additional amount authorized in H.R. 561 and companion bills.

Other minor changes in the newly introduced bills would :

1. Confirm the role that soil and water conservation districts are playing in implementing the program under the present authority.

2. Provide additional latitude to the Secretary of Agriculture to determine the adequacy of control of operating units to make possible, under certain conditions, contracts on land where annual leases are customary.

3. Provide for the Secretary of Agriculture to enter into a few contracts on land units not generally considered farm or ranches, where serious erosion problems exist.

4. Provide for the addition of practices that will help cope with agricultural pollution problems.

5. Recognize the need for measures to enhance the fish, wildlife, and recreation resources of the Great Plains.

Wheat and cattle are the major income sources for farmers and ranchers of the Great Plains area. Today, wheat prices are lower than at any time during the last quarter of a century. U.S. wheat exports are down sharply. Our wheat surplus is building up again at a time when such major exporting nations as Canada and Australia also have burdensome supplies on hand.

More favorable weather, coupled with increased planting of higher yielding wheat varieties in such countries as India and Pakistan, have sharply reduced demand for U.S. wheat in these deficit food areas. Looking ahead, it seems probable that wheat production around the world will continue to rise—perhaps much faster than world population.

The outlook for expanding U.S. wheat markets abroad, at prices which will reflect a fair return to our domestic producers, is less than bright. There will almost certainly be years of drought again in Asia. This will provide short-term demands for large quantities of wheat from the major exporting countries. For the long pull, however, I don't believe American wheatgrowers should rely too heavily upon foreign markets which probably can be obtained only at fire sale prices or through heavily subsidized sales.

On the other hand, I believe the long-range outlook for American livestock producers, particularly cattlemen, is extremely bright. There is an enormous market at home. It is growing constantly, not only because our population continues to mount but also because we are eating more meat per capita.

There are millions of acres in the Great Plains States, now devoted primarily to wheat production, which in the long run can probably be utilized more profitably for livestock production. I think this will come about whether we have a Great Plains program or not because of the irresistible economics of the situation.

Fortunately, the Great Plains conservation program provides a vehicle for helping to make an orderly transition from wheat to livestock for many producers. At a time when there again is talk of massive

land retirement as a means of reducing crop production, it should be pointed out that the conversion of marginal and near marginal cropland from wheat to grassland can be accomplished at much less cost under the Great Plains program than it could be through another soil bank operation.

As the attached summary prepared by the Soil Conservation Service February 28, 1969, reveals—and may I ask here, Mr. Chairman, that this additional addenda of the Soil Conservation Service be included and inserted in the record.

Mr. POAGE. Without objection it will be included.

Mr. KLEPPE. Wind erosion continues to be a serious problem on 691,000 acres in the 10 Great Plains States. You will note that 651,736 acres represent cropland and only 21,507 rangeland. There is a great lesson in these statistics.

I am convinced that a 10-year extension of the Great Plains conservation program is not only in the best interests of the people of the affected areas but of the Nation as a whole. I strongly urge favorable consideration of the legislation before you.

(The statistical data referred to by Mr. Kleppe follows:)

WIND EROSION CONDITIONS—GREAT PLAINS

(Summary of Local Estimates as of February 28, 1969)

This report is a summary of wind erosion conditions from November 1, 1968, to February 28, 1969. It is based on estimates from SCS field offices, in cooperation with other USDA field representatives and local authorities. Reports were submitted from 204 counties in the Great Plains States. Counties reporting are those in which wind erosion was prevalent or expected during the current wind erosion season. The acreage of land damaged is cumulative for the period.

LAND DAMAGED

The 204 counties reported 691,000 acres damaged compared to 459,030 acres reported by 211 counties for the same period a year ago. Rangeland damaged represents 3.1% of the total land damaged this period compared to 1.5% for the first period of this season. Cropland damaged represents 94.3% of the total land damaged this period compared to 94.7% for the same period last year. Other land damaged (17,847 acres) increased 7,887 acres over last year's second period report. Land reported damaged was the greatest in Texas (387,820 acres) and the least in Kansas (5,900 acres).

ACRES OF LAND DAMAGED

	Counties reporting (number)	Land damaged			Total land damaged	
		Crop-land (acres)	Range-land (acres)	Other land (acres)	Feb. 28, 1969 (acres)	Feb. 29, 1968 (acres)
Great plains States						
Northern:						
Montana.....	15	20,650		500	21,150	22,100
Nebraska.....	6	28,000	790	150	28,940	10,600
North Dakota.....	19	129,970	1,450	250	131,670	303,150
South Dakota.....	22	19,300			19,300	25,350
Wyoming.....	10	11,150	7,000	1,530	19,680	20,550
Subtotal.....	72	209,070	9,240	2,430	220,740	381,750
Southern:						
Colorado.....	10	16,125	20	5	16,150	6,160
Kansas.....	39	5,900			5,900	10,000
New Mexico.....	10	20,600	3,600	1,600	25,800	3,900
Oklahoma.....	17	34,531	47	102	34,680	1,200
Texas.....	56	365,510	8,600	13,710	387,820	56,020
Subtotal.....	132	442,666	12,267	15,417	470,350	77,280
Grand total.....	204	651,736	21,507	17,847	691,090	459,030

CROPS OR COVER DESTROYED ON LAND NOT DAMAGED

Crops or cover was destroyed on 166,670 acres of land not damaged in all States except Montana. This represents an increase of 63,580 acres since the last reporting period and an increase of 119,100 acres over last year's second period report. Crops or cover destroyed in Colorado (112,990 acres) represents 76.9% of crops or cover destroyed in the Southern Great Plains States and 67.8% of the total.

LAND NOT DAMAGED DUE TO EMERGENCY TILLAGE

Emergency tillage to prevent land damage was reported on 1,402,940 acres. Emergency tillage in Texas (1,071,950 acres) represents 76.4% of all acres reported. The Southern Great Plains States reported 88.9% of the emergency tillage.

LAND IN CONDITION TO BLOW

Land reported in condition to blow was 3,525,160 acres compared to 4,631,550 acres for the same period a year ago. Of all the land reported in condition to blow, 71.1% is in the Southern Great Plains States.

[In acres]

Great Plains States	Crops or cover destroyed on land not damaged				Land not damaged due to emergency tillage (total)	Land in condition to blow (total)
	Cropland	Rangeland	Other land	Total		
Northern:						
Montana.....					1,080	151,850
Nebraska.....	14,300	1,000	150	15,450	47,500	64,200
North Dakota.....	700	100		800	72,100	557,600
South Dakota.....	1,500			1,500	10,500	215,160
Wyoming.....	1,900		100	2,000	25,100	29,350
Subtotal.....	18,400	1,100	250	19,750	156,280	1,018,160
Southern:						
Colorado.....	112,990			112,990	49,250	414,400
Kansas.....	4,500			4,500	68,400	669,000
New Mexico.....	14,500	2,500		17,000	25,800	91,900
Oklahoma.....	2,690			2,690	31,260	165,650
Texas.....	9,740			9,740	1,071,950	1,166,050
Subtotal.....	144,420	2,500		146,920	1,246,660	2,507,000
Grand total.....	162,820	3,600	250	166,670	1,402,940	3,525,160

Contributing factors to wind erosion this period include: (1) Insufficient vegetative cover; (2) Freezing-thawing conditions; (3) Lack of moisture; (4) Excessive tillage; (5) Failure to perform needed emergency tillage operations; and (6) Overgrazing.

Adverse effects of soil blowing this period include: (1) Health hazards due to air pollution; (2) Hazardous driving and flying conditions; (3) Increased cost of property maintenance particularly roads, fences, waterways, and shelterbelts; (4) Loss of income from destruction of crops; and (5) Reduction of property values.

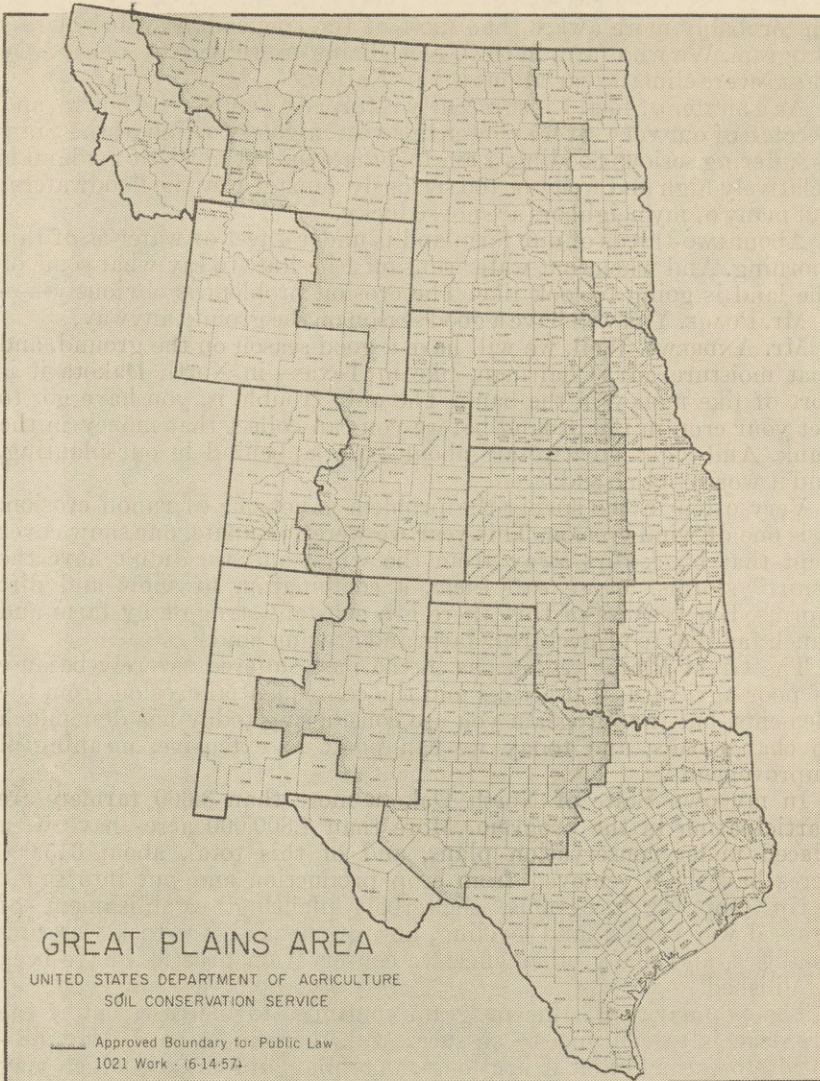
Mr. KLEPPE. And I would add here that your question to Congressman Mahon about how much this should be expanded is a most noteworthy question, because of the success of this program and the general acceptability of it.

Let me just conclude, Mr. Chairman, by saying that I strongly urge favorable consideration of this legislation before you.

Mr. POAGE. Thank you very much, Mr. Kleppe.

I want to call your attention, when you suggest that wheat and cattle are the great products of the Great Plains—and they are Great Plains—that cotton and milo are also great products of the Great Plains area.

Mr. KLEPPE. I should have inserted those in here.



Mr. POAGE. I believe you are convinced.
 I see Mr. Andrews has come in.
 We will be glad to hear from you, Mark.

**STATEMENT OF HON. MARK ANDREWS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
 CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA**

Mr. ANDREWS. I appreciate your taking the time to hear me this morning. It is a privilege to appear before this subcommittee this morning on behalf of this legislation to extend the Great Plains conservation program.

You are aware, I am sure, of the problems involved in connection with this legislation. And since I am a Great Plains farmer myself, I

am probably more aware than most of the tremendous value of this program. We who farm in the Great Plains are subject to some of the most severe climatic variations in this Nation.

As a matter of fact, I just recently returned from North Dakota, and because of our very severe winter this year, a good portion of the State is suffering serious flooding. I am fortunate in that much of my land is relatively high and won't be too seriously damaged by the floodwaters; but many of my neighbors are not so lucky.

About two-thirds of our farmland is under 4 feet of water as of this morning. And when that water runs off I hesitate to say what some of the land is going to look like. The erosion problem is obviously—

Mr. POAGE. You will have a good season on the ground anyway.

Mr. ANDREWS. Well, we will have a good season on the ground, and that moisture, Mr. Chairman, like in Texas—in North Dakota it is sort of like money in the bank. The only trouble is, you have got to get your crop in the ground before you can collect that money in the bank. And right now we are about 3 weeks behind in our planting, and it worries us no end.

Very often in the spring the problem is not one of runoff erosion, it is one of wind erosion. This year we were fortunate, our snow cover kept that black dirt away from the wind, and we didn't have the "snirt" storms, as we call them, a combination of snow and dirt storms. But because of this, there is a constant struggle by farm and ranch families to protect their farm and grazing lands.

The Great Plains region has in the past suffered severely because of poor agricultural practices and the consequential erosion from the elements, but this program you are considering today has done much to change this, and today we can point to extensive, meaningful improvements.

In my own State of North Dakota more than 3,600 farmers are participating in the program. More than 4,800,000 acres have been placed under conservation plans, and of this total, about 315,000 acres have been removed from crop production and put into grass. Strip cropping programs, shelterbelt planting, establishment of grassed waterways, land leveling, improvement of livestock watering facilities, and many other effective conservation practices have been established.

The popularity of this program continues to increase, but if the program is to continue to be successful, there must be a clear indication to farmers that it is a long-range plan and not one which may expire too soon to be of any real benefit to them.

Therefore, it is imperative that this extension be approved to insure the necessary continuity.

There are also improvements in this legislation which will make some minor changes, and which I endorse.

Gentlemen, it is clear that, as the population of the world continues to increase at an alarming rate, the need for food will become more and more acute. Although food production in this Nation today is more than ample to meet our domestic needs, future world needs will make greater and greater demands on our production. As a result, we can ill afford to neglect well-established and proven programs which have clearly demonstrated their great benefit for our agricultural industry and the Nation in general.

I strongly urge your favorable consideration of this extension.

And I notice, Mr. Chairman, coming from the Great Plains as you do, that you recognize that great natural resource that this wonderful area is to our whole country. It is far too often misunderstood by those who live in the East and the far coast, but we of the Great Plains are ready, willing, and able to provide that most basic of all necessities, food, to a Nation that has grown because of the ability of our farmers on the Great Plains, and can only continue to grow if we protect the resources that give them the capability to produce this God-given gift of food abundance.

Mr. POAGE. Thank you, Mr. Andrews. We are always glad to have your views and suggestions here, because we know that you are a practical farmer. And unlike most of us, you have made pretty much a success of your operations. So you must know more about it than some of us.

Your district, as I understand it, is very comparable to that of many of the rest of us. You haven't but one county in this Great Plains area, as I understand it.

Mr. ANDREWS. That is right, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. POAGE. The rest of your district lies just east of it.

Mr. ANDREWS. We wouldn't be adverse to extending the area of the district, either, Mr. Chairman, if that could be done.

Mr. POAGE. Under the law as it now exists, and as I think each of these bills provide, the Secretary has the power to extend the area anywhere within those States that you see delineated on the map. They are named in the law. I have felt that there might be merit to simply extending this program, making this program available in all parts of those States without any action on the part of the Secretary. Of course, that would require action on the part of the individual, because as it was well pointed out here I believe by Mr. Kleppe, the individual has to put up some payments to participate in this Great Plains program, he has to do something. He doesn't simply sit back and draw compensation. And a man who is not going to be benefited by it is not going to get into the program unless it is something that is useful in his area.

There is a whole lot of area in Texas that I don't think would find it desirable to get into this Great Plains program. Certainly, our piney woods would hardly want in the Great Plains program. I don't think the gulf coast would hardly want in the Great Plains program—probably the south end of it would.

So I have wondered if it might not save a great deal of confusion and a great deal of criticism—of course, you always get criticism, when a man lives over the line he says, "Now, you let Mark Andrews get into this, why didn't you let me get into it?"

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Chairman, I think our feeling in North Dakota was that this was a new program. Stutsman County was the only one in the eastern congressional district in it. Many of the counties in my district would be equally well fitted to be included. But we felt, let's take a look at the program, let's see how it works out, and then when it gets established on a permanent basis, obviously these boundaries can be expanded and should be expanded, because up in Pierce County, for instance, or Ramsey County, or any of these other counties in my district, the need is exactly the same as in western North Dakota, and in fact in some counties, Benson and others, perhaps the need is a little greater than in some areas of western North Dakota.

So we are looking forward to an expansion of the program over more of the State. And I appreciate that you feel the same way.

Mr. POAGE. We have done exactly the same thing. I have resisted the expansion of the program to the east in our part of the country simply on that basis, that we should try it out, and if it should prove itself a success, we should have enough money to move it. And every time we moved it further to the east, we diluted the effectiveness of the program in the area where it was originally established. But if we adopt these new bills, or any one of them, there will be a larger authorization, and there will be an opportunity to expand without taking away from any of the counties that are now included in the program.

