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C 86/12 **CRITICAL LANDS RESOURCE CONSERVATION ACT**

GOVERNMENT

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HEARING
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
CONSERVATION AND CREDIT
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-FIFTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON

H.R. 2729

MARCH 14, 1977

Serial No. 95-G



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CRITICAL LANDS RESOURCE CONSERVATION ACT

MONDAY, MARCH 14, 1977

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

The subcommittee met at 10:05 a.m., pursuant to notice, in room 1301, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. Ed Jones of Tennessee (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Poage, de la Garza, Baldus, Bedell, English, Fithian, Glickman, Brown, Jeffords, Kelly, Coleman, and Marlenee.

Staff present: Robert M. Bor, counsel; John E. Hogan, associate counsel; Glenda L. Temple, clerk, and Robert Cashdollar.

Also present: Representative Grassley.

Mr. JONES of Tennessee. The Subcommittee on Conservation and Credit will come to order.

We have several witnesses this morning who will appear to discuss H.R. 2729—Critical Lands Resource Conservation Act, commonly known as the Poage bill.

[The bill H.R. 2729 and the U.S. Department of Agriculture report follow:]

95TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2729

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 31, 1977

Mr. POAGE (for himself, Mr. ENGLISH, Mr. SEBELIUS, and Mr. THONE) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture

A BILL

To foster conservation of critical lands in the Great Plains area of the United States.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*
3 That this Act be cited as the "Critical Lands Resource Con-
4 servation Act".

5 SEC. 2. Notwithstanding any other provision of law:

6 (a) The Secretary is authorized and directed to formu-
7 late and carry out a program with owners and operators of
8 land in the Great Plains area as described in section 16 (b)
9 of the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act to re-
10 duce runoff, soil and water erosion, and otherwise to pro-
11 mote the conservation of soil and water resources in such

1 area through the conversion of cropland from soil depleting
2 uses to conserving uses including the production of soil con-
3 serving cover crops.

4 (b) To effectuate the purposes of this Act the Secre-
5 tary shall enter into agreements for a two-year period with
6 an owner or operator as described in subsection (a) where-
7 by the owner or operator shall agree to devote to a soil con-
8 serving cover crop a specifically designated acreage of crop-
9 land on the farm up to 50 per centum of the acreage which
10 had been planted to soil depleting crops in any of the two
11 years preceding the date of the agreement. The agreement
12 shall be renewable for annual periods thereafter subject to
13 the mutual agreement of the owner or operator and the Sec-
14 retary. In such agreements the producer shall agree (1) to
15 plant a legume, or if not adapted to such area, an annual,
16 biennial, or a perennial cover crop, as specified in the agree-
17 ment; (2) to divert from production such portion of one
18 or more crops designated by the Secretary as he determines
19 necessary to effectuate the purpose of the program; (3) not
20 to harvest any crop from or graze the designated acreage
21 during the agreement period, unless the Secretary determines
22 that it is necessary to permit grazing or harvesting in order
23 to alleviate damage, hardship, or suffering caused by severe
24 drought, flood, or other natural disaster, and consents to such
25 grazing or harvesting subject to an appropriate reduction

1 in the rate of payment; (4) to give adequate assurance, as
2 specified by the Secretary, that the land was not acquired
3 for the purpose of placing it in the program: *Provided*, That
4 this shall not prohibit the continuation of an agreement by
5 a new owner if an agreement has once been entered into
6 under this Act and that the foregoing provision shall not
7 prevent a producer from placing a farm in the program if the
8 farm was acquired by the producer to replace an eligible
9 farm from which he was displaced because of its acquisition
10 by any Federal, State, or other agency having the right of
11 eminent domain; (5) to forfeit all rights to further payments
12 under the agreement and refund to the United States all
13 payments received thereunder upon his violation of the
14 agreement at any stage during the time he has control of
15 the land if the Secretary determines that such violation is of
16 such a nature as to warrant termination of the agreement,
17 or to make refunds or accept such payment adjustments
18 as the Secretary may deem appropriate if he determines
19 that the violation by the owner or operator does not warrant
20 termination of the agreement; (6) upon transfer of his
21 right and interest in the farm, during the agreement period,
22 to forfeit all rights to further payments or grants under the
23 agreement and refund to the United States all payments or
24 grants received thereunder unless the transferee of any such
25 land agrees with the Secretary to assume all obligations of

1 the agreement; (7) not to adopt any practice specified by
2 the Secretary in the agreement as a practice which would
3 tend to defeat the purposes of the agreement; and (8) to
4 such additional provisions as the Secretary determines are
5 desirable to effectuate the purposes of the program or to
6 facilitate the practical administration of the program, in-
7 cluding such measures as the Secretary may deem appro-
8 priate to keep the designated acreage from eroding and
9 free from weeds and rodents in accordance with good con-
10 servation systems.

11 (c) In consideration for such agreements the Secretary
12 shall make an annual adjustment payment to the owner or
13 operator for the period of the agreement at such rate or rates
14 not in excess of \$30 per acre as the Secretary determines
15 to be fair and reasonable. The Secretary may use an adver-
16 tising and bid procedure in determining the lands in any area
17 to be covered by agreements and the payment rate to be
18 made to the producers thereof. The Secretary and the owner
19 or operator may agree that the annual adjustment payments
20 for the agreement period shall be made either upon approval
21 of the agreement or in such installments as they may agree
22 to be desirable: *Provided*, That for each year any annual
23 adjustment payment is made in advance of performance, the
24 . annual adjustment payment shall be reduced by 5 per
25 centum,

1 (d) The Secretary may terminate any agreement under
2 this Act by mutual agreement with the owner or operator
3 if the Secretary determines that such termination would
4 be in the public interest, and may agree with the owner or
5 operator to such modification of agreements as he may deter-
6 mine to be desirable to carry out the purposes of the pro-
7 gram or facilitate its administration.

8 (e) The Secretary may, to the extent he deems it de-
9 sirable, provide by appropriate regulations for preservation
10 of cropland, crop acreage, and allotment history applicable
11 to acreage diverted from the production of crops to establish
12 vegetative cover for the purpose of any Federal program
13 under which such history is used as a basis for an allotment
14 or other limitation or for participation in such program.

15 (f) In carrying out the program, the Secretary shall
16 utilize the services of local, county, and State committees
17 established under section 8 of the Soil Conservation and
18 Domestic Allotment Act, as amended, and the technical
19 services of the Soil Conservation Service and soil and water
20 conservation districts.

21 (g) In case any producer who is entitled to any pay-
22 ment or compensation dies, becomes incompetent, or dis-
23 appears before receiving such payment or compensation, or
24 is succeeded by another who renders or completes the
25 required performance, the payment or compensation shall,

1 without regard to any other provisions of law, be made as
2 the Secretary may determine to be fair and reasonable in all
3 circumstances and so provide by regulations.

4 (h) The Secretary shall provide adequate safeguards to
5 protect the interests of tenants and sharecroppers, including
6 provision for sharing, on a fair and equitable basis, in pay-
7 ments under this program.

8 (i) The Secretary shall prescribe such regulations as
9 he determines necessary to carry out the provisions of this
10 Act.

11 (j) There are hereby authorized to be appropriated for
12 the period beginning October 1, 1977, and ending Septem-
13 ber 30, 1981, such sums as may be necessary to carry out
14 the program provided for in this Act. The Secretary is
15 authorized to utilize the facilities, services, and authorities
16 of the Commodity Credit Corporation in discharging his
17 functions and responsibilities under this program, including
18 payment of costs of administration: *Provided*, That the Com-
19 modity Credit Corporation shall not make any expenditures
20 for such purposes unless the Corporation has received funds
21 to cover such expenditures from appropriations made to carry
22 out this Act.



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20250

April 18, 1977

Honorable Thomas S. Foley
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This is in reply to your request of February 11 for a report on H.R. 2729, a bill "To foster conservation of critical lands in the Great Plains area of the United States."

This bill authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to enter into two year contracts with landowners currently eligible for the Great Plains Conservation Program to divert cropland back to soil conserving crops.

The Department opposes the enactment of H.R. 2729.

The Department is concerned that there be a direct conservation effort to minimize erosion of land in the Great Plains area. It is the Department's judgment this could best be accomplished by present conservation efforts through the Agricultural Conservation Program (ACP) or the Great Plains Conservation Program (GPCP). As you know, these programs were in full force and effect and available to the landowners when this land was taken out of cover and placed into crop. That substantial acreage of marginal lands in the Great Plains have been exposed to erosion, is the result of decisions by growers to take the land out of permanent cover and place it into crop at a time that this appeared to be economically beneficial. In some cases, this conversion process overturned the results of years of conservation effort.