And I have just wondered if handling this just as we handled the reclamation program, making all of the areas in the 17 States eligible—that doesn't mean that you get people using that program in all of those areas, because it is not a program that is usable in all parts of those States. Neither is this a program that every county would want to use. But if we made it available to the individual landowners in those counties who wanted it, we wouldn't get much participation in, let us say, southeast Texas, or eastern Oklahoma, or in the Cookson Hills, I don't think there would be many people that would participate in this program. But if you give the opportunity to those who wanted it, your cost would not be very great, and it seems to me that you would avoid a good deal of criticism that we are now getting.

Mr. ANDREWS. It would be put in where it was needed and where it was fitted. And this is actually the way to run this type of program.

Mr. POAGE. I just wanted your judgment on that, because I know you have the same problem as we have.

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Chairman, as usual, you and I seem to be in complete agreement.

Mr. POAGE. Thank you, sir.

Are there other questions of Mr. Andrews?

Mr. MAYNE. I would like to ask the chairman, I believe you just referred to 17 States.

Mr. POAGE. That is the reclamation program. That is not this Great Plains program.

Mr. MAYNE. There are 10 here?

Mr. ANDREWS. Yes.

Mr. POAGE. Yes. You see all the Western States are in the reclamation area, it goes to the Pacific coast.

Mr. MAYNE. Thank you.

Mr. POAGE. Thank you, Mr. Andrews. We are always glad to have you with us.

Mr. ANDREWS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. POAGE. Now, we asked Congressman White to testify. I am told he can't come. But Mr. Bryson has just come in representing him, and would like to present his statement for him. We would be glad to have that. Mr. Bryson is Mr. White's assistant.

STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD CRAWFORD WHITE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS; PRESENTED BY CONREY BRYSON, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Mr. BRYSON. My name is Conrey Bryson. I am an administrative assistant to Congressman White. Unfortunately he ran into an unex-

pected conflict this morning and was unable to be here. And he was very anxious to have his message presented to the committee.

I will read his statement. And if there are any questions you would like me to submit back to him I would be happy to do so.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am Richard C. White, Representative of the 16th District of Texas, the 12 western-most counties of the State. Six of these counties are participants in the Great Plains conservation program. I shall include with my statement a request from the Highland Hereford Breeders Association that three more adjoining counties be added to this highly successful and much needed program..

The average annual precipitation in these counties ranges from 10 to 13 inches, and often occurs in the form of cloudbursts, with little vegetation to retard the flow of flood waters. The problems of erosion, development and proper use of the meager water resources, and the control of brush to secure maximum proper use of grazing lands, require technical assistance of the most expert nature available. Another major hazard of the west Texas climate is the prevalence of high spring winds which remove many tons of precious top soil annually.

The solution of these problems requires sustained effort, year after year, backed up by comprehensive long-range planning. Under the Great Plains conservation program, participating ranchers sign up for a thorough-going conservation plan, for a minimum of 3 years, a maximum of 10 years. The Soil Conservation Service works with ranchers to develop a comprehensive program based on conditions of climate, soil, water resources, and the rancher's individual needs.

The true long-range benefits of these conservation plans are brought out by the fact that participating ranchers continue the conservation practices at their own expense after their contract with the Soil Conservation Service has expired. A report to me from the late H. N. "Red" Smith, Texas State conservationist, written shortly before his death last month, stated that field personnel checked 4,050 expired contracts in the Great Plains program. It was found that 93.3 percent of the conservation measures were being maintained, and of the 271 units that were not maintaining the program, a large percentage had a change of ownership. This tends to prove, I believe, that the conservation programs are well conceived, and that they will continue to bear fruit for many years to come in conserving the land and water resources of this Nation.

Since the program began in 1957, 10,461 contracts have been signed in the State of Texas, covering more than 13 million acres. In the six counties of my District presently included in the program, Loving, Pecos, Reeves, Terrell, Ward, and Winkler Counties, 246 contracts have been signed on just over 1 million acres. There are 111 of these contracts still active on more than half a million acres of land.

This is an impressive success story, but the limitations, because of a lack of funds, are disheartening. On September 18, 1967, the Soil Conservation Service found it necessary to stop taking new contracts under the Great Plains program. No more were accepted in fiscal 1968 and uncertified contracts totaling \$2 million were carried over into fiscal 1969. In November 1968, the Service again began signing up new contracts, and virtually all the available funds were obligated on May 15 of this year. There are now on hand 1,143 applications waiting for assistance, and many additional counties waiting to be brought

into the program, including Brewster, Jeff Davis, and Presidio Counties in my district.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, we are hearing a great deal about the problems of the big cities. This committee deals with many of them in the food stamp, surplus commodities, and school lunch programs. I think it is pertinent to point out here that the roots of many of the big-city problems are found in the rural areas—areas where depleted soils, erosion, failing crops, and failing ranch lands cause the new generation to leave the land and move to the cities, to help multiply the city problems.

I believe the Great Plains conservation program, if extended for another 10 years, and its funding increased as contemplated in H.R. 561, will be a major factor in the economy of the 10 Western States the program serves. It will help to keep another generation close to the land, and close to the increasingly important task of helping to feed and clothe the burgeoning human race.

I thank the committee for your attention, and I should like to include three items in the record:

1. A letter from the late H. N. Smith, Texas State conservationist, dated March 7, 1969.

2. A letter from Mr. Hayes Mitchell, Jr., president of the Highland Hereford Breeders Association, Marfa, Tex., dated April 9, 1969.

3. A resolution of the Highland Hereford Breeders Association. Thank you.

This was the statement of Congressman Richard C. White. I am reading it as his administrative assistant.

Mr. POAGE. Without objection those items will be included in the record.

(The documents referred to follow:)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE,
Temple, Tex., March 7, 1969.

HON. RICHARD C. WHITE,
House of Representatives,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. WHITE: In order to keep you informed regarding the Great Plains Conservation Program, I am providing a progress report on the status of the program in Texas and in your Congressional District.

The lack of funds continues to be a great handicap to the Great Plains Conservation Program. As reported to you about this time last year, we stopped taking contracts on September 18, 1967. We did not accept any new contracts during the remainder of the 1968 fiscal year and still carried uncertified contracts totaling in excess of \$2,000,000 into the 1969 fiscal year. We could not certify any of these contracts until November of 1968 because of expenditure limitations. In November we began taking new contracts for the first time in over 14 months. With the exception of a small amount of cost-share funds that will be reserved to take care of adjustments needed in older contracts, all of the \$3,432,000 received for contracts will be obligated by March 15, 1969. We have on hand 1143 applications waiting for assistance.

Since the first contract was signed in Texas in December 1957, there have been 10,461 contracts signed, covering 13,082,300 acres. In your Congressional District, there have been 246 contracts signed on 1,071,792 acres. There are 111 contracts still active covering 560,797 acres in your District.

There have been 5,152 contracts completed in Texas, covering 5,879,083 acres. The average size farm and ranch completed was 1,141 acres. Great Plains cost-share assistance used on an average for each contract was \$2,720.50. Consequently, it required an average of \$2.38 per acre of Great Plains cost-share assistance.

In spite of shortage of funds, the Great Plains Conservation Program has done a tremendous job of helping landowners and operators avert many of the hazards that come with recurring droughts common to the Great Plains area.

We feel that the true value of the program can best be tested by analyzing contracts that have expired and determine how well they have maintained the conservation plan installed with Great Plains Conservation Program assistance.

During the period October 1968 through January 1969 field personnel checked 4,050 expired contracts on the land and talked with most of the producers. It was found that 93.3 percent of the conservation measures were being maintained. Over 25 percent of the operating units had made other improvements above what was present when the contract expired. There were 271 operating units that were not maintaining their program. A very high percent of these had a change in ownership. In fact, 14.98% of the contracts checked had a change in ownership and a larger number had a change in operators. By far the largest single item of deterioration was the plowing up of grassland and returning it to cropland in order that the producer may participate in the diversion acre program for allotted crops and feed grains.

Significant statements made by producers showing the benefits of the Great Plains Conservation Program to them and their neighbors are:

1. "I would never have carried out a good conservation program without the Great Plains Conservation Program to help me."

2. "I gained a better understanding of needs of the land and was able to do a better job of managing my operations as a result of the technical assistance provided to me by SCS."

3. "My farm increased in value \$75,000 as a result of work done under the GPCP. Technical assistance has been worth more than the cost-shares I earned."

4. "The opportunity to do the whole job at once motivated me to enter into a GPCP contract."

5. "Conservation plans with technical assistance from SCS have helped me to use all my soil, water and plant resources more fully thereby increasing and stabilizing my income."

6. A number of farmers and ranchers stated that GPCP contracts have helped bankers and other financial institutions and leaders to better understand the needs and benefits of a conservation program thereby making it easier for them to obtain adequate credit to make improvements and to operate on.

7. SWCD supervisors have stated that the GPCP has been instrumental in introducing new conservation practices, such as parallel terraces, badly needed for new farming methods. In fact, 33,223,710 feet of parallel terraces have been installed with GPCP cost-share assistance in less than four years.

I hope this information will be of value to you.

Sincerely,

H. N. SMITH, *State Conservationist.*

HIGHLAND HEREFORD BREEDERS ASSOCIATION,

Marfa, Tex., April 9, 1969.

Congressman RICHARD C. WHITE,
*Longworth House Office Building,
Washington, D.C.*

DEAR DICK: The Highland Hereford Breeders Association passed the enclosed resolution concerning the Great Plains Program as we have formerly discussed. We had to wait for the annual meeting to bring this up before the entire membership. This is the reason for the delay.

Copies are being sent to Senators Tower and Yarborough, Mr. Graham, State Conservationist and Mr. Black, President of State Board. If there are others you think should receive one, please let me know.

We certainly appreciate your continuing support in this matter as well as everything else you are doing for the people in this area.

Sincerely,

HAYES MITCHELL, Jr.

THE GREAT PLAINS CONSERVATION ACT

Whereas we feel the need to be included in the Great Plains Conservation Act to help stabilize our economy by aiding us to conserve our soil and the productivity of our range land. We feel like that a great injustice is being done to this large

productive area in the livestock business by being excluded from this program : Therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Highland Hereford Breeders Association, composed of ranchers in Brewster, Jeff Davis and Presidio Counties, Texas, ask to be included in the Great Plains Conservation Act and the Secretary of Agriculture and our elected representatives in Congress be so notified of our request.

Mr. POAGE. Are there any questions of Mr. Bryson?

If not, we are very much obliged to you.

Mr. BRYSON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. POAGE. Congressman Price was here. He had to leave. And he asked that we insert in the record a statement that he prepared. And without objection this statement will be inserted in the record. But he asked also that we read and insert Mr. Smith's letter. It is the same letter, I understand, that was inserted a moment ago. It will be inserted only once.

(The document referred to follows:)

STATEMENT OF HON. ROBERT D. PRICE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM
THE STATE OF TEXAS

Mr. Chairman, I want to express my appreciation for the fact that you are holding these hearings on H.R. 561 and related bills. I am one of 18 Members of Congress from the Great Plains area who have co-sponsored H.R. 2062, which is identical to H.R. 561.

This proposed legislation would: 1. Extend the Great Plains Conservation program from December 31, 1971, to December 31, 1981; and 2. Change the amount of the authorization from \$150,000,000 to \$250,000,000.

As your committee is aware, the current authority for the Great Plains Conservation program expires on December 31, 1971. The current appropriation authority will be about exhausted by that time, also. Therefore, the proposed legislation has the two-fold purpose.

The Great Plains is an area of several climatic hazards. Various programs have been carried out in the past to meet emergency situations. The Great Plains conservation program was authorized in 1956 as a part of the program of the Soil Conservation Service. It is designed to bring about a more nearly permanent solution to problems resulting from drought and the cultivation of low-grade cropland.

It is a long-term soil and water conservation program aimed at bringing about needed land use adjustments and application of enduring conservation practices to stabilize agriculture and the economy of towns dependent on agriculture in the 10 Great Plains States.

Technical assistance and cost sharing are integrated in carrying out conservation plans over a long-range period, not to exceed 10 years. Cost sharing is specifically limited to installing permanent nonrecurring practices and is obligated when the plan is developed and the contract signed. This guarantees the availability of funds to apply the needed practices on schedule and to make any needed changes in land use.

The Great Plains conservation program has proved to be an excellent tool for helping farmers and ranchers in the Plains area of Texas. The program operates in 99 designated Texas counties. During fiscal year 1968, 803 contracts were signed covering 721,431 acres. As of that date, 10,075 contracts had been written in the States, covering 12,746,546 acres. These contracts, all keyed to basic conservation plans, call for converting 446,529 acres of cropland to grass and for improvement of 7,945,797 acres of rangeland.

This program is bringing wide spread benefits in the 18th Congressional District of Texas, which I represent. Early in March, I received a progress report on this activity from the now deceased H. N. (Red) Smith, the State Conservationist for the Soil Conservation Service in Texas. He reported that in my Congressional District there have been 3,745 contracts signed on 4,846,473 acres.

Mr. Smith quoted the following statements made by producers showing the benefit of the Great Plains conservation program to them and their neighbors:

1. "I would never have carried out a good conservation program without the Great Plains conservation program to help me."

2. "I gained a better understanding of needs of the land and was able to do a better job of managing my operations as a result of the technical assistance provided me by SCS."

3. "My farm increased in value \$75,000 as a result of work done under the Great Plains conservation program. Technical assistance has been worth more than the cost shares I earned."

4. "The opportunity to do the whole job at once motivated me to enter into a Great Plains conservation program contract."

5. "Conservation plans with technical assistance from SCS have helped me to use all my soil, water and plant resources more fully thereby increasing and stabilizing my income."

I asked that Mr. Smith's letter of March 7, 1969, to me be made a part of my testimony.

I urge your Committee to report favorably on H.R. 561 and H.R. 2062 so that we can continue to offer this beneficial assistance to farmers and ranchers in the Great Plains area throughout the next decade.

Mr. POAGE. Congressman Steed, of Oklahoma, asked that his statement be inserted. And without objection it will be inserted.

(The document referred to follows:)

STATEMENT OF HON. TOM STEED, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE
STATE OF OKLAHOMA

I have an intense interest in the Great Plains Conservation Program since nine counties in my district are involved. I also have a great deal of confidence in the ability of this legislation to meet a very important national need. I have so indicated this interest and confidence by joining some of my fellow congressmen in introducing HR-561 on January 7, 1969. HR-561 would extend the Great Plains Conservation Program authorized under Public Law 84-1021 from December 31, 1971 to December 31, 1981. It also changes the amount of the authorization from \$150,000,000 to \$250,000,000.

This program provides a means for stabilizing the natural resources and economy in the Great Plains area involving portions of ten states. The Great Plains is an area of extremes and as such is subject to severe erosion from the forces of wind and water and yet, this area is a source of great potential wealth to the national economy. It must be stabilized if we are to invest wisely in the future of our national resources.

Enactment of this legislation would permit the continuation of this long-term cost-sharing contract program which has been found to be extremely effective to accelerate the complete conservation treatment needed on farms and ranches in the Great Plains area.

In Oklahoma as in other states, there are a number of counties which have been in operation under the Great Plains Conservation Program for only a few years. While the full potential has not been met in any of the counties, there is a recognized need to accelerate assistance to the farmers and ranchers in the counties which have not been in operation very long. Ten of the 30 counties participating in this program in Oklahoma have been in operation for three years or less.

Nation-wide there is a backlog of over 5,000 unserved applications from farmers and ranchers desiring to participate in this program. I sincerely hope we will be in a position to respond to their interest and their needs.

This program does an admirable job in assisting family farmers and ranchers to maximize the use of their total resources to maintain or improve their standard of living which in turn stimulates local economy.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to recommend this program and urge your favorable consideration to its extension.

Mr. POAGE. And we have just received since the committee convened a letter from the Department, the answer to our request for a report on this bill, in which the Department gives us an answer which frankly it seems to me is not very responsive. It states:

It is the policy of the administration not to commit itself this far in advance, especially on long range plans. Further, the funding of such program as this one

should be carried out within such budgets and fiscal policies of the President as may be in effect at that time.

The Bureau of the Budget advises that there is no objection to the presentation of this report from the standpoint of the administration's program.

And I would feel that if the Department really means to be of any help to us in these questions, that we need something more specific than that kind of statement, because the committee has to take action on these bills.

We will put the statement of the Department in the record. It will speak for itself.

(The document referred to follows:)

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
Washington, D.C., April 17, 1969.

Hon. W. R. POAGE,
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture,
House of Representatives.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: This is in reply to your request for comments on H.R. 561, 2062, 3854, and 10134. We favor legislation to continue the Great Plains Conservation Program.

However, we prefer the provisions of H.R. 10134 because it would:

1. Extend the program from December 31, 1971, to December 31, 1981.
2. Confirm by legislation the role soil and water conservation districts are playing in helping to implement the program.
3. Provide the Secretary of Agriculture additional latitude to determine adequacy of control of operating units for the contract period. (This would make possible, where conditions warrant, contracts on operating units where customary control is through annual leasing arrangements.)
4. Provide for the Secretary to enter into contracts on land units that are not generally considered farms or ranches where erosion is serious enough to be harmful to the surrounding area.
5. Provide for assistance on agricultural related pollution problems in keeping with overall objectives of the program.
6. Provide for adding measures to enhance fish, wildlife and recreation resources where it will provide opportunity to utilize their resources to improve their economic condition.
7. Provide for modification of contracts to help make the provisions of this program more complementary with other conservation, land use, and commodity programs administered by the Secretary.

It is the policy of this Administration not to commit itself this far in advance, especially for long-range programs. Further, the funding of such a program as this one should be carried out within such budgets and fiscal policies of the President as may be in effect at that time.

The Bureau of the Budget advises that there is no objection to the presentation of this report from the standpoint of the Administration's program.

Sincerely,

/s/ J. PHIL CAMPBELL,
Acting Secretary.

Mr. POAGE. Now, is there any other Member of Congress who wants to be heard or any Representative who wants to be heard.

If not, I believe we have Mr. Berg with us this morning, representing the Soil Conservation Service. He is accompanied by Mr. Vaught and Mr. Campbell.

We will be delighted to hear from you, Mr. Berg. And you may call on any of your associates as you see fit.

**STATEMENT OF NORMAN A. BERG, ASSOCIATE ADMINISTRATOR,
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
ACCOMPANIED BY WILLIAM VAUGHT AND JOE BRAY**

Mr. BERG. Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee, and Members of Congress who have attended the hearing, I have with me this

morning William Vaught, who has worked in the field with the Great Plains conservation program, and is presently a member of our staff in the service office here in Washington; and Mr. Joe Bray, who represents the office of the General Counsel. I have been requested by the Department to read the letter that the chairman just noted.

This is in reply to your request for comments on H.R. 561, 2062, 3854, and 10134. We favor legislation to continue the Great Plains Conservation Program. However, we prefer the provisions of H.R. 10134 because it would:

1. Extend the program from December 31, 1971, to December 31, 1981.

Mr. POAGE. May I interrupt right there. What is the difference between that and the other bills.

Mr. BERG. That is identical, sir.

Mr. POAGE. I know it is. And therefore why do you favor it because of that?

Mr. BERG. This is the primary emphasis of all of these bills. And I think that would be the position of the Department that we do favor the extension of the program for the 10-year period.

Mr. POAGE. But the letter says that you favor it because it extends it. You favor it against the other bills because, and the other bills are identical with it in that respect.

Mr. BERG. Yes, we agree with that.

2. Confirm by legislation the role soil and water conservation districts are playing in helping to implement the program.

3. Provide the Secretary of Agriculture additional latitude to determine adequacy of control of operating units for the contract period. (This would make possible, where conditions warrant, contracts on operating units where customary control is through annual leasing arrangements.)

4. Provide for the Secretary to enter into contracts on land units that are not generally considered farms or ranches where erosion is serious enough to be harmful to the surrounding area.

5. Provide for assistance on agricultural related pollution problems in keeping with overall objectives of the program.

6. Provide for adding measures to enhance fish, wildlife and recreation resources where it will provide opportunity to utilize their resources to improve their economic condition.

7. Provide for modification of contracts to help make the provisions of this program more complementary with other conservation, land use, and commodity programs administered by the Secretary.

It is the policy of this Administration not to commit itself this far in advance, especially for long-range programs. Further, the funding of such a program as this one should be carried out within such budgets and fiscal policies of the President as may be in effect at that time.

The Bureau of the Budget advises that there is no objection to the presentation of this report from the standpoint of the Administration's program.

Sincerely,

J. PHIL CAMPBELL, *Acting Secretary.*

Now, with this letter in the record we are permitted to make this statement to the committee.

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, we are here to present testimony on a number of bills designed to amend Public Law 84-1021. Three of these, H.R. 561, 2062, and 3854 would extend the Great Plains conservation program for another 10 years and increase the authorization by \$100 million. H.R. 10134, in addition to extending the program another 10 years, would increase the authorization by \$150 million and would add certain other features, namely, confirming by legislation the role being played by soil and water conservation districts in helping to implement the program; providing the Secretary additional latitude to determine adequacy of control

of an operating unit for contract purposes; providing for entering into contracts on land units that are not considered farms or ranches but where serious erosion is occurring; providing for adding practices and measures that enhance fish, wildlife and recreation resources for promoting economic uses of land, and for reducing and controlling agricultural related pollutants harmful to soil and water resources; and providing for modification of contracts to assure equitable treatment with respect to other similar conservation, land use or other commodity programs administered by the Secretary of Agriculture.

While we consider all of these bills to be desirable, we favor H.R. 10134 because of the added features which we believe would improve the Great Plains conservation program.

The Great Plains conservation program provides technical and financial assistance through long-term contractual arrangements to help farmers and ranchers install complete conservation programs on their entire operating units. They in turn agree to share the cost and assume the responsibility of installing and maintaining the needed soil and water conservation measures over the period they consider necessary to do the job.

HISTORY

Dependable agriculture in the Great Plains States is vital to all America. These 10 States spanning our Nation from North to South contain over a third of our Nation's land area and two-fifths of our cropland. It is an area which experiences sustained periods of extremely dry weather. High winds occasionally sweep the Plains causing serious wind erosion where surface of the soil is not protected. The severe land damage from wind erosion in the 1930's led to the origin of the term "Dust Bowl" for a large area of the Plains.

During the mid-1950's, the Great Plains suffered from another extended drought which caused severe wind erosion, loss of crops, untimely sales of livestock, and in some cases loss of farms and ranches due to economic stress. Violent duststorms caused by high winds again drew national attention. Dust was carried aloft for hundreds of miles. State and county highway maintenance costs rose because of soil drifting across roads. Driving at times became hazardous, and dust in the air caused human suffering again.

In 1955, governing bodies of soil and water conservation districts and other organizations, groups, and agencies began seriously to study the erosion and other problems of the Plains for the purpose of recommending programs that would help stabilize the resources and the economy of the area. In early 1956 the Great Plains Agricultural Council with assistance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture recommended a program for the Great Plains which was transmitted to the Congress by President Eisenhower. Public Law 1901 establishing the Great Plains conservation program was enacted in August of that year.

And I may say because of the interest of this particular committee. U.S. Department of Agriculture agency representatives at State levels, along with directors of extension and experiment stations, State agricultural agencies, governing bodies of soil and water conservation districts, and other agricultural leaders jointly reviewed the hazardous wind erosion areas in each of the 10 States. They made recommenda-

tions to the Secretary of Agriculture as to the boundaries that should be established for program participation and recommended the initial counties in each State to be eligible to participate. After the initial designation, other counties within the area were required to request designation by the Secretary, based on criteria established for program participation. The area embraces 427 counties in parts of 10 States as shown by the map and list of designated counties. (Attachment No. 1.) Four hundred and twenty of these counties were designated through June 30, 1968. Since then, three other counties have been designated.

The recommendations for action, along with testimony during the hearings, made clear that a strong effort must be made to stabilize the resources of the Plains. In addition to the critical need to establish protective cover on large acreages of unstable land, the program was designed to achieve a more stable agriculture, more dependable source of income, and a more satisfactory livelihood for the people of the region.

It was recognized that emergency treatment measures would not bring about this stability. A program to obtain complete conservation treatment on entire operating units as rapidly as possible was needed. The program, as developed under Public Law 1021, provides for technical as well as long-term cost-sharing assistance to help farmers and ranchers who are willing to install and maintain complete conservation on their units. Cost-share contracts range from not less than 3 years to not more than 10.

In establishing the operating policies of the program, it was determined that priority should be given to those farmers and ranchers needing to make changes in the use of their land to mitigate the hazards of wind and water erosion. A plan of operations, including a time schedule of treatment installation, is a prerequisite for program participation. Conservation plans, developed in cooperation with soil and water conservation districts, serve adequately as a basis for contracts. The program is designed to be in addition to other Department programs in the area, and provision is made for farmers and ranchers to use other programs in carrying out their soil and water conservation plans.

Representatives of agencies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, along with assistance from soil and water conservation districts, extension service, farm organizations, and others, serve as a program development group at both State and county levels. Needed adjustments in the program are made each year to keep pace with the costs, new technology, and fluctuating weather. This assures that program adjustments are made when needed and it helps to bring about desirable coordination of all programs designed to assist in stabilizing agriculture in the plains.

The Great Plains conservation program requires the application of certain management-type practices where needed even though cost-sharing under this program is not available. While the entire operating unit must be planned for all needed conservation treatment over a 3- to 10-year period, participants may proceed as rapidly as their own financial resources permit. In order to allow as many farmers and ranchers as possible to get started on complete conservation plans, a limit of \$25,000 for any one unit was established. Experience has shown that contracts average about \$3,500 in Federal cost-sharing

spread over about 5½ years. This means about \$630 a year in Federal cost-sharing is used by individuals on the average in carrying his conservation plan through to completion.

The Great Plains conservation program is not a land retirement program. No rental payments are included. It is aimed at obtaining shifts and improvement in land uses based on the varying capability of land, rather than crop reduction. This permits the units under contract to continue operation as viable farms and ranches contributing to the economic stability of rural communities. The program provides opportunities for participants to stabilize their operations by insuring carryover feed for livestock to avoid untimely sales during drought or other emergencies. Through application of needed conservation treatment, more dependable production and more stable income is assured.

On June 30, 1968, a total of 31,122 contracts covering 56,601,700 acres had been executed. The effect of the program in bringing about needed land-use adjustment is evidenced by the fact that producers have contracted to convert about 21 percent of their cropland to permanent cover. Nearly 15 percent of the cumulative cost-share payments paid to producers through June 30, 1968, was for the establishment of permanent grass on land previously used for cropland, and about 22 percent was for practices connected with the reestablishment of vegetative cover on range and pasturelands.

The average contract executed in fiscal year 1968 covered 1,604 acres with an average Federal cost-share obligation of \$3,471. Progress of the program by States, showing cost shares paid by practices, status of applications and contracts—including a graphic description—is contained in more detail in attachments No. 2 and No. 3.

The Department of Agriculture, under the chairmanship of the Soil Conservation Service and with assistance from representatives of State and local agencies, has been updating the National Conservation Needs Inventory. We had completed this inventory 10 years ago, and we felt the need to update it. And that process is nearly completed.

The inventory when completed, will represent the composite judgment of more than 30,000 people at county, State, and National levels on the soil and water conservation treatment needs of the Nation's non-Federal rural lands.

Preliminary inventory data for the Great Plains conservation program area show an estimated 110,500,000 acres of cropland and 215 million acres of range and pasturelands. About 43 million acres of cropland and 91 million acres of range and pastureland now have treatment adequate to meet the conservation needs of the land. Thus, more than half the cropland and range and pastureland still need conservation treatment. These acreages include about 5,500,000 acres of cropland that are not suited for sustained cropland production and should be converted to permanent vegetation, and about 12,500,000 acres of range and pasturelands that need reestablishment of vegetation cover.

Conservation treatment of cropland, rangeland, and pastures produces substantial community and national benefits. Proper land use and treatment materially reduce the sediment polluting our Nation's streams and reduces soil dust in the air. Dust contamination of the air, causes among other things, serious respiratory ailments.

Investigations show that all soil blowing does not start on cropland that is not suitable for cultivation. Sometimes it starts on good cropland that has been improperly farmed, or it may start on rangeland that has been severely overused, especially where sandy soils prevail.

The sudden, intense rainstorms that visit the plains area from time to time are further reason for guarding against land damage from this source through conservation measures. Plains farmers and ranchers have learned how to turn these high intensity storms to their benefit by conserving runoff that otherwise would result in water erosion and soil loss.

Experience has shown that certain additions to the present programs as proposed by H.R. 10134 would be desirable. This bill would confirm by legislation the important role that soil and water conservation districts are playing in helping to implement the program. Provisions would be made to give the Secretary additional latitude to determine adequacy of control of operating units for the contract period. This would make possible, where conditions warrant, contracts on land units where customary control is through annual leasing arrangements. This bill would also provide for the Secretary to enter into contracts on land units that are not generally considered farms or ranches where erosion is serious enough to be a menace to the area. It would provide for assistance on certain agricultural related pollution problems in keeping with the overall objectives of the program, and would include measures to enhance the fish, wildlife, and recreation resources of the Great Plains. We believe, the inclusion of these added provisions would contribute to a more adequate consideration and development of the multiple-use potentials of the area. These provisions would not change the basic nature of the program which deals primarily with the climatic hazards of the area. Lastly, this bill would provide for the modification of existing contracts to help make the provisions of this program complementary with other conservation, land use, and commodity programs administered by the Secretary.

I might insert at this point, Mr. Chairman, that these recommendations that have been considered in the bill H.R. 10134 came primarily from a field committee chaired by the late state conservationist H. N. "Red" Smith of Texas. Our previous Administrator, Don Williams, asked men who had worked on this program for a period of time and had this experience in the field, to look at what they thought would be desirable in the future. These ideas came from field experience.

It is important to point out that all of the proposed legislation makes no changes in the existing boundaries of program eligibility. The Great Plains conservation program provides assistance to help alleviate difficult conservation problems in a particular wind erosion area of the country. This program, along with others, such as the agricultural conservation program, Farmers Home Administration, cropland adjustment program, research and other programs of the Soil Conservation Service, are all teaming up to help bring about significant progress in stabilizing the plains area.

The success of this unique program is dependent upon two important factors: (1) The willingness of farmers and ranchers to agree to place their entire operating units under contract to install complete

conservation treatment; and (2) the availability of timely technical and financial assistance. Well over 31,000 individuals have entered into contracts to date and there are more applicants waiting each year than can be serviced. At a time when many farmers and ranchers are still willing to enter into contracts to complete the needed conservation treatment on their entire units, it is important to continue the USDA-farmer-rancher cooperative efforts another 10 years. This is particularly true when one recalls the insidious cycles of drought that are sure to reoccur in the plains area. Our Nation cannot afford to leave the area unprotected again.

While all of these bills are desirable, we would recommend enactment of H.R. 10134 since it would couple extension of the program with additions which this Department believes would be highly beneficial.

My colleagues and I would be happy to try to answer any questions of the subcommittee, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. POAGE. Thank you very much, Mr. Berg.

Of course, you have dwelt on one of the factors which has occurred to me that causes some little trouble, and as I said in the beginning, that is, the limitations of the area in which it is applicable. I just can't conceive of your drawing lines anywhere that people wouldn't want to extend somewhere on beyond. Possibly we have made a mistake as getting off the plains as such. We have gotten this off of the actual plains long ago. We do have it confined to the area of severer climate, wind erosion, and those sorts of things are factors in every one of the counties I think that is now included, and they are factors in a good many other counties that are not included. So I come back to the question of whether it is or is not practical to simply suggest that you provide in the legislation that this should be available to all land-owners that want it in these 10 States. The present law reads and the bill H.R. 1024 reads that during this period such contracts may be entered into on farms, ranches and other lands in counties in the Great Plains area of the States of Colorado, Kansas, and so on.

It then says:

In counties in the Great Plains area of the States of Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas and Wyoming designated by the Secretary as susceptible to serious wind erosion by reason of their soil types, terrain and climatic and other factors.

I wonder if it might not simply read that the contracts could be entered into on farms and ranches and other lands in the States of—naming the 10 States—where the landowner and operator shall furnish the Secretary with the plan of the farming operations on the land, and so on. I don't think that that could mean at all that you would have a sign-up of all the land in the other parts of these States, or anything like the larger percentage of the land as you have in the Great Plains area itself.

But you would then leave to the individual the decision of whether he considered that it was worth his while to spend his money—because he has to put something into this—you would leave it up to the individual to make that decision rather than having that decision made simply on an arbitrary basis.

I know it would cost somewhat more, because there would be those who would take advantage of it, particularly east of the present line, and I am sure in some instances to the west of the present line. But I

can't believe that there would be many people up there in that western area of Montana, which is the mountainous area, the mining area, would go into this program. Neither can I believe that many of these people in the Piney Woods of Texas would go into it, because it is not something that would serve them very well. But there are a lot of farmers in this twilight area who would like to be in it. And they feel—and I know how they feel, because I represent a district that joins this area—they feel that they should have the same opportunity as their neighbor just across the county line now has, to make the decision as to whether they wanted to go into the program or not.

You don't sign everybody up that is in this red area; not by any manner or means. But you give those people an opportunity to go in. And these people in the white areas feel that they would like to have that same opportunity. What is your feeling on that?

Mr. BERG. Mr. Poage, I know of your long and helpful interest in this matter. We have felt, as you have expressed here, the need to reexplore the definition of where this program should apply. The committee that I mentioned did consider this matter. They made a recommendation that the legislative history, of course, that produced the law would have to reflect an attitude such as you are expressing to allow the Department to do somewhat different than what we have been doing, which is primarily holding to the line as designated in 1956.