Now that these economic benefits have diminished, it is natural that producers should think about reestablishing permanent cover on these marginal acres. The cost of doing this should be borne by the owners of the property involved, and particularly so when there is no assurance that they will not convert to cropland again if prices make it sufficiently attractive. On the other hand, cost-share payments can now be received through the ACP or GPCP if the producers and landowners agree to the conservation contract terms.

Also, it should be noted that if the present drought situation continues in this region, it would be virtually impossible to establish a cover crop yet this fall.

The bill also presents another problem. The major area of present concern over wind erosion includes areas outside the present Great Plains area. Marginal lands surrounding the Great Plains counties have been converted to crop production. Before a major new initiative is undertaken, we must know more about the total conservation problem.

Honorable Thomas S. Foley

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We are now reviewing all existing programs and their effect on the total conservation need of the country. When we have concluded this review, we will be in a much better position to deal effectively with national conservation and pollution abatement problems.

Furthermore, this proposed legislation has tremendous budgetary implications in droughty situations that occur in this designated area. Such a situation currently exists in much of the Great Plains area. Additionally, the President's drought assistance program, which was announced on March 23, is designed to assist farmers, ranchers, and landowners whose losses are a result of the drought impacts which have occurred in this area. This program provides an additional \$100 million in cost-sharing in ACP-type practices.

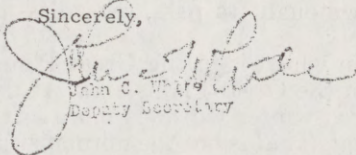
Because the extent of the program will depend upon appropriated funds, it is difficult to estimate the cost of such program. However, it is noted that if 15 million acres are placed in the program, and if the rate of compensation is at the level of \$30 per acre, the outlay for the first year could be \$450,000,000.

The other problem of production adjustment, if needed, can be better treated in the commodity legislation that will be a portion of the overall farm bill.

The language of H. R. 2729 gives the Secretary wide discretion for developing the terms and provisions for the program. In emergency situations, the Secretary could be subjected to pressures to relax the program to the permissible limit and hence incur high costs with minimal accomplishment of program goals. Moreover, in order for a program such as this or the GPCP to be effective, it must necessarily have long-term agreement requirements.

The Office of Management and Budget advises that there is no objection to the presentation of this report and that enactment of H. R. 2729 would not be consistent with the Administration's objectives.

Sincerely,



John C. White
Deputy Secretary

Mr. JONES of Tennessee. Our first witness this morning is Mr. Claude Freeman, Acting Director, Grains, Oilseeds, and Cotton Division of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Welcome, Mr. Freeman.

Mr. Freeman, while you are getting ready, the vice chairman of the full committee, Mr. Poage, will have a statement that he would like to make.

STATEMENT OF HON. W. R. POAGE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS

Mr. POAGE. Mr. Chairman, I do not want to displace the regular order, but I think it might be appropriate if we understand what I am trying to do with this bill before we proceed too far.

This bill was not written originally to be considered as a separate instrument, but rather as a part of what we hoped would be general farm legislation with a realization that in any new program that we adopt, if we are supporting prices, that there is almost the inevitable situation where there must be some way of limiting the liability or responsibility of the Government.

We have always done that in the past by acreage controls. We have done that by quotas and by allotments and have said that we would let each one have so much land on which he can grow his commodities.

If he did, to that extent, he could be assured of a price, but for the Federal Government to guarantee a price on everything that everybody can produce all over this country becomes staggering. We recognize that fact. We do not know just what is going to be in this new farm bill, but we do anticipate that it is going to involve the Federal Government in very substantial price supports for very substantial volumes of production.

Obviously, the most important feature of the farm program at the present time is wheat. There was a time when cotton was in the most serious trouble. Today, wheat is the commodity that is in trouble, basic trouble. If we can solve the wheat problem, or alleviate the pressure on the wheat market, we will have gone a long ways toward stabilizing the situation in feed gains as well because the wheat market is, right now, at a point where any substantial drop in the price of wheat, if you maintain the present price of feed grains, would move a lot of wheat into the feed market. We recognize that.

Normally we consider that an unfortunate situation to have that occur.

I was not the only one working on this bill. Mr. Sebelius, Mr. English, Mr. Thone—all coauthored it. We thought that if we could deal with the wheat situation, we would have given a good deal of stability to the general farm bill that we ought to pass, regardless of the details of that farm bill.

We recognize that the real problem in wheat is in the Great Plains area. The bulk of our wheat is grown in the Great Plains area. At the present time, the situation with hard red winter wheat is more critical than it is with other varieties of wheat. That is not the normal situation, but it is the situation today.

We do have tremendous supplies of hard red winter wheat, most of which are grown on the Great Plains and in the Great Plains area.

We, therefore, have felt that if we could come up with some program that would give relief to overproduction in that area, then we would have done a great deal for the whole farm program. We have recognized that along side-by-side with this problem we have the problem of soil depletion, erosion particularly.

In the wheat situation, much of it means wind erosion. We are seeing that to a degree that we have not seen probably since 1935 or 1936. It is true that in the early 1950's we had a good deal of wind erosion, but I do not think we have had anything like it compared to what we are having today.

I talked with Texas this morning. They told me that they thought that the skies were clear this morning for the first time in a long time. They had had dust in the air for the last 2 weeks. Dust in the air at Waco, Tex., means that land is blowing in Goodland, Kans., or in Springfield, Colo. Dust in our air is the result of land blowing somewhere to the northwest. The land that blows first is always

the poorer qualities of land. If it is light land that blows easily, that is one of the reasons it gets shallow, because it has been blown away over the centuries, I suppose.

But we have in the United States classification of land by the Soil Conservation Service. Among the classes are classes III and IV.

Class V is fine land, but it is too wet to work. On the other hand, classes III and IV are thin lands. Classes III and IV are the lands where the blowing starts in the Plains. Blowing does not normally start on class I land. Class I land will blow away, but it does not normally start blowing on the class I or II lands. It starts blowing on class III or IV lands.

Once you get that land blowing, if I have a field here of class IV land, and you have class I land adjoining me, and if my land starts blowing and moving that dirt, then your land is going to blow before dark. Your land is going to be blowing, too, no matter how good your land is or even what you have done to protect it.

These pieces of land, which are unprotected and which are of low quality, start this blowing. It involves the whole productivity of the Great Plains area.

We think that we all recognize that we have to protect that vast area, the breadbasket of America. We have to protect it. If we continue to plant wheat every year on the whole thing, then we will have more and more of this sort of thing.

So we thought the smart thing to do was to try to take out some of the land that would cause trouble and take it out at a time when you do not need it.

Obviously we do not need the lower land in wheat at the present time with 1.1 billion bushels of wheat in storage now. We obviously do not need additional wheat storage at the moment.

With 2 billion bushels of the crop which we grew last year, I mean 200 million bushels more than we have ever sold in any one year. We obviously are providing more wheat than our people need.

Is there a better time to take it out? We may be faced with these choices. We can take it out of production now while we do not need it or maybe 20 or 50 years from now when we do need it, it will be taken out, because if it blows away, it will be taken out of production.

And we will not be able to put it back in production, not for a long, long time. I am talking about geological times.

So we have suggested making a change in the nature of the Great Plains program. I am one that believes that Great Plains program has been a very fine thing. I wish that we could afford to put it all over the United States. We have not been able to. The only reason for limiting this to the Great Plains area is because we recognize there is a limit to what the United States Government can spend. We think that by spending it in that area, that you would get greater results for every dollar you spend than if you spend it all over the country.

So, we have suggested that instead of writing 10-year contracts—and that has been one of the outstanding features of the Great Plains program and one of the features that probably has counted for much of its success in years past, and I thought it was fine. The thing that differentiated the Great Plains program from the ordinary ASCS program throughout the country is that you had long-time contracts and you determined that future—but the trouble with that is that if, in fact, there were a world situation that required or needed the

production of more wheat, then you cannot get it under the present Great Plains program.

If every acre on the Great Plains was lined up in the Great Plains program today, you would have no flexibility as to what you could grow in future years. We have suggested that we change this program basically, that is, for the new program. We do not propose to do away with the Great Plains program. Let it stay in existence.

But our newer program, the one on which we hope we can more nearly balance our production with our needs, we suggest that you make it a short-term contract. You can start with 2 years. It takes at least 2 years to get a man started in it. After that, let it come year by year. You can have 1-year extensions.

So that if in fact, let us say 3 or 4 years hence, there was another situation such as existed 3 years ago whereby a good part of the world needed more wheat and would buy it from the United States, then we could immediately abandon these contracts and the minute you abandon these contracts, the land would go back into the production of wheat. We all know that.

You would have a way in which you could get production the very next year because at least 50 percent of your contracts would be expiring every year. You could increase your productivity the next production year. We think that is important in a food like wheat, wheat being probably the most vital of them all, of all the human foods. We think that is important.

So we have suggested here a series of short-term contracts with the owners of the less desirable land, not the best, but the less desirable land. We have suggested short-term contracts whereby they would take their land from the production of wheat or any other commodity and put it into a soil-conserving crop or growth. We say "crop" but we do not even produce to allow the harvesting of any crop on that land unless you would have a situation where the President would declare the area a disaster area. We think it would be shortsighted to say that you could not graze or use production from the land if, in fact, it is declared a disaster area.

Again, we are trying to provide flexibility so that in case that there are unusual conditions which will arise, then we can take care of them. You can use it to the best advantage of the Nation.

So, we say that if there is a disaster, and the President proclaims it, you then can harvest whatever you have on this land. We would anticipate that in the Northern Plains we would use legumes very largely and in the Southern Plains, you would use some form of sorghum or something like that which would prevent the blowing. If you have to have grazing, then all right, but we do not propose to use any of that at all. We think the cattle market is such that it would be foolish to suggest that we add to the grazing area capacity of the United States at this time.

But the situation might develop, particularly in specific spots where you would want to do that. We would provide this flexibility. I think this bill has in it the greatest degree of flexibility of any program that I have seen which would in many ways reduce our cost of a farm program.

Now, this bill would cost you anywhere from as much as you want to spend on it to as little as you want to spend on it, depending on how much land you want to take. Some years you would want to take

more and some less. You would provide the Secretary of Agriculture the power to determine how much he wants to take.

If we took all of the class III and the class IV land on the Great Plains, it would cost \$400 million, roughly, if you paid \$30 an acre for it. Thirty dollars an acre may be high, but I am talking about the high figure, and if you took all the class III and IV lands, that is what it would cost you.

If you paid only \$20 an acre, of course it would only cost you \$300 million.

We leave the degree of flexibility there with the Secretary so that if you want to take all of it and if you want to pay the full price for all of it, you have a maximum of \$400 million there, roughly. If you do not want but half of it, then you cut it down just by saying you are only going to take half of it, or you can cut it down by saying you are only going to pay \$15 per acre. You can cut these figures to almost anything you want, up or down, dependent pretty largely on how much you are going to be paying in the farm program.

We have this in mind that if it is going to be costing you \$1 a bushel to take that wheat, that is, after you have the wheat—let me put it this way. It is going to cost you \$1 a bushel to take it out this way—and would cost you about that if you paid \$30 an acre—and if you pay \$1 a bushel to remove it, that is a whole lot cheaper than paying \$4 a bushel of support price after you have grown it.

If you do not put but \$2 as the support price, you have not saved near as much and you obviously would not spend as much here.

But it depends largely upon how much you want to spend, how high you want to try to keep your support prices as to what you should pay for this. But I submit that we are offering a program here that is flexibility, that gives you the opportunity to take a substantial amount of wheat land out of production. I know you can take land out of production lots cheaper before you plant the crop on it than you can pay for the crop after you have produced it.

That is the whole philosophy of this bill, that is, if we are coming to a farm program which is going to result in Government supports at substantial prices, then you can do it cheaper by never growing the wheat than you can by growing and paying a remunerative price for it after it is grown. You can maintain a degree of flexibility also by producing just what the Nation is going to need under the terms of this bill which you cannot do simply with a program that fixes a certain support price for wheat.

I think the bill has enough merit to consider it on its own merits, but I think that primarily it must be considered a portion of a general farm bill. I would hope, Mr. Chairman, that we might consider the bill as such with the idea that this subcommittee might recommend it for inclusion in the general farm bill.

I appreciate the opportunity to try to give an outline of what we are hoping to do here before we had the testimony on it.

Mr. JONES of Tennessee. Thank you very much, Mr. Poage. We appreciate your comments. I am sure the committee will do their best to abide by your wishes.

Without objection, your written testimony will be inserted in the record at this point.

[The prepared statement and attachments thereto, submitted by Mr. Poage, follow:]

STATEMENT OF HON. W. R. POAGE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE
STATE OF TEXAS

Mr. Chairman, I first want to thank you very much for scheduling this hearing on H.R. 2729, the "Critical Lands Resource Conservation Act," which I have introduced with the cosponsorship of Mr. English, Mr. Sebelius, and Mr. Thone. I feel this legislation is very important for several reasons and I hope that the witnesses here today will agree.

One of the greatest resources that we have in the United States is an abundance of arable agricultural lands. Unlike most countries of the world, the United States is blessed with a great expanse of relatively level fertile soils across the heartland of our continent. Today, the Great Plains is the "breadbasket" for the world, producing an abundance of wheat, corn, soybeans, grain sorghum and livestock to feed hungry people all over the world.

However, while the Great Plains is capable of producing great amounts of food today, such may not be the case in the future unless we move to protect the millions of acres of soil being eroded by wind and water today. Otherwise, vast amounts of topsoil will be lost forever in dust storms like the one that ravaged the Southern Great Plains at the end of February, 1977.

When I speak of the Great Plains, I am generally referring to the area west of the 20-inch rainfall line and east of the Continental Divide. The area is bounded on the south by the Coastal Plains of Texas, and on the north by the Canadian Border. It is the area that originally comprised the Midgrass Prairie and the Shortgrass Prairie and today is the major winter wheat growing area of the United States.

Prior to being farmed, the Great Plains suffered only slight erosion as the dominant grass species native to the area provided protection from wind and water erosion. However, with the advent of large-scale farming operations, vast amounts of soil have been left virtually unprotected from wind erosion. The "Dust Bowl" of the 1930's, of course, resulted from the effects of drought and high winds on unprotected soil of the Great Plains. The Federal Government then moved to halt the erosion of the Great Plains by creating the Soil Conservation Service and assigning it the duty of assisting landowners in resource conservation.

The situation existing in the Great Plains today is little different from the early days of the "Dust Bowl" era. During 1976, almost 1.2 million acres of Great Plains soil suffered moderate to severe wind erosion. In the first 2 months of this year, an additional 3.8 million acres have suffered erosion and an additional 17 million acres are highly susceptible to wind erosion. I am sure that all of you are aware of the severe dust storm that ravaged the Great Plains at the end of February.

The wind erosion occurring in the Great Plains today is a result, to a great extent, of our farm policies of recent years. Great Plains wheat farmers have been encouraged to plant from fence to fence and they have responded by sowing more and more wheat on marginal lands. Also, unable to control predator losses, many western Great Plains livestock producers have plowed up thousands of acres of marginal rangeland to plant wheat and other small grains. The drought of recent years, coupled with the depletion of the underground water supply, have resulted in much of this recently farmed marginal cropland being blown away and forever lost to posterity.

It is with these problems in mind that we have introduced H.R. 2729. If adopted, our bill would result in about 15 million acres of marginal cropland in the Great Plains being converted from production of soil-depleting crops like wheat to soil-conserving cover crops. Of course, this would result in a reduction in our total wheat production of 200 to 300 million bushels. I am sure all of the members of the committee will agree that we surely can afford to reduce our production of wheat at this time considering the large surplus of wheat in storage at present.

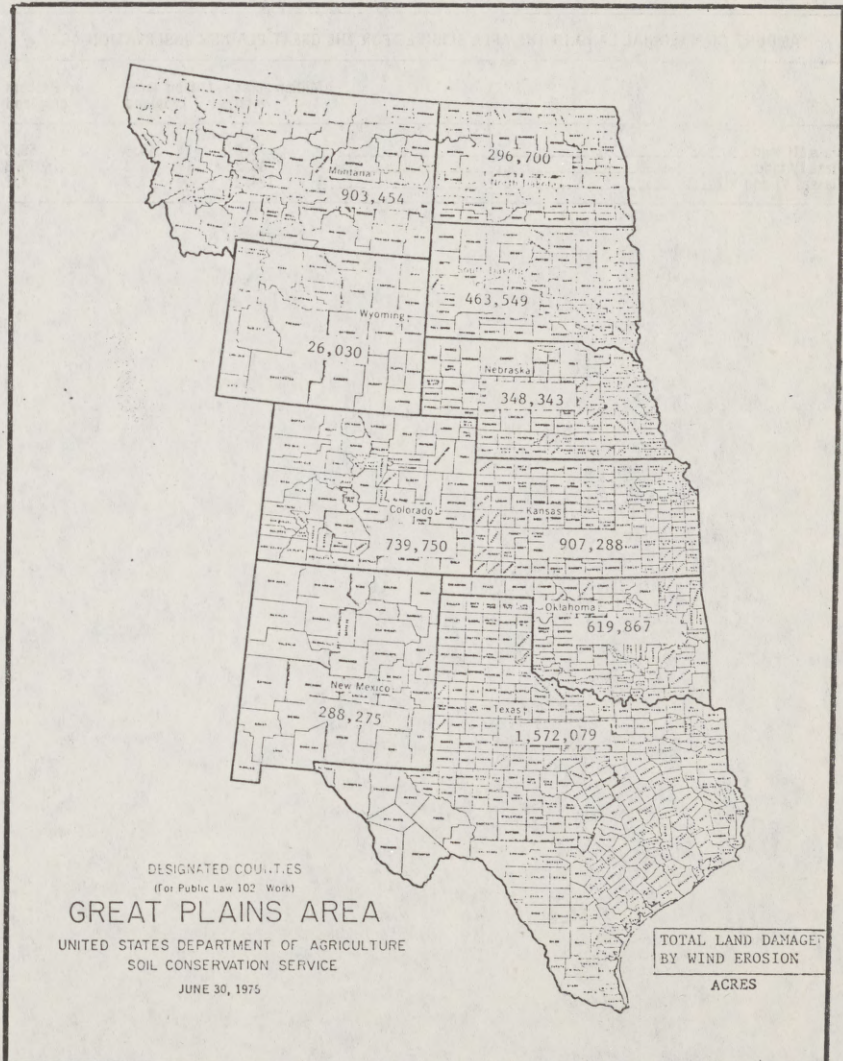
Technically, this legislation would allow the Secretary of Agriculture to enter into 2-year contracts with landowners in the area eligible for the Great Plains Conservation Program to convert up to 50 percent of their cropland to soil-conserving cover crops. In turn, the Secretary would pay landowners up to \$30 per acre per year as an incentive for their participating in the program. During the period that land was under contract under this program, it could neither be grazed nor otherwise harvested by the landowner except where the President declares a disaster resulting from drought or other natural catastrophe. At the end of the 2-year contract period, the agreement could be extended for one year