I agree that the western boundary, especially in the Northern States, is probably about where it should be, because there we are up against the Rocky Mountains, except in Texas. The eastern portions of those States have requested periodically some adjustment. And as you point out, not all of the people participate in this program. The history to date is that in the Great Plains designated area, 11 percent of the farms and ranches are taking part in the program. They represent about 17 percent of the land. With the extension we are talking about here, this may perhaps double that number in the next 10 years.

Mr. POAGE. How could it double it? In this white area here you don't have more than about half the land that you have in the counties that are now eligible, and certainly your percentage of participation will be much smaller.

Mr. BERG. Mr. Chairman, if the program were extended for 10 years we would expect the number of participants to about double from the standpoint of what we have now in the 15-year history of the act.

Mr. POAGE. I think that is reasonable. Excuse me, I thought you meant that if you included this white area that it would double the number of persons.

Mr. BERG. Now, this group of field people felt that perhaps an adjustment of up to about 50 more counties in the area that they feel from personal experience and talking to the local farmers and ranchers and conservation district supervisors is about the extent of what would be a legitimate expansion over another decade. Now, again coming back to this point, under our previous legislative history that developed the act we now operate under, we have felt compelled to pretty much stay within the boundary that we had talked about in 1956. However, we need to recognize that in this eastern part of the area there are counties without question that do have application to this program.

I was in South Dakota during the time that the line was drawn, and there could have easily been another tier of counties to the east, because of the marginal type of operation in those particular counties. There are programs that do operate successfully in this area. The small-watershed program applies more in this area than it does in the high plains country. And there are possibilities of other programs that perhaps can answer some of the needs of that area. But there are counties to the east of this boundary that should be considered in the future, especially when we are talking about a program that would extend through the 1970's.

Mr. POAGE. You are familiar somewhat, I am sure, with the situation in north central Texas?

Mr. BERG. Right.

Mr. POAGE. You know what we call the cross timbers, the east and west cross timbers. They are sandy areas. And where they were put in cultivation, unfortunately a considerable part was put in cultivation a number of years ago, and they should not have been. But where they have been put in cultivation they blow just about as badly as that country up in the panhandle. In fact, I have seen probably greater sand dunes or sand over the fences in some of that cross timber country than I ever saw up on the true plains. Now, we look upon the plains as the area above the cap rock, the high plains. I know that we speak of the red lands as the rolling plains. They are not plains in the sense that they are entirely level, because they are probably just as rolling as some of this Maryland country is. And the same thing is true on into Oklahoma, of course. But a whole lot of this country is not the perfectly flat land that we think of up on the high plains. But it blows just the same. It has many of the same characteristics. And it seems to me that it would be desirable to let those individuals make the decision if they want to come in.

And you get an average of 11 percent in this area—I would think you would get an average of 5 or 6 percent in this area, possibly. You wouldn't get as large a percentage of the land, obviously, because there wouldn't be as many who would need it. But for many individual farms it is just as important as it is in the areas just west of there.

I expect that 50 counties might very well take care of the need. And I wonder if we might more or less understand that if we passed this bill without changing that feature of it that the Department would expect to add something on the order of 50 counties; possibly more.

Mr. BERG. Mr. Chairman, we would certainly be able to give more thought to this matter than we have had in the past, because of the previous legislative intent of the 1956 act.

Mr. POAGE. You have actually added something in the last few years?

Mr. BERG. Yes; we have added five in this 15-year period beyond that designated line that was drawn in 1956. These have been carefully considered one by one. We certainly would not want to dilute the present intent of this program. And that point, I think, is very well understood. It would be a matter of the budget available and the amount of funding that could be applied in these areas.

I might point out that within the plains country itself, as designated on this map, there are counties that, even though they have been designated, have found that their particular local area really didn't need this program, and therefore they have not asked for help. It is an entirely voluntary participating effort.

But with new legislative history the Department would have some guidelines as to how to consider the applicability of these areas, and what criteria to draw. We would certainly hope that we could hold to the intent that it would be based on local needs expressed with a willingness to do something about the problems, and that we would be able to have agreement by the county and State program development groups that these counties would have problems that are similar to the intent of this program.

Mr. POAGE. I just wanted to have an answer that if we passed this amendment that the Department would recognize that it was entirely proper, to say the least, to add a group of counties particularly to the east—and I don't claim to speak for those far north, but from what little I know of them, Mr. Andrews' district is promised several counties there. It seems to me that there should be some counties added in central Oklahoma.

And I am quite sure that there should be 20 or 25 or maybe 35 counties added in Texas, to give us the opportunities that the farmers would take advantage of. Is that along the line of your thinking?

Mr. BERG. Yes. I think from our experience that when we operate this program on an extended basis on through 1970 the expression of your concern about these counties and the problems that are very similar to what we have been dealing with right along the boundary line need to be considered. We need to have the flexibility in the administration of the program to take care of those sorts of areas.

Mr. POAGE. Then there are those counties, which frankly I overlooked, that Mr. White's statement mentioned—Presidio, Brewster, and I guess Culbertson, I forget the counties he named, they are on the south—they run between your program and the Rio Grande River. Of course, they are pure desert counties actually. They are part of the Plains counties, we call them the trans-Pecos country. They are not very mountainous; most of them are great desert areas that the wind certainly does blow on. And they certainly should be added.

Mr. BERG. I think we should use judgment on this certainly, with the legislative history that we are developing now.

Mr. POAGE. Thank you. That is what I wanted to be sure of.

Let me ask you about one other phase. This proposed legislation would extend this program for 10 years. Many of the contracts are 10-year contracts. Those entered into toward the end of the extension period would actually, in effect, double the period of time in which there was an obligation to the United States.

In other words, it is possible under the terms of this to have contracts entered into which would not be performed until 20 years from now instead of 10. So that it does project the program further into the future. Why do we put a cutoff date on the program at all? We don't do it on our small watershed program, as an illustration, and we don't do it on a great many others. Why do we put any cutoff date on this?

Mr. BERG. I think this is a good question that applies both to the legislation itself and to the authorization level, because all of our other items that we administer do not have either. The funding comes primarily—well, it comes through the process that you all know so well, the Department makes its presentations, the Bureau of the Budget makes its allowances, and the Congress appropriates the money annually.

The way we operate this program, when a contract is signed we set aside all of the cost-share funds that would be needed for the length of the contract, so that there is no need to live beyond our means, so to speak. In other words, we do assure and set aside the needed funds to carry out the program as far as the cost-share obligations are concerned.

So it is a good question from the standpoint of whether there is a time limit needed or authorization level needed. Because the way we operate the other programs in the Soil Conservation Service we do not have either of these limitations.

Mr. POAGE. Do you see any reason why we should put this time limitation on any new bill?

Mr. BERG. Well, we would be able to live with it, because I think the opportunity to come back before the Congress and report on progress and reexamine the intent of the program and the way it has been operated is a valuable assist to the Department. Therefore, we have not objected to the idea of extending it for another decade. I do think we need to have an indication that it is the concern of this Nation through the Congress that this area be treated in accordance with the resource and conservation needs that these people feel. That sort of assurance is desirable.

Mr. POAGE. I still don't see that you are going to get any real advantage of the time limit, because obviously any time Congress wants to change a program, anybody can introduce legislation at any time to do it. And we do do that with a great many programs. I am just wondering why the 10-year limitation. It doesn't seem to me that you have shown any great need for the 10-year limitation.

Mr. BERG. No; I have pointed out that our other programs do not have the limitations.

Mr. POAGE. Are there any other questions?

Mr. MAYNE. Mr. Berg, you have placed great emphasis on the previous legislative history which pretty well controlled the areas that the Department has felt free to administer in this program in the past. And I believe you have indicated that you think that this extension should also be handled by legislative history rather than by specific amendment, is that correct?

Mr. BERG. Yes; Mr. Mayne. The present act does provide that the program could operate in the 10 named States. It has been an administrative decision that has drawn the line that we see on the map.

Mr. MAYNE. I would just like to be clear in my own mind as to what kind of legislative history you think will be needed to give you freedom to extend the areas in the future. Is what has already taken place in this record today considered by you to be adequate, or do you want further legislative history before you feel free to go ahead and extend these limits?

Mr. BERG. I think it would be adequate, Mr. Congressman, because we do have a long history of what it is that we are actually facing here in terms of some boundary shifts. This has been developed, and there has been quite a record made in terms of the local need, that the people felt that they should have a right to participate in this program.

It would be a matter of judgment, and I think without question a matter of funding, because the people within the primary area here would still be concerned that the original intent of the act not be lost.

Mr. MAYNE. Is the fact that this record has been made here in the subcommittee going to be sufficient for your purpose, or will the Department feel that it must also be made on the floor at the time of the debate?

Mr. BERG. I would think that the Department could be responsive to the discussion that has taken place here in the subcommittee. The reason I say that is that within the Soil Conservation Service we would certainly be fully cognizant of what has been talked about here. We are charged with the administration of the program. Now, if the Department as a whole has other views on this, they would have the opportunity to express them. But with our leadership responsibilities and with the history of working this program since 1956, we feel that the judgment that would be needed here could be exercised.

Mr. MAYNE. Mr. Chairman, I don't seem to have a copy of Price's testimony. Did he submit a written statement?

Mr. POAGE. Yes.

Mr. MAYNE. I know that Mr. Price was here for some time. But he was not able to stay.

Mr. POAGE. We have already turned his copy over to the reporter.

Mr. MAYNE. I wonder if his testimony points out additional areas to which an extension should apply that ought to be a part of this legislative history.

Mr. POAGE. I wouldn't imagine it would, because every county in Mr. Price's district is in the area now.

Mr. MAYNE. That is something that I was not aware of.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is all the questions I have.

And thank you, Mr. Berg.

Mr. POAGE. Are there any other questions?

If not, we are very much obliged, Mr. Berg.

Mr. BERG. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. POAGE. And now we will hear from Mr. Harrison Pace.

STATEMENT OF HARRISON W. PACE, VICE PRESIDENT, TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION CONTRACTORS, MIDLAND, TEX.

Mr. PACE. Mr. Chairman and gentlemen of the committee, I am happy that you could hear me today.

My testimony, which you have a written copy of, covers much the same area that has already been covered by the testimony by these other gentlemen. But there are several things in this that have been left out that I think bear some consideration, primarily the economics of the program itself.

This program in those cases that we have explored in Texas will return the tax dollar within a period of 2½ to 7 years.

Now, this is unusual, inasmuch as most of the Government programs do not have a return to them.

I am a contractor and also a rancher in Texas. And I would like to speak primarily from the contracting side of this. Our association and the contractors within it have grown up primarily within the framework of the Great Plains program. And we derive most of our income from the work that we do on this program.

When the funding, as mentioned heretofore—say they started re-issuing contracts in November of last year, and they cut them off this year, well, this is inadequate as far as keeping the industry going.

And you need an industry, a big industry to service this Great Plains area.

We are associated with the Land Improvement Contractors of America, which also covers the rest of the Great Plains States, and the rest of the Nation.

But this program is necessary, and very, very useful, and has experienced great results, as you have seen in previous testimony here.

It also fulfills another obligation which the Congress has attempted to create new jobs for more or less indigent type people. We in this industry employ a tremendous number of these people. I am a very small contractor myself, but I employed 65 of these last year. You multiply this by over 2,000 contractors in the State of Texas, and this represents a tremendous section of this type labor market.

Perhaps the prime, one of the more prime reasons for sustaining this Great Plains program—and the people in Texas are more acutely aware of it at this point is time—is our water problem. By adequately controlling the brush in the State of Texas we can add to our water resources another 10 million acre-feet a year. There is a tremendous amount of thought given to bringing this water from out of State from various sources. Well, there is a potential for water that falls in Texas to stay in Texas at a much cheaper per acre-foot rate.

Justification for the existence and perpetuation of the GPCP could be made on any one of the many accomplishments, whether it be in the preservation of our water resources, control of water and air pollution, preservation of our natural resources, employment of labor, assistance to the farmers and ranchers, or just a good Government business deal based on the return of its investment. The program has proven itself both economically and practically in the past. It has picked up the momentum necessary to sustain it as an accepted part of our natural resources perpetuation.

If funds are not available in this prime area of importance, irreparable damage will be done to its impetus on the breadbasket of the Nation. We would request of the House and Senate that they increase the available funds for the 1970 fiscal year to match the 1967 level of \$18,526,000, and that House bill 561 be supported in its entirety.

(Mr. Pace's statement follows:)

REPORT OF TEXAS CONSERVATION CONTRACTORS' ASSOCIATION COMPILED BY
HARRISON W. PACE

PURPOSE AND SCOPE FOR THE GREAT PLAINS CONSERVATION PROGRAM

The Great Plains

The Great Plains region is a vast, productive, agricultural empire which has problems peculiar to its environment. The region can continue to be a great productive reservoir if wisely managed to conserve and increase its productive capacity. These great potentials can be fully realized by putting into effect those practices and procedures which will more completely control the effects of weather hazards. Drought, destructive winds, floods, and other natural disasters cannot be prevented—but their damaging effects can be minimized. Based upon experience and research in the region, a sound and practical program has been developed.

The region is subject to severe climatic variations that periodically bring wide suffering and serious economic losses. Because of the character of some soils in the region, and the normal low rainfall pattern, some of the land cannot sustain

continuous cultivation. When that is attempted, serious problems of wind erosion and resultant economic distress occur and recur.

The region also has the continuing problem of providing protection for its good cultivated lands against eroding soil during seasons of high winds and frequent periods of extremely dry weather. Most of the land now in cultivation is suitable for continuous cultivation provided good management practices are continuously employed. There are, however, several million acres of land now in cultivation that are not suited for such use, as is clearly indicated by the very low and uncertain yields that have been received. These are the lands that constitute the major problems.

The farmers and ranchers in the Great Plains States responded splendidly to the call of their Government for greatly increased production during World War II. The Great Plains region is suffering some of the results of continuing in effect wartime production incentives long after that emergency demand had ended.

Development of the Program

This long-range agricultural program for the Great Plains area has been developed after much research and study. A wide range of proposals was solicited and received from such sources as the following:

(a) Proposals and recommendations made at local, county, State, and regional levels by associations, agricultural colleges, and other State agencies, farm organizations, State officials, Federal agencies and officers, and other interested groups.

(b) The Great Plains Agricultural Council, from the 1930's, has given continuous study to the problem since that time and has made many carefully developed recommendations.

(c) Studies conducted by the United States Department of Agriculture and the land-grant colleges.

(d) "Guides" to a proposed long-range program for the area were drafted at a special Great Plains Agricultural Conference held May 31-June 2, 1955, with representatives of the 10 Great Plains States. These suggested "Guides" were widely distributed to interested groups and individuals and their suggestions were requested. On receipt of the reactions of farm, agricultural and other organizations, and a further conference with the Great Plains Council on July 25-27, 1955, a program for the Great Plains has been developed.

This program is applicable generally to all of the Great Plains States. Some actions, however, are being given greater initial emphasis in the most critical wind erosion areas. Several phases of the program have already been put into effect. Other phases require further development in cooperation with leadership in the States. The program is subject to revision from time to time as additional research, continued study, and experience show need for changes and expansion.

To become effective any long-range program must be developed and adapted to local conditions by the people in the area with appropriate assistance from their local, State, and Federal Governments.

The Objective of the Program

The goal to be achieved is a more stable agriculture, more dependable sources of income, and progressively satisfactory livelihood for the people of the region. To achieve this goal, there must be widespread use of good soil management and water conservation practices and adjustments in sizes and types of farms which will enable farmers and ranchers to effectively cope with the climatic hazards of the region.

There must also be complete understanding of the objective and coordinated teamwork on the part of all concerned, farmers, landowners, civic and agricultural groups, private industry, local, State, and Federal agencies and governments, in order to translate this program into action to create a more stable economy and for maximum benefits to all the residents of the Great Plains.

Breakdown of Costs by Practice in Texas

In Texas as of February 28, 1969, funds amounting to \$36,500,000 have been obligated. Of this obligated amount about \$29,000,000 had to be paid out to producers in cost-share practices; net difference is \$7,000,000 in contracts to be earned. The present rate of payments is approximately a $\frac{3}{4}$ of a million dollars per quarter. At the present time contract funds are again exhausted in the State of Texas. Applications far exceed available funds as there are 1,243 unserved applications for approximately \$4,000,000 awaiting development. Texas

received an allocation of only \$3,282,000 for 1969 F.Y. This compares with \$2,837,000 for 1968 F.Y., and \$5,500,000 for 1967 F.Y. Available contract funds under the GPCP has been as follows: \$11.1 million, Fiscal Year 1969; \$10.6 million, Fiscal Year 1968; and \$14.8 million, Fiscal Year, 1967.

For 1970 F.Y. the budget estimate for cost-share assistance is \$10,000,000.

The Great Plains Conservation Program in Texas (14.6 percent operating units)

Counties in Texas.....	99
Acres	67, 121, 920
Operating units.....	75, 779
Contracts	11, 000
Acres (20 percent land).....	13, 000, 000
Contracts expired.....	5, 152
Active contracts.....	4, 729

\$37,000,000 obligated in contracts.

\$29,000,000 paid out.

68 percent rangeland.

32 percent cropland.

500,000 acres cropland converted to grassland with GPCP.

Cost-shares spent as follows:

	Percent
GP: 1 and 5.....	42
GP: 7, 8, and 9.....	26
GP: 15, 16, 17 and 18.....	7
GP: 19, 21, 22.....	6.5
GP: 23.....	13
GP: 24.....	2.2
Others	3.3

Cost-shares spent on cropland equals 52.3 percent.

Cost-shares spent on rangeland equals 47.7 percent.

Lang Range Results of the Great Plains Program, Texas

It is significant to note that the average expenditure per expired contract has been only \$2,720.50, and on an average GPCP cost-share expenditure of \$2.38 per acre. The average expired contract covered 1,141 acres. The true value of the GPCP has been shown in the way conservation has been maintained. To date, over 5,152 contracts have expired in Texas. 4,050 expired contracts were checked in the field and it was found that 3,779 or 93.3% were being maintained. The study showed that 68.8% were being maintained essentially as they were when the contract expired; 25.3% had made significant improvements above what was present when the contract expired and only 5.9% showed some signs of deterioration of permanent practices and were not meeting the needs of the land. Other far-reaching results cited by statements from the producers are:

1. Many said they gained a better understanding of the needs of the land and were able to do a better job in managing their operations as a result of the technical assistance provided by SCS.

2. One owner stated that although his farm increased in value \$75,000 as a result of work done with the GPCP, the SCS technical assistance he received had been worth more than the cost-share he earned.

3. The opportunity to do the whole conservation job in a short period of time motivated many producers to enter the GPCP contracts.

4. SWCD supervisors have stated that the GPCP has been instrumental in introducing new conservation practices, such as parallel terraces, badly needed for new farming methods. For example, some 33.3 million feet of parallel terraces have been installed in Texas with GPCP assistance in less than 4 years.

5. A number of farmers and ranchers stated that GPCP contracts have helped bankers and other money lenders better understand the needs and benefits of a conservation program, thereby making it easier for them to obtain adequate credit to make improvements.

6. Conservation plans with technical assistance from SCS have helped producers to use all of their soil, water and plant resources more fully, thereby increasing and stabilizing their income.

7. Several small landowners reported that increased farm earnings from application of the contract enabled them to stay on the farm instead of moving to town for employment. Comparing accomplishment made with the GPCP with the Conservation News of the 99 Great Plains counties in Texas, we found that

from 10 to 15 percent of the needs had been met during the first 10 years. This would have been much higher if funds had been available to meet requests of producers, GPCP has also been instrumental in motivating landowners and operators to carry out a conservation plan without cost-share assistance, proving beyond doubt the excellence of the program's concept.

Overall Great Plains Program

The law provides for \$150,000,000 cost-share limitation through the life of the program which terminates on December 31, 1971. As of the 1970 F.Y. there is only 30.8 million dollars left out of the original appropriation. It is possible and highly probable that funds will be exhausted by 1971. Therefore, it is imperative that Congressmen Mahon and Purcell, of Texas; Rogers and Evans, of Colorado; Aspinall, Steed, White, Bursleson and Fisher, of Texas be supported in House Bill 561, and that the extension to December 31, 1981 and the dollar amount of \$250,000,000 be supported.

COMPARISON OF 1968 OBLIGATIONS WITH 1969 AVAILABLE AND 1970 BUDGET ESTIMATES

	1968 obligations	1969 available ¹	1970 budget estimates
Conservation operations:			
Assistance to conservation districts, communities, and other cooperators:			
(a) Soil surveys.....	\$18,597,133	\$19,500,000	\$19,500,000
(b) Technical programing, installation services, and snow surveys.....	94,365,000	98,226,000	98,226,000
(c) Operation of plant material centers.....	1,011,840	1,060,000	1,060,000
Total.....	113,973,973	118,786,000	118,786,000
Watershed planning: Project investigations and planning.....	\$6,270,940	\$6,706,706	\$6,209,000
Projects authorized for planning.....	100	100	25
River basin surveys and investigations.....	\$8,066,666	\$9,764,000	\$8,187,000
Watershed works of improvement:			
Works of improvement.....	\$56,501,995	\$64,361,806	\$63,778,000
Loans and related expense.....	546,018	605,066	300,000
Total.....	57,048,013	64,966,872	64,078,000
Projects moved into construction stage.....	43	55	25
Flood prevention:			
Works of improvement.....	\$22,079,058	\$26,042,081	\$20,123,000
Loans and related expense.....	24,647	1,909,485	100,000
Total.....	22,054,411	27,951,566	20,223,000
Great Plains conservation program:			
Cost-sharing assistance.....	\$10,604,366	\$13,842,338	\$10,000,000
Technical services.....	3,949,254	4,160,000	4,000,000
Total.....	14,553,620	18,002,338	14,000,000
Unserviced applications.....	5,019	4,628	5,128
Resource conservation and development:			
Project investigations and planning.....	\$701,569	\$473,000	\$1,200,000
Resource development and technical services.....	6,053,183	6,388,355	8,952,000
Loans and related expense.....	1,311,042	334,832	100,000
Total.....	8,065,794	7,196,187	10,252,000
Projects in operation.....	29	44	63
Total all funds.....	\$230,033,417	\$253,373,669	\$241,735,000
Man-years (appropriated funds).....	16,502	16,760	16,755

¹ Includes proposed supplemental of \$5,723,000 to partially cover added pay costs. Of the total of \$7,431,000 needed, \$1,708,000 is being absorbed.

GRAPHIC PRESENTATIONS

The Great Plains Conservation Program

F.Y. 1962-1969:

1. Average-size contracts (acres).
2. Status of applications received and contracts written.
3. Status of unserviced applications.

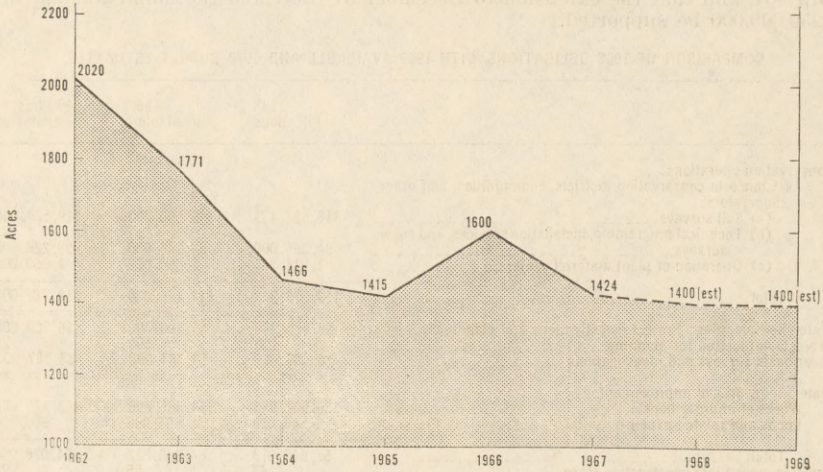
The Great Plains Conservation Program—Texas

F.Y. 1962—1969:

1. Status of applications received and contracts written.
2. Status of unserviced applications.
3. Average-size contracts (acres).
4. Contract and planned crop-land conversions.
5. Percentage of total cost-shares spent on selected practice.

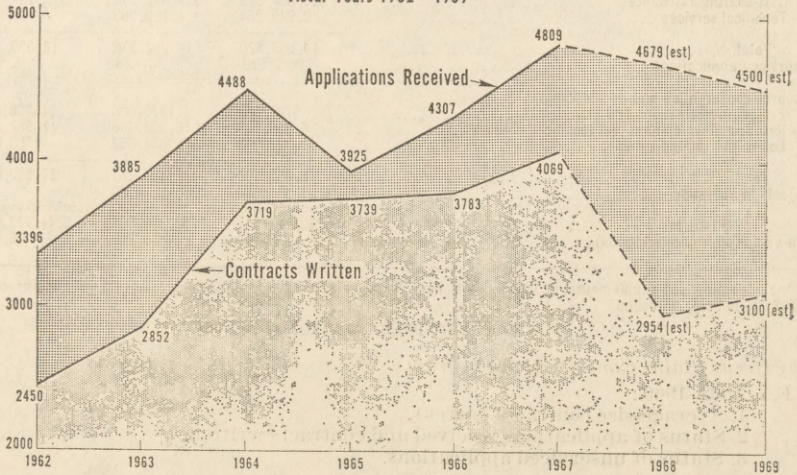
GREAT PLAINS CONSERVATION PROGRAM
Average Size Contracts (Acres)

Fiscal Years 1962 - 1969



GREAT PLAINS CONSERVATION PROGRAM
Status of Applications Received
and Contracts Written

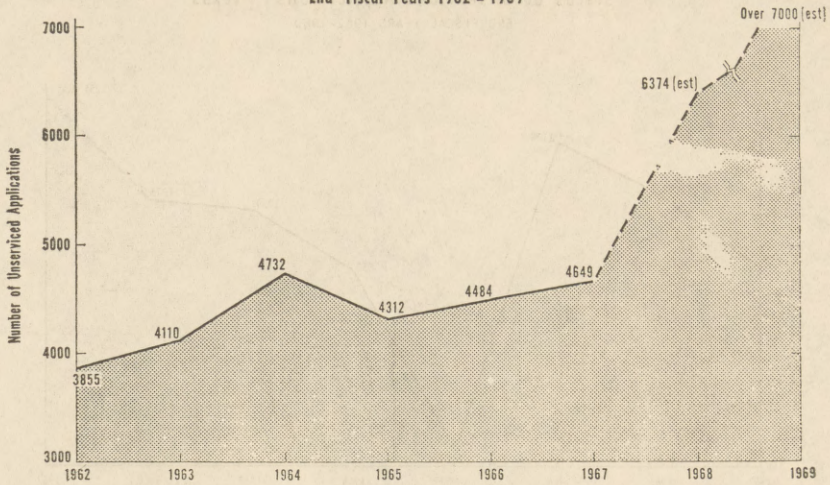
Fiscal Years 1962 - 1969



GREAT PLAINS CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Status of Unserved Applications

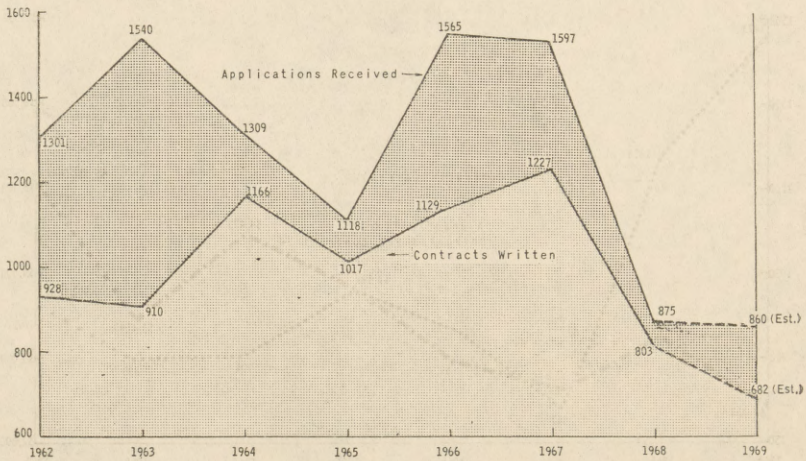
End Fiscal Years 1962 - 1969



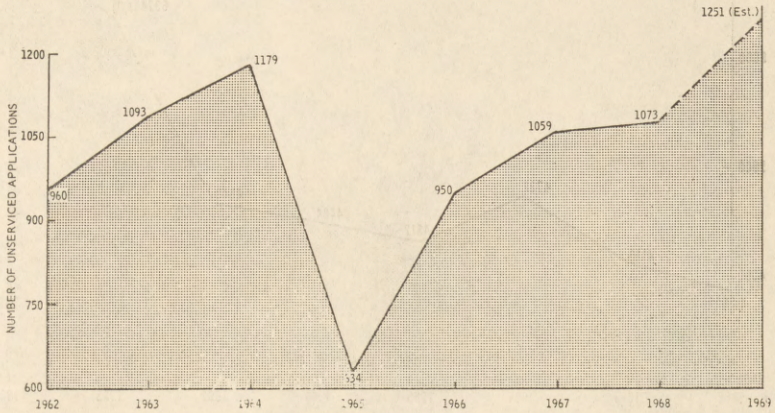
GREAT PLAINS CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Status of Applications Received and Contracts Written - Texas

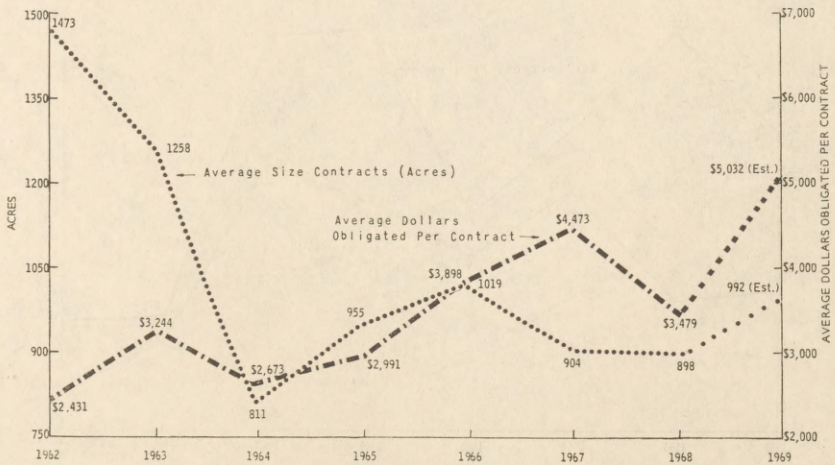
FISCAL YEARS 1962-1969



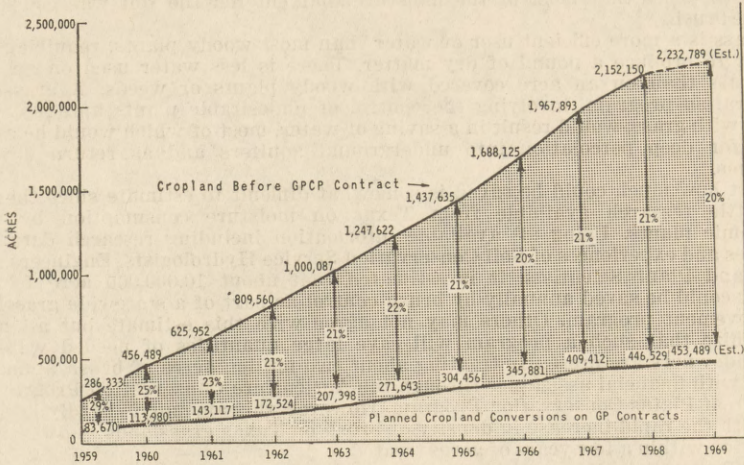
GREAT PLAINS CONSERVATION PROGRAM
Status of Unserved Applications - Texas
END FISCAL YEARS 1962-1969



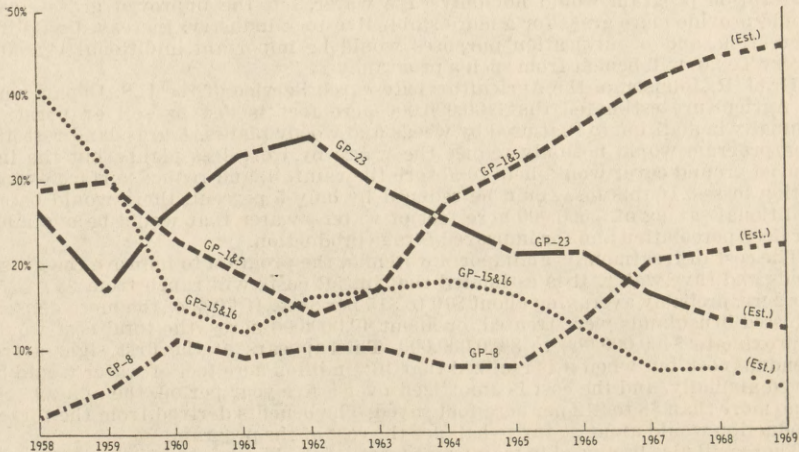
GREAT PLAINS CONSERVATION PROGRAM
Average Size Contracts (Acres) - Texas
FISCAL YEARS 1962-1969



GREAT PLAINS CONSERVATION PROGRAM
Cropland in Operating Units Before GPCP
Contract and Planned Cropland Conversions - Texas
FISCAL YEARS 1959-1969



GREAT PLAINS CONSERVATION PROGRAM
Percent of Total Cost-Shares Spent on Selected Practices - Texas
FISCAL YEARS 1958-1969



Program Relation to the Water Problem

One of the most important by-products of the Great Plains program in Texas as well as the other Western States, is its contribution to the Water resources. Water has always been one of Texas' most valuable and least abundant resources, particularly in the western part of the state, as present supplies of available water are taxed to its utmost. It will become even more valuable. It has been estimated by scientists that 138,000,000 acre feet of water—almost 38% of the average annual precipitation are consumed by non-economical plants.