at a time upon agreement between the Secretary and the landowner or, if the country needed additional wheat, the agreement could be dropped and the land would in almost every case automatically go back into wheat.

It is my opinion that a maximum of about 15 million acres of cropland will be entered into this program. Thus, assuming the maximum of \$30 per acre, the program would cost about \$450 annually. However, the Secretary can control participation in the program by varying funding for the program and to actual per acre payments on an annual basis. If the Secretary were to determine that more wheat production is necessary, he could reduce funding for the program to prevent new contracts from being signed with eligible landowners.

I strongly believe that this legislation is needed if we are to protect our valuable soil resources in the Great Plains for use by posterity. I hope that the subcommittee will see fit to approve this bill and refer it to the full Committee on Agriculture for inclusion in the general farm bill which we must approve by May 15, 1977.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

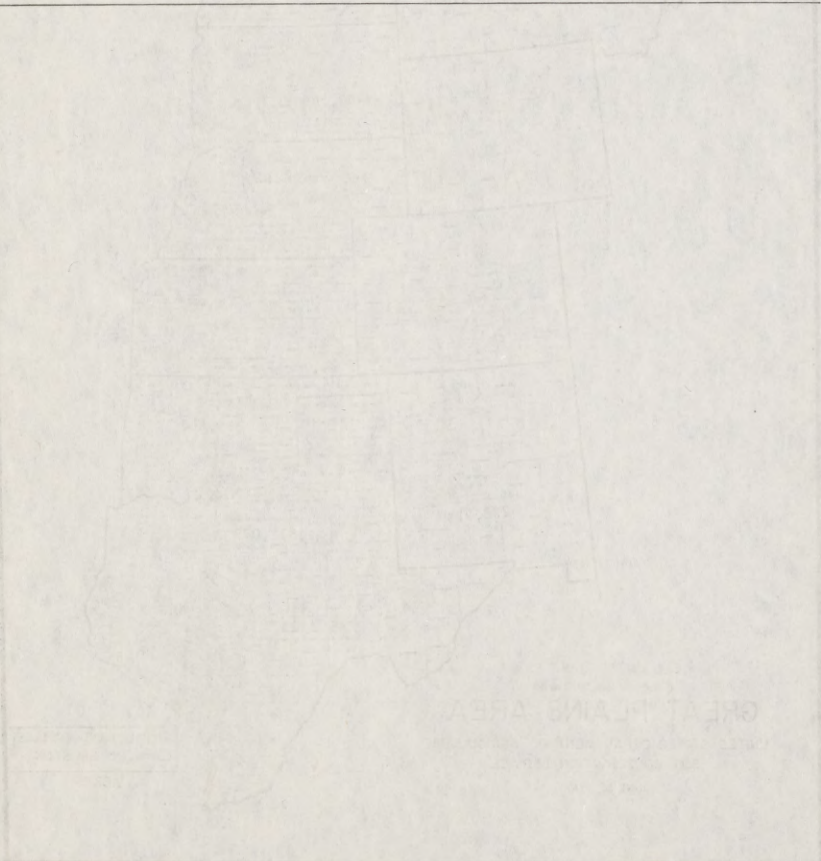


WHEAT ACREAGE, AVERAGE YIELD, AND TOTAL PRODUCTION IN THE GREAT PLAINS STATES IN 1975

State	Acres planted (thousand acres)	Acres harvested (thousand acres)	Average yield (bushels per acre)	Total production (thousands of bushels)
Colorado.....	2,773	2,260	22.5	50,950
Kansas.....	12,800	12,100	29.0	350,900
Montana.....	5,130	4,975	31.3	155,925
Nebraska.....	3,200	3,070	32.0	98,240
New Mexico.....	463	387	26.0	10,062
North Dakota.....	10,627	10,213	23.9	264,392
Oklahoma.....	7,400	6,700	24.0	160,800
South Dakota.....	3,240	3,003	21.1	63,294
Texas.....	6,500	5,700	23.0	131,100
Wyoming.....	295	273	24.9	6,802
Total.....	52,428	48,681	23.4	1,285,663
Total, United States.....	75,095	69,656	30.6	2,133,803

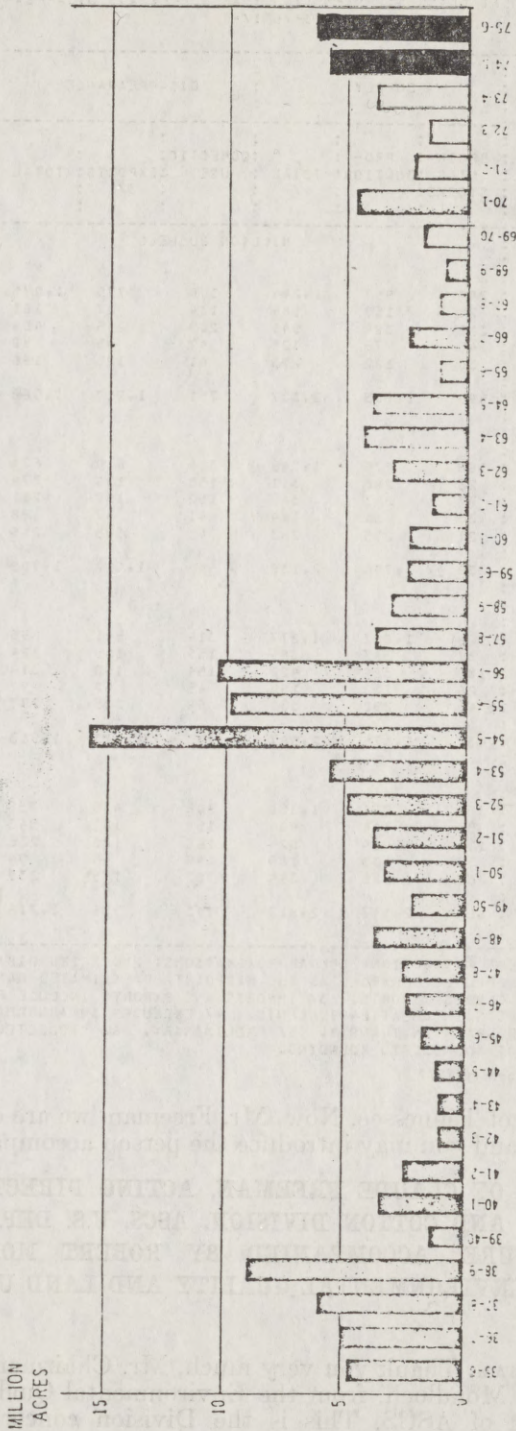
AMOUNT OF MARGINAL LAND IN THE AREA ELIGIBLE FOR THE GREAT PLAINS CONSERVATION ACT

	Million acres total	Million acres cropland	Percent cropland
Class III land.....	75.6	43.9	58.0
Class IV land.....	46.2	16.3	35.3
Classes VI and VII.....	184.2	7.7	4.2



ACRES OF LAND DAMAGED ANNUALLY IN GREAT PLAINS

Seasons 1935 - 36 to 1975 - 76, inclusive



Note: Data for period 1943-44 through 1952-53 was obtained from reports of the Great Plains Council.
All other data was obtained from SCS reports. (The number of counties reporting may vary from year to year.)