The brush survey made by the Soil Conservation Service in 1964 found that 88,000,000 acres, 82%, of Texas' grasslands were infested with brush, 54,000,000 acres so dense that most of the moisture that entered the soil was consumed by the brush.

Grass is a more efficient user of water than most woody plants, requiring less water to produce a pound of dry matter. There is less water used on an acre to grass than on an acre covered with woody plants or weeds. A grassland restoration program, involving the control of undesirable plants and replacing them with grass, would result in a saving of water, most of which would be available for deep percolation into underground aquifers and as return flow to streams.

Just how much could be saved is somewhat difficult to estimate since there is so little research available from Texas on moisture consumption by non-economic plants. Using all available information including research data and studies and experiences of Soil Conservation Service Hydrologists, Engineers, and Soil and Plant Scientists, it is estimated that about 10,000,000 acre feet of water could be saved annually by brush control as part of a statewide grassland improvement program. Others may not agree with this estimate but all must recognize that such a program will save large quantities of needed water.

Landowners are presently treating about two million acres of brush annually, often with financial assistance through the Agriculture Conservation Program or the Great Plains Conservation Program. However, this amount is hardly keeping up with the rapid increase in density of brush on Texas grasslands and the reinfestation within a few years of acres treated.

The importance of water conservation is so widespread that a concerted effort and the support of all interests are needed to accomplish the job. Grassland restoration as a means of saving water is apparently one of the cheapest means of saving water, less costly than but not a substitute for de-salinization of sea water or transportation of water for hundreds of miles to thirsty lands. A grassland restoration program would not only save water, but the improved grass cover would provide more grass for a more stable livestock industry. Increased wildlife, recreation, and beautification purposes would be important additional benefits. Every Texan will benefit from such a program.

Dr. J. R. Johnson of the Agricultural Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture estimated that 100,000,000 acre feet is lost by soil evaporation annually in addition to that used by weeds and woody plants. A grassland restoration program would not only reduce the waste by worthless plants, but the improved ground cover would help to absorb the rainfall, and reduce surface evaporation losses. If this loss could be reduced by only 5 percent, there would be an additional saving of 5,000,000 acre feet of water—water that would be available for deep percolation and for improved forage production.

The cost of treatment is an important item in the program to improve the grasslands and save water. It is estimated that initial costs will range from \$3 to \$50 per acre, probably averaging about \$10 to \$15 per acre. If 70% of the more densely infested brushlands were treated, or about 40,000,000 acres, the total cost would approximate \$400,000,000 to \$600,000,000. This appears at the first sight a tremendous cost, but when it is realized that 10¼ million acre feet of water would be saved annually, and the cost is amortized over a five year period, the annual cost is no more than \$8 to \$12 per acre foot saved. The benefits derived from the forage production would alone go far to balance the cost of the program.

There will also be a need to maintain control of the brush on treated land. Treatment presently being used seldom eradicates all the brush, and there will be a continuous source of reinfestation from untreated areas. Therefore, a comprehensive control program will of necessity provide for maintenance. This may be applied annually, or periodically every few years as needed. Annual maintenance costs will be considerably less than initial costs, and will probably range from \$0.25 to \$1.00 per acres.

It is recognized that more effective and certainly more economical methods of control are badly needed. Methods of control, if properly applied, are generally

effective to most species, but inadequate for some species. Research properly oriented to the needs can aid greatly to improve treatment effectiveness and costs, and should be a step in the overall program.

The citizens of Texas have become acutely aware of their water resources, and the lack of it in many places. A State Water Plan has been proposed by the Texas Water Development Board which involves many reservoirs and diversions at a huge cost. The reservoirs and diversions are only a part of the needs, however. There needs to be a plan for treatment to assure that the water reaches the reservoirs and diversions. Water that is wasted by brush and weeds can't be stored or diverted to needy areas.

The cost of saving water through the grassland restoration program compares quite favorably with the cost of storing water in the State Water Plan. The cost of the latter is about \$55 per acre foot storage.

The citizens of Texas are faced with a fight to prevent soil losses and save their water and grass resources from the host of undesirable woody plants that cover vast areas of the state. What is needed is a concerted effort on a wide front—information, education, research, legislation, financing, technical services, and operation on the land. Its goal should be control of water losses and increased grassland productivity that would assure the maximum benefits to landowners and downstream water users.

Texas simply cannot afford to waste their water resources.

Program Relation to Pollution

Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman's speech to the Agriculture and National Resources Committees of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Washington, D.C., on Friday, February 2, 1968, relates that silt and sediment is the oldest of all water pollutants. The cost of sediment in our reservoirs alone is \$100,000,000 a year. Sediment ruins recreational lakes, kills fish, costs millions in taxes for dredging and filtering, and carries other pollutants into the water. Total yearly silt pollution damage is in excess of \$346,000,000. He advocates better land practices to curb run-off and sediment delivery that transports unwanted fertilizers and pesticides into watersheds.

Program Relation to Economic Recovery

The GPCP has demonstrated its ability as originally designed to accomplish its objectives. Several random samplings of its beneficial results are attached. A complete and extensive study of benefits of the GPCP has not been made; however, two very prime examples are submitted:

Program effect on an individual.

The Vernon M. Early family of Silvester chose a farm life. They were in debt for their land, and dry weather put them in debt for operating expenses. The Earlys developed a conservation plan with the help of Bob Price, SCS technician at Rotan, Texas. The Farmers Home Administration furnished financial assistance. Seventy acres were rootplowed and seeded; an irrigation system was developed; land was leveled. Early now irrigates alfalfa, wheat, grain sorghum, and cotton. His total gross income in 1962 was \$3,149.00. In 1966, after completing his GPCP contract, his total gross farm income was \$13,240.00.

Program effect on a county as a whole.

Montague County was activated in the GPC Program in January, 1966. Three active Trinity River subwatersheds and Farmers Creek, a PL-566 project, have about 50,000 acres of severely eroded land that need treatment before the projects can be fully effective. The GPCP is making this possible. The first year, 129 contracts obligating \$825,966 on 51,315 acres were prepared. These contracts obligating \$825,966 on 51,315 acres were prepared. These contracts contained cost-sharing help for 190 grade stabilization structures and farm ponds; 22,740 acres of pasture planting and range seeding, and 1,804 acres of critical area shaping and planting. This compares with 57, 4,489 and 0 respectively for 1965. Four new heavy equipment conservation contractors emerged during the last year. John Wilson, who is a rancher, conservationist and businessman at Bowie, said that using the multiplying factor that the \$825,966 of GPCP cost-sharing generated spending of about \$4,000,000 the first year.

Prior to the advent of the program the county was losing population. After the conclusion of the work under the Great Plains Program the county started increasing in population.

Program effect on the community.

The Hawley community is located in Jones County about half way between Abilene and Anson. There are about 50,000 acres of shinnery located in this area,

most of which was not fenced until the Great Plains Program was introduced in the area in 1961. There are now over 15,000 acres under contract with the Great Plains Conservation Program. All of this land has a complete conservation plan and over $\frac{1}{2}$ of the work on this 15,000 acre tract has been completed. Over \$180,000 has been paid to local contractors, seed dealers and fence builders over an eight-year period in this area. Most of this, in turn, has been paid directly into the local economy. Not only have the local businesses received a direct benefit from the expenditure of these funds but there is also a multiplier effect of new funds which permeates and benefits the economy of the area. The value of the land has increased tremendously over the past 10 years. In 1957, one 563-acre tract was bought for \$17 per acre. Today \$100 per acre will not buy this place. Another tract of land sold 3 times in an 18-month period between 1962 and 1963 going from \$30.00 per acre to \$90.00 per acre. A recent portion of this place sold for over \$350.00 per acre. Additionally, there have been 12 miles of farm-to-market road built through this area and a large part of the increase in traffic was due to the GP Program. The improved community environment brought about by conservation practices and the availability of essentials such as good drinking water and good roads added to the build-up of homes in this area. Several people are buying this land as a place to retire. The average size place is about 200 acres which could be classified as small farms.

These illustrations show that the GPCP does not cost the Government, but is a sound program that will return its investment many times over in the future through increased income tax. An analysis will show that increased taxes will repay all Government cost-shares in $2\frac{1}{2}$ to $7\frac{1}{2}$ years. In some cases it can be shown that recovery is in the first year.

Conclusion

The GPCP has been greatly handicapped by lack of cost-share funds. Texas received approximately \$5,500,000 for the 1967 F.Y.; \$2,837,000 for the 1968 F.Y., and \$3,282,000 for the 1969 F.Y. of which these funds are exhausted. Presently there are applications which far exceed available funds as there are 1,243 unserved applications for approximately \$4,000,000 awaiting development which is twice the dollar amount needed for the previous year. The total proposed 1970 F.Y. budget estimate for cost-sharing assistance is \$10,000,000, as opposed to \$11,100,000 in 1969; \$10,600,000 in 1968; and \$14,800,000 in 1967.

The proposed decrease in cost-share funds will effect a near stoppage on an industry that has grown up with the GPCP. The Conservation Contractors Association of Texas feels that it will lose a large number of the contractors in Texas and seriously harm the rest. A large number of skilled and unskilled labor will be returned to the labor market both from contractors and from its support industry, that is, seed dealers, producers, vendors and suppliers. As is brought out in the previous body of this testimony, the harm done to smaller sized ranch and farm operations will be highly injurious. This segment of the population is already being squeezed to the utmost.

Justification for the existence and perpetuation of the GPCP could be made on any one of its many accomplishments, whether it be in the preservation of our water resources, control of water and air pollution, preservation of our natural resources, employment of labor, assistance to the farmers and ranchers or just a good Government business deal based on the return of its investment. The program has proven itself both economically and practically in the past. It has picked up the momentum necessary to sustain it as an accepted part of our natural resources perpetuation. If funds are not available in this prime area of importance, irreparable damage will be done to its impetus and to the breadbasket of our nation.

Synopsis of Request

We would request of the House and Senate that they increase the available funds for the 1970 F.Y. to match the 1967 level of \$18,526,000.

And, that House Bill 561 be supported in its entirety.

Mr. PACE. Gentlemen, that is all I have to say. If you have any questions—

Mr. POAGE. Thank you very much, Mr. Pace.

Any questions of Mr. Pace?

If not, we are much obliged to you.

And now, Mr. House, president of the Texas Association of Conservation Contractors.

Mr. PACE. Mr. House was not able to attend.

Mr. POAGE. I see Mr. DeVaney is here. If you would like to appear today—you are listed tomorrow, but we would be glad to hear you if you want to appear today.

STATEMENT OF C. H. DeVANEY, ASSISTANT LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR, AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

Mr. DeVANEY. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, we have a brief statement and I will leave out part of it.

Mr. POAGE. You want it printed, though, don't you?

Mr. DeVANEY. Yes; I would like to have it printed as though it were all read.

Mr. POAGE. Without objection, it will appear in total.

Mr. DeVANEY. I am C. H. DeVaney, assistant legislative director with the American Farm Bureau Federation. The American Farm Bureau Federation represents the extension of the Great Plains conservation program as provided in H.R. 561. The Farm Bureau has consistently supported the program since its inception. And we have many thousands of members in the area affected.

With your permission, I will skip reading the next two paragraphs.

At the March meeting, the American Farm Bureau Board of Directors reviewed and evaluated the Great Plains conservation program. As a result, we are supporting extension for a 10-year period with an authorization of \$250 million over that period. With the success of the program thus far and the inflationary trend, this does justify the increase in the authorization. However, we hope the program can be administered in such a way as to keep it at about the level of expenditures experienced during the past 3 years. In the interest of economy, we would urge continued emphasis on permanent-type practices which would prevent occurrence of a situation such as that which brought about the necessity of a Great Plains program; namely, the Dust Bowl area.

(The document referred to follows:)

STATEMENT OF C. H. DeVANEY, ASSISTANT LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR, THE AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

The American Farm Bureau Federation recommends the extension of the Great Plains Conservation Program as provided in H.R. 561.

Farm Bureau has consistently supported this program since its inception. We have many thousands of members in the area affected.

The basic objective of the Great Plains Conservation Program is to provide assistance to farmers and ranchers in applying complete conservation programs on individual units. The farmer or rancher enters into a contract with the Secretary of Agriculture for a period from a minimum of three years to a maximum of ten years to carry on needed conservation treatment. The program provides cost-sharing for permanent type practices.

It is currently in operation in 421 counties in 10 states and has in effect currently over 31,000 contracts. Emphasis is given to the establishment of permanent cover.

At its March meeting the American Farm Bureau Board of Directors reviewed and evaluated the Great Plains Conservation Program. As a result, we are supporting extension for a ten-year period, with an authorization of \$250,000,000 over that period. The success of the program thus far and inflationary trends in costs justify the increase in authorization; however, we hope the program can

be administered in such a way as to keep it about at the level of expenditures experienced during the past three years.

In the interest of economy, we would urge continued emphasis on permanent type practices which would prevent a recurrence of the situation that brought about the necessity for the Great Plains Program, namely, the Dust Bowl Era.

Mr. DeVANEY. Mr. Chairman, that is the conclusion of our testimony.

Mr. POAGE. Thank you very much.

Are there any questions of Mr. DeVANEY?

If not, we are very much obliged to you.

I don't suppose that Mr. Bauer is here, and I know that Congressman Martin is not.

It will not be possible for me to be here tomorrow, but we will ask the subcommittee to meet, and Mr. Stubblefield will preside.

And there are only two witnesses scheduled tomorrow. And I think they can be disposed of rather expeditiously. And we will then sit in executive session some time possibly next week.

Is there anything further to come before the subcommittee?

If not, we stand in recess until tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock.

(Whereupon, at 11:50 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned, to reconvene at 10 a.m., Friday, April 18, 1969.)

GREAT PLAINS CONSERVATION PROGRAM

FRIDAY, APRIL 18, 1969

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CONSERVATION AND CREDIT
OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10 a.m., in room 1301, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. Eligio de la Garza, presiding.

Present: Representatives de la Garza, Alexander, and Teague of California.

Also present: Christine S. Gallagher, clerk; William C. Black, general counsel; John H. Knebel, assistant counsel, and Fred Ward, assistant staff consultant.

MR. DE LA GARZA. The committee will come to order.

We will be very happy to hear from you, Mr. Martin.

STATEMENT OF HON. DAVID T. MARTIN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEBRASKA

MR. MARTIN. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am a cosponsor of H.R. 2062, which authorizes an appropriation for the Great Plains conservation program of \$250 million.

This program has been of tremendous benefit to my home State—the State of Nebraska. Sixty counties in Nebraska are presently designated to receive assistance; many of these counties were subjected to serious drought last year, and will require extensive land treatment to prevent rapid erosion.

The Great Plains conservation program, with its unique feature of long-term cost-sharing through contractual arrangements with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, has made a significant impact on the tough wind and water erosion problems in the Plains area of Nebraska.

There is visual evidence across the hazardous Plains area of Nebraska and the other Great Plains States that installation of complete conservation treatment on a scheduled basis is efficient and effective. Many farmers and ranchers in my district have told me how significant it is to them to have the assurance of cost sharing and timely technical assistance over a fixed period of years. This enables them to plan and apply with confidence needed conservation measures which they can afford over a period of years.

Dependable Federal cost-sharing and technical assistance, which can be translated into being our society's share of the cost of preventing another Dust Bowl, have been important factors in the way our

farmers and ranchers have undertaken the job. It should be noted that these producers are likewise making significant investments in reaching the final objective.

The program has given priority to those farms and ranches where serious wind erosion is occurring. Efforts are being made to return unsuitable cropland to grass and to reestablish depleted ranges so that adequate cover exists to protect the land from the ravages of strong winds that often plague the Plains.

Nearly 4,500 farmers and ranchers in Nebraska have entered into long-term contracts to complete the needed conservation treatment on their entire operating units. This involves over five and one-half million acres where the needed conservation treatment is either finished or is well underway. About \$13.5 million have been obligated in my State since the program began to assure our State's agricultural producers that the Government's share of the cost of needed practices is available as rapidly as they can afford to proceed. Significant to me is the emphasis being placed upon returning to permanent grass those cropland fields that should never have been plowed in the first place. Well over 200,000 acres are planned for such conversion in the contracts in Nebraska, most of which has already been accomplished. I note, too, that in the Great Plains region 21 percent of all the cropland in these contracts is scheduled to be returned to grass. Nearly one and one-half million acres have already been established.

Our Nation has been fortunate thus far in not having to experience another period like the "dirty thirties." Our conservation investment since that time has perhaps assured us that we shall not see those dark days again, at least on the same scale. But having been born and raised on the Plains, I am sure my other colleagues will agree with me we cannot for one minute drop our guard. Extended droughts coming in cycles are a constant threat to the vast Plains area of our Nation, and particularly Nebraska.

As I travel over my congressional district, which is all in the Plains, I note with considerable satisfaction that the Great Plains conservation program, along with others, has made this area far less vulnerable to those extremes in weather conditions. This unique contract arrangement with over 32,000 farmers and ranchers in the Plains States thus far has proven its value to our Nation's breadbasket. In addition to diminishing the tremendous dust storms once experienced, the program has in many cases provided economic stability to individual farm and ranch units and kept them in business. It has likewise had a beneficial economic impact on rural communities.

Average rainfall in Nebraska is often below minimum requirements for good crop production. Consequently, you can see that there is a great need in my State for returning some of our cropland acres to permanent grass.

I take pride in returning to my district to visit with the farmers and ranchers who no longer suffer the anguish and despair once experienced when strong winds eliminated a total year's work in a matter of hours.

Together in this USDA-farmer-rancher partnership we are learning to cope with those hazardous weather conditions, and together we are on our way to complete stability of the Plains area. We are winning the battle by working with Old Mother Nature—but let me emphasize that the battle is not yet won. At a time in history when we are close to having the needed stability of the Plains area, I urge that we con-

tinue this unique program another 10 years with appropriate authorization, so that we can close out forever the chance of witnessing another period of dust storms that settled over many of the metropolitan areas in the East during those dark days of the 1930's.

Mr. DE LA GARZA. Thank you, Mr. Martin.

Do you have any questions, Mr. Teague?

Mr. TEAGUE. I have one. Mr. Martin, I noted you did not mention pheasants. I suppose this program does not hinder at all, as a matter of fact it probably assists considerably with the propagation of these pheasants which also brings a lot of money into Nebraska, is that not correct?

Mr. MARTIN. This is correct, Mr. Teague. In fact, I believe Nebraska might be classified perhaps as the number one pheasant State now in the Nation——

Mr. TEAGUE. Thank you.

Mr. MARTIN. As a result of this program partially.

Mr. DE LA GARZA. Thank you very much. We are very happy to have you, Mr. Martin.

Mr. MARTIN. Thank you.

Mr. DE LA GARZA. Now, we will be happy to hear from a member of our Agriculture Committee, Mr. Sebelius. I understand you want to introduce the next witness.

STATEMENT OF HON. KEITH G. SEBELIUS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF KANSAS

Mr. SEBELIUS. Congressman Skubitz is going to introduce the witness, and Congressman Shriver is here also and wants to file a statement. I will give mine very, very briefly.

Mr. DE LA GARZA. We will be very happy to hear from you.

Mr. SEBELIUS. Mr. Chairman, I really appreciate this opportunity to comment for the record on behalf of H.R. 561 and all the related bills that have been introduced that would amend section 16 of the Soil Conservation Act. I would actually state that Congressman Martin who just testified has 61 counties in this, and I have 52. We think we have the most counties involved. And in answer to Congressman Teague's remarks about the pheasants, we bill my home county as the pheasant capital of Kansas. This program does propagate a lot of pheasants because it leaves cover where they can breed and hatch.

I would state also that I am especially proud to be able to make my remarks at the same time as my fellow Kansan, Lyle Bauer, our area vice president of the National Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts, and Mr. Bauer will specifically address his remarks to the need for the adoption of a provision that conservation plans of landowners and operations, which are developed in cooperation with and approved by the soil and water conservation district in which the land is situated, form a basis for contracts under this program.

I will not read the rest of my statement, Mr. Chairman, if it is all right. I do have attached to it a letter signed by the entire Kansas delegation who are cosponsors on one of the bills before the committee and I would file it with the committee at this time.

Mr. DE LA GARZA. Without objection, we will include your statement and the letter in the record.

Mr. SEBELIUS. Thank you.

Mr. DE LA GARZA. Any questions?

Mr. ALEXANDER. No, sir.

Mr. DE LA GARZA. Thank you very much, Mr. Sebelius.
(The documents follow.)

STATEMENT OF HON. KEITH G. SEBELIUS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM
THE STATE OF KANSAS

Mr. Chairman: I appreciate the opportunity to comment for the record in behalf of H.R. 561 and related legislation that would amend Section 16 of the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act to extend the Great Plains Conservation Program.

I would also like to state that I am especially proud to be able to offer remarks at the same time as my fellow Kansan, Lyle Bauer, our Area Vice President of the National Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

Mr. Bauer will specifically address his remarks to the need for the adoption of a provision that conservative plans of landowners and operators, which are developed in cooperation with and approved by the soil and water conservation district in which their lands are situated, form a basis for contracts under the Program. I wish to strongly emphasize that the entire Kansas delegation supports the national association in this regard.

Mr. Chairman, as evidence of the importance of this legislation to my home state of Kansas, I would like to introduce into the record a joint letter signed by all of the members of the Kansas Congressional Delegation.

Mr. Chairman, I also think it is pertinent for me to point out that in addition to strongly supporting this bill, I have also joined as a co-sponsor with my colleague, the honorable Tom Kleppe from North Dakota, who introduced H.R. 10134 April 15. This bill is identical to legislation introduced in the Senate April 14 by Senator Milton Young and co-sponsored by our Kansas Senator Bob Dole and other members.

This legislation entails only minor changes to H.R. 561 and related legislation—the basic purpose remains the same—to extend the life of this vital program so that we can continue the conservation of our land resources in the Midwest.

Mr. Chairman, I urge the members of this subcommittee to give this bill their favorable consideration and thank the Committee for this opportunity to make these remarks.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, D.C., April 18, 1969.

Hon. W. R. POAGE,

*Chairman, Conservation and Credit Subcommittee, Agriculture Committee,
House of Representatives, Washington, D.C.*

DEAR CHAIRMAN POAGE: As co-sponsors of H.R. 2062, legislation that would amend Section 16 of the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act to extend the Great Plains Conservation Program, we would like to go on record as strongly supporting this bill and urging the subcommittee's favorable consideration.

As the subcommittee is aware, this bill extends the Act to December 31, 1981, and authorizes an increase from \$150 million to \$250 million in program funds. The current authority for the Great Plains Conservation Program expires on December 31, 1971.

Created by Congress in 1956, this program was designed to assist farmers and ranchers in applying conservation programs throughout the vast plains area. Now it has become apparent the critical conservation needs in the ten great plains states cannot be met by the end of 1971. The authority should be extended another ten years, with adequate financing to help meet the wind erosion problems of insufficient vegetative cover, freezing-thawing conditions, lack of moisture, excessive tillage, failure to perform needed emergency tillage operations and overgrazing.

This is a program of proven value that must be continued. We must preserve and enhance the great production capacity of the great plains.

Sincerely yours,

CHESTER MIZE,
KEITH SEBELIUS,
GARNER SHRIVER,
JOE SKUBITZ,
LARRY WINN,
Members of Congress.

STATEMENT OF HON. GARNER E. SHRIVER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF KANSAS

Mr. DE LA GARZA. Congressman Shriver, did you wish to make a statement?

Mr. SHRIVER. Mr. Chairman, it is a privilege for me to join with my colleagues from Kansas and with Mr. Bauer of Harper, Kans., in support of legislation to extend the Great Plains conservation program. And rather than take the committee's time, I would like permission to place into the record a copy of my statement and to express my appreciation for the opportunity of appearing.

Mr. DE LA GARZA. Thank you. You are most generous. And without objection, we will have your statement placed in the record.

(The statement follows:)

STATEMENT OF HON. GARNER E. SHRIVER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF KANSAS

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

It is a privilege for me to join with my colleagues from Kansas and Mr. Lyle Bauer of Harper, Kansas, in support of legislation to extend the Great Plains Conservation Program for a period of ten years.

Mr. Bauer, a farmer and vice president for the Great Plains Area of the National Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, can testify firsthand as to the need for this program by agricultural America. As one who has resided in a city for most of my life, I am aware of the benefits of this program which have accrued to urban areas.

Early in this session, I joined with a number of House members including the entire Kansas delegation in sponsoring a bill, H.R. 2062, which is similar to H.R. 561 which is before you for consideration today.

As the subcommittee is aware, this bill extends the Great Plains Conservation Program to December 31, 1981, and authorizes an increase from \$150 million to \$250 million in program funds. The current authority for this program expires on December 31, 1971.

This program was designed to assist farmers and ranchers in applying conservation programs throughout the vast plains area. Now it has become apparent the critical conservation needs in the ten great plains states cannot be met by the end of 1971.

We are aware of the great strides which have been made in conservation work as a result of this partnership between the Federal Government and local state governments. However, we are constantly reminded by nature that the job is far from finished. The ability of the farmer to provide for the future food needs of our nation may depend on our continuing investments in agricultural programs such as the Great Plains Conservation Program.

Mr. Chairman, the authority should be extended another ten years, with adequate financing, to help meet the wind erosion problems of insufficient vegetative cover, freezing-thawing conditions, lack of moisture, excessive tillage, and overgrazing. More than half of the crop, range, and pasture lands within the 423 counties participating in this program is still vulnerable to damage and still in need of conservation treatment.

The extension of this Program would enable the Great Plains region and the nation to move closer to the time when all of this area's lands will be protected.

I strongly support this bill and urge the Subcommittee to give it favorable consideration.

Thank you for this opportunity.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOE SKUBITZ, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF KANSAS

Mr. DE LA GARZA. I now recognize Congressman Skubitz to present a statement and/or introduce the next witness.

Mr. SKUBITZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Teague, Mr. Alexander.

I have another committee appointment, Mr. Chairman. The Committee on Interstate Commerce is meeting at this hour and it is necessary that I be present. So rather than read my statement, I would like very much to insert it in the record at this time.

Mr. DE LA GARZA. Without objection, that shall be done.

(The statement follows:)

STATEMENT OF HON. JOE SKUBITZ, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF KANSAS

Mr. Chairman, I come before your Subcommittee today for two purposes. 1. To testify in support of legislation to extend the Great Plains Conservation Program for ten years. 2. To introduce a constituent of mine who is to appear as a witness before your Subcommittee.

I am a co-sponsor of H.R. 2062 to extend the Great Plains Conservation Program from December 31, 1971, to December 31, 1981; and to change the amount of the authorization of \$150,000,000 to \$250,000,000.

The Great Plains Conservation Program provides guaranteed cost sharing to enable farmers to apply a basic soil and water conservation plan. It gives farmers and ranchers a real opportunity to fit a long-time conservation program to the varying moisture conditions of the Plains area with a minimum of financial risk. It provides without ceiling limitation the full amount of cost sharing that may be needed to do a job of a given size and duration. It protects the farm acreage allotment base while the farmer carries out needed land use shifts. Farmers may use for grazing or other purposes the land established in vegetative cover under the contract, as long as such use is consistent with good management.

In Kansas the Great Plains Conservation Program operates in 62 designated counties. During fiscal year 1968, 348 contracts covering 191,441 acres of land were signed. Total Federal cost-share obligation represented in these contracts is approximately \$907,650.

To date, 3,391 contracts have been written in the State. They include about \$8,684,000 in Federal cost-share funds and cover 2,405,000 acres. These contracts, all keyed to basic conservation plans, call for converting 90,500 acres of cropland to grass for improvement of 110,000 acres of rangeland.

This is a good program that has proved its worth in Kansas. There is need to have it extended for another decade. I urge your committee to report favorably on the proposed legislation.

Mr. SKUBITZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And now it is my privilege, Mr. Chairman, to introduce Mr. Lyle Bauer of Harper, Kans. Mr. Bauer is one of Kansas' outstanding farmers. He raises grain and beef cattle in Harper County, which is also in my district.

He is supervisor of the Harper County Soil Conservation District. In fact, in our State, he is known as Mr. Soil Conservation of Kansas. Presently he is area vice president of the National Association of Soil and Water Conservation, and it is in this capacity that he appears before this committee this morning to testify on this proposed legislation.

Mr. Chairman, may I present Mr. Bauer.

STATEMENT OF LYLE BAUER, HARPER, KANS., AREA VICE PRESIDENT, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Mr. DE LA GARZA. Thank you very much, Congressman, and we will be very happy to hear from you, Mr. Bauer.

Mr. BAUER. Mr. Chairman, I am Lyle Bauer of Harper, Kans., a farmer and vice president for the Great Plains area of the National Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

And I would like to read my statement to you this morning because it is relatively short and this is of major importance to farmers and ranchers over the Great Plains area.

More than 3,000 individual districts and their State associations in all 50 States compose the membership of NACD.

We support the purposes of H.R. 561 and related bills to extend the Great Plains conservation program from December 31, 1971, to December 31, 1981; and to increase the amount of the authorization from \$150 to \$250 million.

Two years ago the council of our association adopted the following statement regarding the Great Plains conservation program:

This program, authorized by Congress in 1956, has proved its value in protecting the precious land base of the vast Plains area and in restoring the area's resources to their potential.

Features which have made this program effective have been the guaranteed long term cost-sharing provision, the accelerated assistance in conservation planning and application, and the systematic scheduling of work over a period of years.

The interests of soil and water conservation districts are in seeing that the Great Plains conservation program is compatible with the districts; long range programs and that plans of operations associated with contracts meet the requirements and standards of the districts' programs.

Although substantial progress has been made, there is still urgent need to continue this program to provide additional time and funds with which to combat erosion and resource problems which still endanger the soil and water resources of the Great Plains.

The NACD urges the Congress to amend Public Law 1021 (84th Congress) to extend the Great Plains conservation program to December 31, 1981, and to provide a corresponding increase in the fiscal authorization level.

There are 427 counties in parts of the 10 States making up the Great Plains area for purposes of this program. Of this number, 423 counties have been designated by the Secretary of Agriculture for participation in the program. All 423 of these counties are encompassed within soil and water conservation districts established under provisions of State laws pertaining to districts.

Historically, the Great Plains region has been an area of high climatic hazard. It is subjected to frequent periods of severe and prolonged drought. Each winter and spring, high winds racing across exposed lands bring the threat of destructive erosion and dust storms. High intensity rainstorms are normal to the region, producing flash floods and heavy damage to the highly erodible soils.

Despite the fact that it is subject to these hazards of nature, the region is one of the most productive agricultural areas of the country. It is also one of the largest. Estimates by the Soil Conservation Service of the Department of Agriculture indicate that the 423 designated counties contain more than 110 million acres of cropland and 215 million acres of range and pasturelands.

During the first third of this century, very large areas within the Plains States were vulnerable to severe damage. Protective cover on millions of erodible acres was either too thin or absent altogether. Millions of acres were being cultivated unwisely—because they were too shallow, too sandy, or otherwise unsuited for the plow.

Since the days of the dust bowl and the beginning of intensive conservation programs, however, progress toward soil and agricultural stability has been steady. It is estimated that approximately 43 million acres of cropland and 91 million acres of range and pastureland have now received conservation treatment, including adjustments in land use, which provides adequate protection against damage.

This means, however, that more than half of the crop range and pasturelands within the 423 counties is still vulnerable to damage and still in need of conservation treatment. SCS estimates that about 67 million acres of cropland and approximately 124 million acres of range and pastureland require the application of conservation practices, adjustments in land use, or substantially improved vegetative measures.

The extension of the Great Plains conservation program for another 10 years, and an increase in the program authorization to \$250 million, would enable the region and the Nation to move much closer to the time when all the lands of this vital area will be protected.

The National Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts strongly supported the enactment of the Great Plains conservation program. We, and the individual districts within the region have been active supporters and participants ever since.

Insofar as I have been able to determine, every one of the approximately 32,000 landowners and operators participating in the program is also a cooperator with his local conservation district. In the aggregate, the contracts with these 32,000 landowners and operators cover about 57 million acres.

It is our hope that the program will not only be extended, but that its operation will be broadened and clearly aligned with conservation districts at the local level.

It is appropriate to recognize, we believe, that an intergovernmental partnership has developed during the past 20 years to foster in several appropriate ways the conservation and development of natural resources on farm, ranch, and other privately owned lands of the country. This is a partnership of Federal, State, and local governmental agencies and entities with conservation and resource development responsibilities.

Directly and indirectly, Congress has encouraged and given leadership to the development of these working relationships. Programs administered by the Soil Conservation Service, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, Farmers Home Administration, and Agricultural Research Service, for example, are being progressively coordinated with conservation and resource programs administered by State soil and water conservation boards and commissions, and by State departments of agriculture and natural resources. At the local level, this coordination increasingly comes to focus in the programs of soil and water conservation districts and on the properties of district cooperators.

Experience has demonstrated that this is a practical and effective partnership. It promotes participation and distributes responsibility at all three levels of government.

We urge the committee, in connection with an extension of the Great Plains conservation program, to take another important step in the development of the governmental partnership we have just outlined.

More specifically, we urge the committee to amend Public Law 1021 by adding a provision that conservation plans of landowners and operators which are developed in cooperation with and approved by the soil and water conservation district in which their lands are situated, for a basis for contracts under the program.

In our judgment it would also strengthen Federal-State-local coordination and contribute to the broad purposes of resource management in the Great Plains if Public Law 1021 recognized that conservation plans, used as a basis for contracts, could include measures for the enhancement of wildlife and recreational resources, and for the prevention or control of agriculture-related pollutants harmful to soil and water resources.