TABLE 2.-WHEAT CLASSES: MARKETING YEAR SUPPLY AND DISAPPEARANCE,
1973-76 1/*

YEAR BEGINNING JUNE 1	SUPPLY		DISAPPEARANCE			ENDING STOCKS MAY 31	
	BEGIN- NING STOCKS	PRO- DUCTION	TOTAL 2/	DOMESTIC USE	EXPORTS 3/	TOTAL	CARRYOVER
MILLION BUSHELS							
1973/74							
HARD WINTER	287	957	1,244	300	775	1,075	169
RED WINTER	25	159	184	134	27	161	23
HARD SPRING	212	326	541	209	245	454	67
DURUM	45	75	125	47	45	92	33
WHITE	30	182	213	61	125	186	27
ALL CLASSES	599	1,705	2,307	751	1,217	1,968	339 4/
1974/75							
HARD WINTER	169	879	1,048	314	510	824	224
RED WINTER	23	288	311	138	135	274	37
HARD SPRING	87	293	382	152	130	282	100
DURUM	33	51	114	41	47	88	26
WHITE	27	255	283	45	195	240	43
ALL CLASSES	339 4/	1,796	2,138	690	1,018	1,708	439
1975/76 5/							
HARD WINTER	224	1,053	1,277	314	521	895	362
RED WINTER	37	343	385	155	165	324	56
HARD SPRING	100	326	427	154	150	314	113
DURUM	26	123	150	45	52	97	53
WHITE	43	290	333	58	215	273	60
ALL CLASSES	430	2,135	2,567	730	1,173	1,903	664
1976/77 6/							
HARD WINTER	382	966	1,350	308	450	758	592
RED WINTER	56	348	404	158	185	343	61
HARD SPRING	113	410	524	166	120	286	238
DURUM	53	135	189	49	45	94	95
WHITE	60	286	346	62	175	237	109
ALL CLASSES	664	2,147	2,813	743	975	1,718	1,095 (Projected)

1/ DATA, EXCEPT PRODUCTION, ARE APPROXIMATIONS; PROJECTED DISAPPEARANCE FIGURES SHOULD BE REGARDED AS THE MIDPOINT OF ESTIMATED RANGES. 2/ TOTAL SUPPLY INCLUDES IMPORTS. 3/ IMPORTS AND EXPORTS INCLUDE FLOUR AND OTHER PRODUCTS IN WHEAT EQUIVALENTS. 4/ EXCLUDES AN ABNORMALLY LARGE VOLUME OF GRAIN IN TRANSIT. 5/ PRELIMINARY. 6/ PROJECTED.
* TOTALS MAY NOT ADD DUE TO ROUNDING.

16 WS-239, February 1977

Mr. JONES of Tennessee. Now, Mr. Freeman, we are delighted that you are here and you may introduce the person accompanying you.

STATEMENT OF CLAUDE FREEMAN, ACTING DIRECTOR, GRAINS, OILSEEDS, AND COTTON DIVISION, ASCS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, ACCOMPANIED BY ROBERT MONDLOCH, DIRECTOR, ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND LAND USE DIVISION, ASCS

Mr. FREEMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I have with me Mr. Bob Mondloch, from the Environmental Quality and Land Use Division of ASCS. This is the Division concerned with our conservation program.

I do appreciate this opportunity to comment on H.R. 2729, a bill to foster conservation of critical lands in the Great Plains area of the United States.

This bill authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to enter into 2-year contracts with landowners currently eligible for the Great Plains conservation program to divert cropland back to soil conserving crops.

There are two very important issues which must be considered in evaluating this legislation. First is the issue of soil erosion in the Great Plains area and second is the issue of production adjustment for wheat.

On the issue of soil erosion, the Department is concerned that there be a direct conservation effort to minimize erosion of land in the Great Plains area. I might add at this point that we do appreciate the longstanding and abiding interest of this committee in this matter. I think we in the Department and the committee see eye-to-eye on the seriousness of erosion.

But it is the Department's judgment that this could best be accomplished by present conservation efforts through the agricultural conservation program or the Great Plains conservation program.

An attempt should be made to treat this problem by identifying and implementing programs in those particular areas of cropland which present the greatest erosion hazard. Such areas can be specifically identified with the assistance of specialists in land classification in the Soil Conservation Service.

The bill also presents another problem. The major area of present concern over wind erosion includes areas outside the present Great Plains area. By the terms of this proposed legislation, such areas could not be dealt with.

Marginal lands surrounding the Great Plains counties have been converted to crop production. Before a major new initiation is taken, we must know more about the total conservation problem. We will undertake to review all existing programs and their effect on the total conservation needs of the country.

I might add this sort of a comprehensive review will be undertaken very shortly. When we have concluded this review, we will be in a much better position to utilize the financing available to us in a manner that will deal effectively with national conservation and pollution abatement problems.

Furthermore, this proposed legislation has tremendous cost/benefit implications in droughty situations that frequently prevail in this designated area. Such a situation currently exists in much of the Great Plains area. In this connection, the executive branch is actively monitoring the current situation and will take appropriate measures to protect our natural resources in the present situation.

In addition, the scope and effectiveness of this program, if authorized, could be seriously impaired by erratic funding as a result of the appropriate process and priority considerations related to economic conditions.

On the issue of production adjustment, the Department believes that this problem can be better treated in commodity legislation as part of an overall farm bill by continuing discretionary authority for the Secretary to institute a production adjustment program if he determines one is needed.

As I understand this bill, it would be implemented regardless of whether there was a production adjustment phase to the regular price support program or not.

Because the extent of the program will depend upon appropriated funds, it is difficult to estimate the cost of such program. However, it is noted that if 15 million acres are placed in the program, and if the rate of compensation is at the level of \$30 per acre, the outlay for the first year could be \$450 million.

We have reason to believe that this rate of payment, if offered, would result in 15 million acres being placed in the program. Obviously expenditures of this magnitude exceed present budget restraints and will not effectively accomplish either of the two goals of erosion control and production adjustment.

The Department concludes, based on analysis of this bill, that it is not the best solution to the two problems of soil erosion of the Great Plains area and that of production adjustment for wheat; and, therefore, does not favor the adoption of this proposal.

This is not to say that we do not think both the problems of soil erosion and production adjustment of wheat are important. We are just saying there are other ways to do it.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my prepared statement. Either myself or Mr. Mondloch will be glad to answer any questions that you or other members of the committee might present.

Mr. JONES of Tennessee. Mr. Freeman, we thank you. Can you remain for awhile while we hear the other witnesses?

Mr. FREEMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. JONES of Tennessee. We will call you back later.

Our next witness is Mr. David G. Unger, executive vice president of the National Association of Conservation Districts.

Mr. Unger, welcome. We are delighted that you are here. We will be glad to hear you.

STATEMENT OF DAVID G. UNGER, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Mr. UNGER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and members of the committee. We appreciate your invitation to present the views of the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) on H.R. 2729, the Critical Lands Resource Conservation Act. As you know, NACD represents the nearly 3,000 local soil, water, and natural resource conservation districts established under the laws of the 50 States, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

The primary purpose of our member districts is the conservation, protection, and development of the soil and related natural resources of the Nation, and especially those on the privately owned lands of the country.

As a matter of background, I would like to say that as of February 1, 1977, there were 13 million acres of land in the 10 Great Plains States which were in a condition to be damaged by wind erosion. This is 5 million acres more than a year ago on the same date. More intensive use of agricultural land during the past several years and the conversion of grassland to cropland have combined with the current

drought to create serious erosion and the threat of further erosion hazards. As has been reported extensively in the news media, wind erosion of consequence has occurred in some sections of the Plains as recently as the past 2 weeks. Mr. Poage referred to that in his opening statement.

Much progress in establishing needed conservation practices and conversion of land to less intensive uses has been accomplished under the Great Plains conservation program. There are currently over 4,500 unserved requests for assistance on file, and many additional landowners would apply for help if funds were available. NACD favors an extension of this program beyond the present termination date of 1981.

It is obvious, however, that we are faced with a critical problem in the Great Plains region. H.R. 2729 would provide an additional tool to help achieve conservation objectives in this emergency situation.

We would like to make the following specific comments on the proposed legislation:

One, we would recommend that the period covered by the contracts between landowners and the Secretary of Agriculture be lengthened from 2 years to a minimum of 5 years. This change is necessary in order that the program have longer term benefits and that the owner or operator have additional options in adjusting his operations.

Two, we believe that the legislation should specify that priority will be given to retirement of those lands identified as having the highest erosion hazards and that emphasis should be placed on establishment of permanent cover. Where available, information contained in the land capability classification system of the Soil Conservation Service should be used in identifying these lands.

Three, we question whether owners and operators would convert land to a soil-conserving cover crop at a payment rate of \$30 per acre. We would estimate that it would cost from \$24 to \$36 per acre to establish perennial grasses in the Great Plains States. As the bill is now drafted, most of the first year's payment would be expended for the cost of establishing the vegetative cover, leaving very little return to the landowner as an incentive to participate. We would recommend that the annual adjustment payment be increased to \$50 per acre.

Four, we support the flexibility provided in the terms upon which payments will be made. Allowing opportunity for payments to be made in advance of performance will be helpful in encouraging participation because it will aid in financing the necessary purchases of seed, fertilizer, and other inputs.

Five, we also support the provision regarding preservation of allotment history. Acreage allotted to individual farms for crops subject to production controls is generally based on past crop history. Landowners who have not practiced soil conservation usually have a higher acreage history of these crops than landowners who have followed a conservation plan. If crop history were not preserved, those landowners who participate in the H.R. 2729 program could be penalized in any future production adjustment program because of their conversion of soil-depleting crops to grass.

Mr. Chairman, NACD believes that the long-term solution to conservation problems in this region of climatic hazards will come about through expansion, extension, and appropriate modification of the existing Great Plains conservation program. In the present emergency situation, however, the provisions of H.R. 2729 would aid in stimulating conversion of land to grass and protection of the soil from excessive erosion.

Thank you for this opportunity to present our views.

Mr. JONES of Tennessee. Thank you very much, Mr. Unger. We hope that you also can remain for questioning until we have heard all of the witnesses.

Our next witness is Mr. John Datt, director of the Washington office of the American Farm Bureau Federation.

Welcome, John. We are delighted that you are here and you may also present your testimony.

**STATEMENT OF JOHN DATT, DIRECTOR, WASHINGTON OFFICE,
AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION, ACCOMPANIED BY
VERNII GLASSEN, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, WASHINGTON OFFICE**

Mr. DATT. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I have with me Mr. Glasen, who is the assistant director of our national affairs here in Washington.

We appreciate this opportunity to express Farm Bureau's support for H.R. 2729, the Critical Lands Resource Conservation Act.

H.R. 2729 is an important and timely piece of legislation. It is important because conservation is and has always been a necessary and major concern of farmers and ranchers. It is timely in that it offers producers in the 10-State Great Plains area of the United States an opportunity and a financial incentive to apply effective conservation practices at a time when the area is faced with a very serious drought. Additional help is critically needed.

This bill offers another advantage much to the liking of Farm Bureau. It has potential for removing a significant amount of grain from production without the enforcement of strict acreage allotments. It provides a voluntary means of attempting to prevent overproduction. This is especially significant as it relates to an area that has few alternatives for resource adjustment.

The following policy statements—which were adopted by the voting delegates of the member State farm bureaus at the 58th annual meeting of the AFBF in Honolulu, Hawaii—support H.R. 2729:

The essential ingredients of a sound national farm program include * * * programs to encourage the conservation of land and water resources * * *.

Farmers should be encouraged to participate in set-aside programs through per acre payments for performance.

Land used for the production of agricultural products are essential to our nation's welfare.

Land is a valuable natural resource. Its conservation should receive the highest priority.

Farm Bureau members emphasized these positions in different policy areas relating to both Government farm programs and conservation of natural resources. In addition, the AFBF board of directors voiced its support for H.R. 2729 at a meeting on March 9.

Let me just say here that I discussed this legislation with our board of directors last week. As Congressman Poage has indicated,

I think it is clear, from the Farm Bureau standpoint, that this legislation provides an opportunity to deal with both a conservation matter and a production adjustment matter, something that is critically needed.

We would hope that rather than wait, frankly, until the farm program legislation is adopted, which might be some time in the future, that the committee might consider moving this legislation on its own because of the critical need for this type of adjustment in this particular area. That is the attitude that our board expressed when I discussed it with with them last week.

H.R. 2729 is carefully prepared legislation, which meets our policy objectives to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to enter into contracts with producers for a 2-year period, should have a more helpful impact on easing surplus conditions than would a 1-year set-aside. The provisions for renewal on an annual basis could have an even greater effect by changing the future use of the land on a more permanent basis.

We also support the provisions of the bill that:

One, require that portion of land contracted in the program to be land that has actually been in production within the last 2 years;

Two, require the producer to divert such crops as the Secretary may designate;

Three, prohibit producers from harvesting or grazing the conserving crop during the term of the agreement;

Four, prevent blatant abuses of the program; and

Five, provide for administration of the program by ASCS with the technical assistance of the SCS.

In conclusion, the Farm Bureau views H.R. 2729 as a welcome new combination of old ideas. It can make a constructive contribution to the conservation of land, water, and energy resources as a part of a sound national farm policy.

We thank you for the opportunity to present these views.

Mr. JONES of Tennessee. Thank you very much.

Mr. GLASSEN, do you have anything you would like to say?

Mr. GLASSEN. No, sir.

Mr. JONES of Tennessee. We appreciate your being here. We will call you back later for questioning.

Our next witness is Mr. Winston Wilson, president of the Texas Wheat Producers Association. He is accompanied by Mr. Jack Muse, president of the New Mexico Wheat Producers Association.

Welcome, gentlemen, and we are delighted that you are here.

STATEMENT OF WINSTON WILSON, PRESIDENT, TEXAS WHEAT PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION, ACCOMPANIED BY JACK MUSE, PRESIDENT, NEW MEXICO WHEAT PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION; BILL WARREN, VICE PRESIDENT, COLORADO WHEAT GROWERS ASSOCIATION; AND ELMORE BATHURST, PRESIDENT, OKLAHOMA WHEAT GROWERS ASSOCIATION

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We also have Mr. Elmore Bathurst of the Oklahoma Wheat Growers Association, and Mr. Bill Warren, vice president of the Colorado Wheat Growers Association.

Mr. JONES of Tennessee. We welcome you gentlemen. We are delighted you could come along.

Mr. WILSON. They have asked this testimony reflect their views as well. We will all be available for questions afterwards.

First I would like to compliment Mr. Poage and Mr. English and other sponsors of this bill for their foresight and timeliness in introducing this important conservation measure and we are pleased with the early scheduling of these hearings.

One has only headlines in daily newspapers in much of the Great Plains area such as those shown from Amarillo, Tex., yesterday—"Ten Million Dollars in Wheat Destroyed by Wind."

This happened Friday. Indications at this time are that in the Texas Panhandle alone, over 1.5 million dryland wheat acres and 1.11 million acres of irrigated wheatland were damaged in a wind and dust storm this past Friday alone. It might well be that the word "emergency" should be attached to this bill.

In recent years wheat producers, at great expense to themselves patriotically responded to the national call for allout production and successfully met the challenge. This entailed use of marginal lands not formerly in crop production. With a 2-year domestic wheat supply or a full year's export requirement being carried into the new marketing year on June 1, 1977, obviously the intensive use of this valuable land resource certainly is not now needed, but must be conserved for possible future real national need.

Accordingly, we support the provisions of this bill to assist producers to reestablish ground cover and conservation measures on such lands.

Mr. Chairman, as the bill now reads, there is one area in which we would like clarification and one in which we would like to offer an alternative.

The Secretary may use an advertising and bid procedure in determining the lands in any area to be covered by agreements and the payment rate to be made to the producers thereof.

First, we are concerned about farmers who need funds to initiate conservation practices "bidding" against each other for Federal funds. With \$30 per acre being the maximum allowed in the bill, a "bid" lower than that might tend to encourage a lesser job of conservation. We know that certainly is going to involve some expense getting this ground back into some sort of cover crop. We do not really feel that a low bid job is necessarily the best type of conservation.

And, too, the bill says the "Secretary may use the advertising and bid procedure." What are the alternatives if the Secretary decides otherwise?

Along this same line, in section E, the bill seems to leave it up to the Secretary as to whether or not land placed in the program will be counted as planted to wheat for allotment history purposes. We think that Congress, not the Secretary, should direct that this be done. The work "may" should be changed to "shall provide * * *."

Mr. Chairman, in summary, we support this measure as a seriously needed solution to the emergency situation developing in many wheat producing regions of the Great Plains. As Mr. Poage mentioned in his opening statement, the dust has reached far into South Texas in

the past couple of weeks. We were in Dallas day before yesterday at the airport and the dust was very much in evidence at that point, even though the wind was not blowing.

This has certainly become a real problem, especially in the northern portions of the Great Plains, Colo., and parts of Kansas and Oklahoma. I was not here in the 1930's during the dust, but it certainly is at least as bad as during the 1940's and probably worse.