At our NACD convention a year ago, delegates adopted the following policy statement:

The planning and subsequent application of complete conservation plans as provided by the Great Plains conservation program has been hampered in some localities by the absence of cost-sharing opportunities for wildlife and recreation.

Many landowners in the Great Plains States have wildlife and recreation land use objectives which require specific conservation applications in order to facilitate these objectives. These conservation treatments favoring wildlife and recreation objectives frequently convert land to permanent vegetation and lower surplus crop production.

Inasmuch as the use of suitable land and water resources for the production of fish and wildlife, and for meeting outdoor recreation needs, complies with the principle of using land in accordance with its natural capabilities, and is in the national interest, the National Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts urges that the Great Plains conservation program be modified to provide for wildlife and recreation cost sharing.

We appreciate very much this opportunity to present the views of conservation districts on the Great Plains legislation now being considered by this committee.

And I thank you.

Mr. DE LA GARZA. Thank you very much, Mr. Bauer.

Any questions?

Mr. TEAGUE. Yes, one, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DE LA GARZA. Mr. Teague.

Mr. TEAGUE. In my part of California we have problems which are in some ways related but also they are quite different because I am on the coast in California where we have steep mountains and months of no rain and then very heavy rain. We had as much as 70 inches in a few days which we had in January and February of this year. So I think it might be helpful, it would be to me anyway, if you would in a few words tell us just what techniques are used in Kansas under this program.

Mr. BAUER. This program is very attractive in Kansas, and in my opinion, in my judgment, it is one program that actually gets the conservation job done, the reason being that you prepare a plan and then you develop this plan over a period of years and you accomplish your objectives through this.

Mr. TEAGUE. Well, I am sure of that but just how do you do it? Is it catch basins, planting grass, both? What procedures or techniques do you use to accomplish the obviously desirable objectives?

Mr. BAUER. We have land conversion from cropland to grass where this is needed, and we also have other types of conservation measures such as terraces, waterways, diversions, ponds and dams, and so forth. Is that what you mean?

Mr. TEAGUE. Yes, I think so.

Thank you.

Mr. DE LA GARZA. Mr. Alexander?

Mr. ALEXANDER. No, sir; no questions.

Mr. DE LA GARZA. Thank you very much, Mr. Bauer. We appreciate your being here.

Mr. BAUER. Thank you.

Mr. DE LA GARZA. Is there anyone present who would like to appear before the committee before we recess the meeting?

If not, I have a statement from Congressman Robert V. Denney, who was not able to be here, and without objection it will be inserted in the record.

(The statement follows:)

STATEMENT OF HON. ROBERT V. DENNEY, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM
THE STATE OF NEBRASKA

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee: as a co-sponsor of H.R. 2062, I appreciate the opportunity to present my views with regard to the extension of the Great Plains conversation program.

In past years I have pointed with pride to the fine conservation record in Nebraska. Historically we have measured progress in miles of terraces, numbers of farm ponds and other on-the-land conservation treatment.

The Great Plains conservation program (P.L. 1021) is being utilized in all of the sixty eligible counties in the western part of the State. Under this program, the Soil Conservation Service assists farmers and ranchers to develop a complete conservation plan for their farm or ranch. The Soil Conservation Service also provides technical and cost-sharing assistance for installing the needed and agreed-to measures over a reasonable period of years.

The Nebraska allocation of Federal funds of FY-1969 under the Great Plains conservation program is \$1,900,000. Of this amount, up to \$500,000 may be used for technical services.

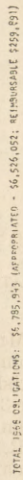
Strip cropping is one of the practices used in the Great Plains program. Across the western two-thirds of the State, grass seeding—converting cropland to permanent native grass—is the number one practice.

Over 5,000,000 acres of land in the State have been placed under contract for complete conservation treatment. In contracts in Nebraska, an average of 25 per cent of the original cropland is being seeded permanently to native grass. This means as of July 1968 over 200,000 acres of cropland were either planted or planned for retirement and without annual rental payments.

It is estimated that the present accomplishments under the Great Plains program are about one-fifth of the potential in the sixty eligible counties. A recent conservation needs inventory shows counties reporting 817,000 acres of sub-marginal cropland that should be planted permanently to grass.

The extension of the Great Plains conservation program for another 10 years, and an increase in the program authorization to at least \$250,000,000 or to \$300,000,000 as requested in H.R. 10134, would enable the Great Plains area to move much closer to the time when all the lands of this vital region will be protected.

It makes good sense to extend this program.



STATEMENT OF HON. GRAHAM PURCELL, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM
THE STATE OF TEXAS

Mr. Chairman, last January 3, for myself and eight other members of Congress from the Great Plains area, I introduced H.R. 561. The purpose of this proposed legislation is to extend the Great Plains Conservation Program from December 31, 1971, to December 31, 1981, and to change the amount of the authorization from \$150,000,000 to \$250,000,000. Identical legislation was later introduced as H.R. 2062 and H.R. 3854 by 19 other Members of the Congress representing the Great Plains area of the Nation

The Great Plains Conservation Program was created by the Congress in 1956. Over the years it has proven to be highly successful in helping farmers and ranchers in solving soil and water conservation problems. It is administered effectively by the Soil Conservation Service.

The purpose of the program is to help farmers and ranchers carry out a plan of operations that will help to minimize climatic hazards and protect their land from erosion and deterioration by natural causes. The plan of operations is implemented through a long-term contract with the Secretary of Agriculture. By law the program must be based on a farm or ranch conservation plan of operations.

The program guarantees Federal cost-sharing for applying needed soil and water conservation practices for a long period, up to 10 years. The program emphasizes land use changes and wind-erosion control and moisture conservation and management practices that in combination will provide the most enduring conservation benefits.

It is fully voluntary on the part of the individual farmer or rancher. It has the incentive of local leadership. Local soil and water conservation districts assume this leadership. This program is carried out in close cooperation with interested Federal, State, and local governmental units and organizations. Special emphasis is placed upon converting land unsuitable for sustained crop production into permanent grass.

Measures eligible for cost sharing include: Establishing permanent plant cover, field or contour stripcropping, contour cultivation, improving range cover, plant-

ing trees or shrubs for windbreaks or shelterbelts, establishing waterways, building terrace systems, chiseling or pitting rangeland, improving dams or ponds for irrigation, constructing wells for livestock, installing pipe, fencing, and controlling brush.

The program applies only to counties designated by the Secretary of Agriculture in the 10 Great Plains States. There are 423 counties which have been designated.

In these 423 designated counties more than 32,000 farmers and ranchers have entered into long-term contracts to complete the total conservation job on nearly 59 million acres. More than 10,000 of these contracts are in Texas. Nearly 1,500 of them are in the fifth Congressional District which I represent, involving nearly 1.7 million acres of my constituents' land.

I have seen this program functioning on the land. The Great Plains Conservation Program is producing benefits far beyond the boundaries of individual participating farms and ranches. In the extremely dry early spring of 1967, dust storm damages were significantly reduced in areas where 25 to 40 percent of the agricultural land was under Great Plains program contract.

This program is highly popular with my constituents. They have made a good beginning in using it in the advancement of soil and water conservation on their farms and ranches. But they are not finished. The job is far from complete. There is still much soil and water conservation to be done in the Great Plains area.

The present authority will expire on December 30, 1971. There is need to have this authority extended. Continued emphasis must be given to protect this geographic area vulnerable to drought and wind and water erosion. H.R. 561 would extend the authority for 10 years. I urge your committee to report it favorably.

STATEMENT OF HON. FRANK E. EVANS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM
THE STATE OF COLORADO

Mr. Chairman, starting primarily in 1933, and continuing for some five years, our nation witnessed a devastating event which saw literally thousands of farmers and ranchers wiped out. Millions of acres of land became unusable. Urban areas were inundated by billowing clouds of dust which closed schools and business places and, in some small communities, created ghost towns.

These were the days of the dust bowl across the Great Plains. People wore soaked handkerchiefs over their faces to keep from breathing this dust. Farmers saw entire fields covered from an inch to several feet deep in sand. Some stood helplessly as their fields literally blew away to cover some other field in the next county or even the next state.

This condition prevailed over all or portions of 10 states from Montana and North Dakota southward through Wyoming, South Dakota, Nebraska, Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Texas. Every one of the 21 counties in my Third Congressional District in Colorado are affected.

The solution to this massive problem has been developed through the Great Plains Conservation Program. Owners and operators throughout this region are given vital federal assistance in planning and carrying out conservation practices to keep more moisture in the soil, to plant grasses in fields which cannot bear crops dependably and to generally carry out programs which will prevent recurrence of those disastrous days.

This huge area involves some 7.1 million acres in Colorado alone. The job is not completed for we cannot stop wind and drought, two major contributing factors in erosion of this kind. We can educate and assist. We can continue the Great Plains Conservation Program which has to date established permanent cover on 123,300 acres in Colorado and has been instrumental in seeding 59,900 acres of range. This is not to speak of the assistance in establishing terraces, ponds, wind breaks and other devices to protect the land and people.

I don't believe there are any accurate figures on the number of people living on the land and in cities of this vast region. They are all affected one way or another by the droughts and dust storms when they happen. Starting in the 1800's drought and blowing soil turned back the tide of settlers on several occasions. Following the disastrous 1930's dust bowl days, there was another but more limited period in 1953, 1954 and 1955. While the period and affected areas

of Nebraska, Colorado, New Mexico and Texas were more limited, the damage was as severe. Some reports say this period was worse than any previously.

There are now some 14 million acres of land in the Great Plains being cultivated which should not be. This is land, which because of the qualities of the soil or the slope of terrain, is highly susceptible to erosion and blowing.

There are more than 400 soil conservation districts in the Great Plains and these cover 90 percent of the ranches and farms. This is a continuing problem and it calls for continuing efforts. The disasters were massive. The Great Plains Conservation Program has brought together massive forces combining federal, state and local resources to blunt any recurrence of those days.

STATEMENT OF HON. CHESTER MIZE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM
THE STATE OF KANSAS

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate this opportunity to testify in behalf of extension and expansion of the Great Plains Conservation Program.

It goes without saying, this program has been one of the most productive soil and water conservation programs ever enacted by the Congress. Initiated under President Eisenhower, the drafters of this legislation envisioned a continuing opportunity for farmers and ranchers to enter into long-term contracts with the government to share the cost of improved conservation practices on their acreage. Since 1956, over 31,500 landholders have entered into such agreements, and more than 57 million acres of valuable crop and range land have been improved. The cost to the government has been a thrifty \$108 million.

NEED FOR EXTENSION IS NOW

Mr. Chairman, it is essential that this program be extended *now*. The Great Plains Conservation Program is due to expire at the end of the calendar year 1971. Thus, the government is currently denied the opportunity to grant ten-year contracts with landholders, and one of the strongest arguments favoring the program is being lost. Only through long-term agreements can farmers and ranchers be expected, in most cases, to accomplish substantial conservation improvement. In these days of cost-price squeeze on the farm, short-term contracts for land improvement inevitably result in substantially diminished end results. Operators of family farms just cannot be expected to provide significant capital outlay for conservation practices in three years or less—yet this is the current limitation.

Dispassionate analysis of results achieved under the Great Plains Conservation Program will convince the most skeptical observer that we cannot allow the program to expire. So also, should we not delay a full ten-year extension of its provisions. We must achieve maximum year-to-year productivity for each dollar spent.

Mr. Chairman, 62 of 105 Kansas counties are currently eligible for assistance under the Great Plains Conservation Program. None of those 62 counties is in my Congressional District.

Notwithstanding, I favor extension and expansion of the program, for I recognize the terrible threat posed by wind and water erosion in the high plains regions. I have co-sponsored H.R. 2062, which you consider today, for nearly *all* of us depend upon the continuing productivity and strength of these fertile, yet vulnerable, Great Plains counties.

There are several counties in my Congressional District which I hope will eventually be approved for participation in the Great Plains Conservation Program. I feel they *deserve* to participate, for they *too* suffer from the ravages of the climate. An expansion of the program would permit approval of additional regions for participation, and the demonstrable benefits which we have witnessed would thereby be extended to more farmers, more acreage.

Mr. Chairman, a farmer is as much a public servant as is an elected official. He is the steward of the land, and generations yet unborn depend upon his wisdom and foresight today. The soil and water conservation practices which the government and private citizens choose to undertake *today*, guarantee the sustenance of the future.

For this reason, more than any other, I urge that your committee promptly approve an extension and expansion of the Great Plains Conservation Program.

Thank you.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN S. WOLD, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE
STATE OF WYOMING

Mr. Chairman: There has been significant progress in the recovery and rehabilitation of the Great Plains region of the United States since the initiation of the Great Plains Conservation Program 12 years ago. Yet much more needs to be done because there are still large areas which are subject to serious potential erosion.

There, I urge the Great Plains Conservation Program be funded and extended for an additional twelve years.

The program is one supported by constituents from 12 counties of my district, the Great State of Wyoming, that lie within its jurisdiction. It is also supported by the Wyoming Department of Agriculture and many others who know its accomplishments.

Wyoming has 12 eligible and designated counties. It is estimated that about 30 per cent of the 5,131 eligible farms in the 12 counties have need for the program. There are 405 farms who have entered into contracts who would continue.

The districts in the Great Plains Conservation Program have proven their effectiveness as local units through which people and their governments (local, state and federal) can work together to develop and conserve natural resources for the maximum benefit of the people.

Therefore, I again urge the extension of the program because it provides the farmer and rancher of limited resources a plan and schedule to fit those resources.

STATEMENT OF ANGUS McDONALD, DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH, NATIONAL FARMERS
UNION

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, I am appearing here in support of HR 561 and other identical bills which would extend the Great Plains Conservation Program from December 31, 1971 through December 31, 1981 and increase the amount of funds available for the 10-year period to \$250 million.

This program, according to our information, has worked very well ever since it was inaugurated almost ten years ago. I have looked over various material obtained from the Clerk of this Committee as well as background information in the Washington office of the National Farmers Union and strongly feel that the program should be extended not only to protect the vast areas in the Great Plains States, but to assure the welfare and livelihood of farmers and ranchers in the area.

I have looked through materials obtained from the Department of Agriculture in regard to various practices carried on as well as regulations promulgated by the Department of Agriculture which set up various grass roots committees as well as representatives of Government agencies which have insured the excellent administration of the program. The program was originally designed to alleviate the very bad situation which developed over a long period of years in regard to wind erosion.

During and after World War II, because of needed food and fiber, many millions of acres of virgin soil were plowed up in the Great Plains. This area, once the soil was distributed in the semi-arid areas, was subject to severe wind erosion. It was responsible in large part for the terrible dust storms of the 30s which older Members of the Committee may remember.

This witness happened to be an employee of the Conservation Service during those years and had a small part in the creation of the soil conservation program which has worked so well. However, it was felt in the 50s that the soil conservation program and other conservation programs were not sufficient to protect the soil from the ravages of wind erosion. Therefore, the Great Plains program was inaugurated in 1956 during the Administration of Ezra Taft Benson. The Great Plains program from its inception has been a bi-partisan program supported by members of both major political parties and, so far as I know, has never been subject to any adverse criticism.

The cause for alarm in the 50s was centered on the vast area in the States of North and South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas and Texas which receive only about 10 to 20 inches of rainfall each year. It was estimated years ago that about 12½ million acres of cropland was unsuitable for crop production and that about 200 million acres of privately owned range and non-crop pasture land should be protected from soil erosion.

It is important to point out that individual ranchers and farmers find that they are unable to bear the full cost of converting to grass and the application of the 24 crop practices which are listed in USDA material. Therefore, this legislation provides that 80 percent of the cost will be borne by the Federal Government.

We urge that the Committee approve the bills under consideration here pertaining to the Great Plains Conservation Program.

WASHINGTON, D.C., April 28, 1969.

Hon. W. R. POAGE,
Chairman, Subcommittee on Conservation,
House Committee on Agriculture,
Washington, D.C.:

The National Grange is in support of H.R. 561 to amend section 16 of the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act, as amended, to extend the Great Plains conservation program. The program has been of invaluable assistance in taking land unsuitable for sustained cultivation out of crop production and moving it into permanent vegetation. This acreage has been removed from the production of other crops, many of which are in surplus, and it costs far below that of other acreage diversion and land retirement programs. To date more than 1,800,000 acres of cropland conservation has been accomplished under this program. This is a good beginning but the job is far from complete. The critical conservation needs of the Great Plains cannot be met by 1971, therefore we urge that H.R. 561 be approved by this subcommittee and we recommend its being reported by the full committee to the House floor for favorable action. We apologize for our tardiness in showing support for the bill. This should not be interpreted as hesitation of our support but only circumstances beyond our control in preparation of our position statement.

JOHN W. SCOTT,
Master, The National Grange.

Mr. DE LA GARZA. Without objection, we will stand recessed subject to the call of the Chair.

(Whereupon, at 10:20 a.m., the subcommittee adjourned to reconvene subject to the call of the Chair.)