We feel that it is also vital to saving and preventing damage from spreading to the more productive wheat lands in these regions. Mr. Poage mentioned the class I and II lands do not start blowing and the class III and IV lands blow and there certainly is damage that occurs there with the class I lands.

They do not necessarily have to blow but the soil that is in the air does considerable damage to the wheat in the southern areas.

We feel that this bill would accomplish the purpose. Aside from the conservation areas, as we mentioned earlier, we do have a tremendous wheat carryover. We feel that anything that would take some of these acres out of production would certainly be of benefit to the Great Plains wheat farmer, as well as the wheat farmers all over the country, since all wheat, whether it be Hard, Red, Winter, or Spring, or whatever, does certainly—that is, the stocks of any type of wheat influences the price of all wheats of all classes.

We would be glad to respond to any questions at this time.

Mr. JONES of Tennessee. Thank you very much, Mr. Wilson.

Without objection, the attachment to your statement will be inserted into the record at this point.

[The attachment to Mr. Wilson's statement follows:]

TABLE 2--WHEAT CLASSES: MARKETING YEAR SUPPLY AND DISAPPEARANCE,
1973-76 1/*

YEAR BEGINNING JUNE 1	SUPPLY		DISAPPEARANCE			ENDING STOCKS MAY 31	
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* TOTALS MAY NOT ADD DUE TO ROUNDING.

16 WS-239, February 1977

Mr. JONES of Tennessee. Before I call the other witnesses back, Mr. English, I have a note that you may have someone here that you would like to comment.

Mr. ENGLISH. I am glad to see Mr. Bathurst has joined us. We are delighted to have him with us here today.

Mr. JONES of Tennessee. Welcome, Mr. Bathurst. Do you have a statement you would like to make at this time.

Mr. BATHURST. Just to endorse what Mr. Wilson just said. This is an approach, I think, in the right direction. We do have a surplus. We do have a real problem in conserving our land at this particular time due to wind erosion and this sort of thing.

Mr. JONES of Tennessee. If the other gentlemen who are here would come back to the witness table, we will ask the committee to pose questions to you.

Is there anyone else in the audience who has a statement to make? [No response.]

Mr. Poage?

Mr. POAGE. Mr. Chairman, I have occupied so much time that I would like to let the other members of the committee ask questions. I might wind up later on.

Mr. JONES of Tennessee. All right.

Mr. Brown?

Mr. BROWN. I have no questions.

Mr. JONES of Tennessee. Mr. Jeffords?

Mr. JEFFORDS. I have no questions.

Mr. JONES of Tennessee. Mr. English?

Mr. ENGLISH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Freeman, going back to your testimony, can you give us any estimate of how much marginal land has been broken out and planted in wheat in the last 3 or 4 years.

Mr. FREEMAN. Maybe Mr. Mondloch can handle that question.

Mr. MONDLOCH. I have no specific figures except the figures that indicate that there is a total of about 16.3 million class IV type lands in the Great Plains area. Just how much of this has been broken out into wheat, I do not have the figures with me.

Mr. ENGLISH. Do you have a guess? Half of it? Three-quarters of it?

Mr. MONDLOCH. I think NACD's testimony indicates that there is 5 million more acres of this type of land in production this year than there was 5 years ago. So that would indicate a ballpark figure as to what has happened.

Mr. ENGLISH. I notice, too, in recent days—in fact, in the last 2 or 3 weeks, the Secretary indicated that he has given some thought to the possibility of the reinstatement of the soil bank program.

Do you have any idea how much that would cost?

Mr. MONDLOCH. I am not aware of that, Mr. English. The only thing that has taken place is this. The Carter administration, of course, has included in its amended budget a request for \$190 million for funding of the agricultural conservation program which, for the first time in recent years, is a switch on the part of the executive branch.

I am not sure this is the area you were referring to. I am not aware that the Secretary has indicated anything concerning soil bank specifically.

Mr. ENGLISH. I noticed in the press that this was one of the options that he mentioned as a possibility. Would not your testimony pretty much cut off any consideration of reinstating the soil bank program? Are you not going to be in a difficult position if the Secretary decides he wants to reinstate the soil bank program and you come back here to try to tell us that this is what should be done?

Mr. FREEMAN. That is true. I certainly would be. As I say, I am not aware that he intends to do that. It may be that the soil bank was a figure of speech. I do not know what the provisions might be.

Mr. ENGLISH. Do you have any idea about this? Can you give us some ballpark figure as to how much erosion has increased over the past 3 or 4 years in the Great Plains area?

Mr. FREEMAN. I do not.

Mr. MONDLOCH. I have no figure, but obviously it is significant. I personally would not dispute the point that there is a serious erosion problem there. But the testimony that we have today indicates that we feel this could be done within the existing programs, the Great Plains conservation program and the Agriculture conservation program. They could address the soil erosion problem that exists in that area.

Mr. ENGLISH. Also I have seen in the press that they are indicating that last year and the year before there was a 10-percent increase. Do you have any ideas about this? Can you give me a ballpark figure as to how much it has increased over the past 3 years?

Mr. MONDLOCH. I am sorry. I do not have any specific information.

Mr. ENGLISH. You have indicated that it is significant, have you not?

Mr. MONDLOCH. Yes.

Mr. ENGLISH. You say that the present soil conservation programs that exist now, which are in place, can take care of the problem.

Is it not a fact that there has been a significant increase? Would this not be a pretty good counter-argument to your statement that the present programs would take care of the problem?

Mr. MONDLOCH. What we are saying is that the legislative authority of the current programs could address themselves significantly to the erosion problems.

The funding that goes with this is another consideration as to whether the funds for the Great Plains conservation program and whether the funds for the Agriculture conservation program would be adequate.

But we are saying the legislative authority seems to us, at least, would be adequate to try to get to the problem.

Mr. ENGLISH. In your opinion, how much money would it take?

Mr. MONDLOCH. The average cost shares for establishing permanent vegetative cover under the 1975 ACP range from around \$6 an acre in North Dakota to about \$20 an acre in Kansas.

If you take an average of \$13 per acre for establishing cover, or maybe even a \$15 figure, then you could take the \$15 times the 15 million acres and come up with the amount for which farmers have been willing to carry out the practices in the past and come up with the total dollar figure.

Mr. ENGLISH. So you basically tell them it is going to cost \$15 times 15 million acres. Is that correct?

Mr. MONDLOCH. And that would be on a one-time basis.

Mr. ENGLISH. One shot?

Mr. MONDLOCH. Yes; for the establishment of the vegetative cover.

Mr. ENGLISH. You have also testified here that there is erosion outside the Great Plains area and that this is one of the parts of your testimony in proposing this particular proposal.

How many acres outside the Great Plains area are you talking about?

Mr. MONDLOCH. We do not have any actual figures on that. The point being made there was simply that the problem is not limited by the actual boundaries of the Great Plains, the 460 counties in the 10 States, but that the problem also is outside this area.

Just acreage figures—I do not have them with me today. Maybe we could determine what they are. But we are saying it is beyond the Great Plains area itself, as far as the problem is concerned.

Mr. ENGLISH. Mr. Chairman, I believe my time is up, but I would like to come back for a second round.

Mr. JONES of Tennessee. Thank you, Mr. English.

Judge Kelly, do you have questions?

Mr. KELLY. Yes.

Mr. Wilson, in your testimony you say, "In recent years wheat producers, at great expense to themselves, patriotically responded to the national call."

Is that what your testimony said?

Mr. WILSON. Yes.

Mr. KELLY. Let me see if I understand this. Those farmers out there are not businessmen with mortgages and need for new equipment and families and all this. They did not need money. But they were just doing this out a burst of patriotism?

Mr. WILSON. No, sir, that is not the case at all. But in 1973 and 1974, the U.S. Department of Agriculture held meetings throughout the wheat-producing areas of the country specifically urging wheat producers or all-out production. We responded to this.

I will admit we were certainly interested in making a profit.

Mr. KELLY. The idea was that this was an opportunity to take some land that was not otherwise productive and make some money on it.

Let me reverse this thing. I did not know you people were so patriotic. Let me ask you how patriotic it is for us to conserve the national resources of the United States.

How come you need the taxpayers money when the people that are going to vote for this bill are never going to vote the taxes to pay for it? They are just going to put the Government further in debt. They are not paying for what they are giving you already.

It is just as phony as a \$9 bill.

What you are asking for, you will probably get, but you will not pay for it. Somebody down the line will put up the chips for all of that.

Mr. WILSON. Everytime I go to the bank to borrow more money to cover the money that I am not receiving in the marketplace, I feel like I am paying for something. I think it is the food supply of this country, as well as the balance of trade that we buy foreign oil with. I feel it would be much easier to explain to the general public a program such as this rather than going back 5 years hence and explain why the American agricultural machine is suddenly bankrupt and out of business and that we may import food from Russia or some other country that may not be quite as dependable as the American farmer is.

Mr. KELLY. Let me ask you this. Who does this land belong to?

Mr. WILSON. To the farmers.

Mr. KELLY. That is right.

If it is a good thing to keep this land from blowing away—and I suspect it is—why do not the farmers take care of their own land?

Mr. WILSON. A lot of this land came into production at the urging of the U.S. Government.

Mr. KELLY. That was for the profit of the farmers.

Mr. WILSON. Yes; but we certainly were led to believe that the situation in which this came in would be a little longer lasting than

it was. We were not informed that our markets would be repeatedly embargoed and that the prices would decline as a consequence.

Mr. KELLY. I think the same forces which are going to say yes to the special interest demand that is being made here are the same ones who made it possible for the embargoes to come into effect, are they not?

Are they not the same ones who were saying that whatever pressure group is putting the greatest heat on us right now is the one that is going to get it?

They were just doing this to curry favor with the consumer groups. The same people now will vote for this kind of a bill.

What we are doing is subsidizing businessmen in the operations of their business. This is an operating expense of running a farm, is it not? That is, to keep a farm from blowing away?

Mr. WILSON. Yes, sir, whenever possible.

Mr. KELLY. I would say so.

Mr. WILSON. But I would say that we must bear in mind that the American wheat industry is suffering from an acute price problem. We are not making any money. It is not within the limits of most farmers financially at this particular time to do anything to stop this land from blowing because most of them are in dire financial condition in the wheat industry.

Mr. KELLY. Let me ask you something about this bill, then.

If you put in these cover crops—and I am talking about in wheat land—and we are talking about one group here wanting up to \$50 because there would be no profit in it for the farmer.

If you put in these cover crops and then next year it looks like you can make another profit if you will plow it up and plant it, is that not going to be expensive to the taxpayers? Would you, as a businessman, put this crop in with the idea that you are going to undergo the expense and then next year plow it up? Is it not easier to make that decision if somebody else is paying the bill?

In other words, I am asking would you be as practical in your evaluation of the planning and plowing up if you were paying the bill yourself?

Mr. WILSON. I am sorry. I did not quite get that.

Mr. KELLY. To put the cover crop in costs money. If you plow it up to plant it because it looks like a profit is in prospect, then you have, in effect, lost the money for the cover crop that you planted the year before.

If you put a cover crop in, and you leave it for 2 years in dry-land wheat farming, then the cover crop will last more than 1 year.

If you plow it up in 1 year, then you have lost much of the advantage that you had put into the cover crop. That is a much easier decision to make if somebody else is paying for it.

So I am asking you this. Is it a practical way to do business?

Mr. WILSON. I would not anticipate that there would be a lot of 1-year use of this program. I think it will probably end up to be a longer range type program. The farmers, the wheat farmers in particular, are going to be suspect of any sudden increase in price. I think it takes us a long time to learn a lesson sometimes, but I do not think if wheat prices got high next year that there would be a lot of people

plowing up class III and IV land and putting it back in wheat because we are going to suspect that this thing would not last all that long.

Good prices have a way of disappearing a little faster than the bad prices do.

Mr. KELLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. JONES of Tennessee. Thank you, Judge Kelly.

Mr. Fithian, do you have questions?

Mr. FITHIAN. Yes.

Before I take my turn, however, I would like to introduce three guests from the second district of the board of county commissioners in White County: Mr. Mans, Mr. Carter, and Mr. Stewart are in the hearing room this morning and we welcome them today. They are sitting here along the wall. I just wanted to mention that.

Mr. JONES of Tennessee. Gentlemen, would you stand and be recognized? We welcome you. We hope you can stay for the conclusion of the hearing.

Mr. FITHIAN. I wonder if other witnesses might want to comment on the utility of the 5-year period rather than 2, as suggested in one of the testimonies this morning.

Mr. Datt?

Mr. DATT. It certainly is as far as we are concerned. I think if you start out with a 2-year period, in our Board discussions, one of the recommendations that was made was that this should be followed by a second 2-year period rather than the 1-year period.

Five years might be too long, but certainly there was some concern expressed within our Board of Directors about simply going on a year-to-year basis.

I think in the subcommittee's discussion, we would urge consideration of at least a 2-year period in terms of renewing these contracts.

Mr. FITHIAN. Anybody else?

Mr. MUSE. I think the bill is designed very well because it lends flexibility that the program needs if we come up with a few shortages. The land can be brought back into production and as stated it is a 2-year thing. There are options in there for both the producer and the Secretary. I think the thing is structured well as it is.

Mr. FITHIAN. I would like to raise another point among the representatives testifying this morning. You will recall a few years ago when we had the set-aside program and a variety of programs somewhat similar to this, at least.

We got into a position of a great deal of criticism in the public mind over the phrase, "We are paying farmers not to produce."

This was particularly heard when prices rose. I am not in any way implying by my question here that I oppose this program. I suspect we ought to have been practicing conservation practices and procedures throughout this Great Plains area over a long period of time. So I think I am very conservation minded, but I am wondering about the practical response that we are apt to get to a bill like this, which is, "Here we go paying farmers not to produce again."

Mr. Datt?

Mr. DATT. I would like to comment on that.

I think you have to recognize that in the current situation that a set-aside program, put into effect by the Secretary of Agriculture, is probably highly unlikely for the reasons that you cited.

Therefore, I think that is one of the reasons why we have supported this approach because it, in effect, is a form of a set-aside program, but is tied to the conservation of this particular land area.

I would like to comment on the question that Judge Kelly raised earlier.

You are talking about two matters here. One is production adjustment and soil conservation practices, both together. There is a critical production adjustment problem that is going to have to be met by the taxpayers one way or the other.

We happen to feel that this is a sound way to meet that and at the same time conserve the land in that particular area.

Mr. FITHIAN. Mr. Datt, does this basically run counter to the Farm Bureau's normal thrust of keeping Government out of agriculture?

Mr. DATT. No, sir. The Farm Bureau, Mr. Fithian, has for years, in terms of the farm program legislation that we have supported, at the same time supported the use of the set-aside approach as a way to bring the adjustments that were needed within agriculture. This is totally consistent with the philosophy that we have supported over the years.

What I am saying is that in the current setting we feel it is politically unrealistic to feel that the Secretary of Agriculture will have a set-aside program.

Therefore, this special program, or this particular program has appeal to our people.

Mr. FITHIAN. Mr. Freeman, I wonder if you would comment about the possibility or probability of getting back into this criticism which we have had of our farm programs over the years of paying farmers not to produce.

Mr. FREEMAN. You are right, Mr. Congressman. There is a great deal of criticism from outside the farming community about the concept of paying farmers not to produce.

I would add, I think, that even in the guise of this program, that criticism would still be raised. I think people would be aware that was one aspect of this program.

I will say that I think the Secretary of Agriculture, Secretary Bergland, would recommend a set-aside program of modest proportions, unless this wheat situation turns around in a matter of a year or two. I think we have no alternative.

As Mr. Poage so capably pointed out in the opening of this session, it is much cheaper to pay producers not to produce wheat than to produce wheat and have the investment and the storage costs of it.

I think looking at it as a responsible Government agency, we would have to make the case that in spite of the unpopularity among consumers of a set-aside program, it is still the least costly way to accomplish what we are after.

Mr. FITHIAN. Thank you.

I see my time has expired. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. JONES of Tennessee. Thank you, Mr. Fithian.

Mr. Marlenee?

Mr. MARLENEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to direct my question to Mr. Poage.

One of the objections of farm programs in the past have been the huge number of Federal employees that it took to administer such programs. I think all we need to do is look down the block here and we realize that, but we also can look out into the communities.

In every community, there was an ASC office that had field staff that we had to support.

In looking at this conservation program, which you have, do you foresee it as a way of cutting the number of employees and the costs involved there?

Mr. POAGE. No, I do not see it as any way of cutting the number. I think it probably would require the minimum number of any new program.

But we have at the present time a Great Plains program going on. We have staff for it. That is one of the advantages of confining this to that area. You already have a staff to do these sorts of things.

I do not anticipate that this would require anything in the way of additional field force. But it would not cut anything down at all. I think it is the cheapest way you have of administering these kinds of programs.

Mr. MARLENEE. Thank you. That was one of my concerns.

I, too, would view it as coming from that direction as far as the number of employees is concerned. Therefore, probably one of the more reasonable methods of cutting production is just this thing.

Would you see it as being incorporated into the farm bill to the point to where it would become mandatory to set aside a certain amount of acreage or to commit a certain number of acres to the program, that is, to the permanent cover to be eligible for loans and this type of thing?

In this matter, it would allow each individual producer to go on and operate the rest of his acres without ever having the supervision and get up every morning and go down to the local ASC office to ask what he might be able to do that day.

Mr. POAGE. As I see it, one of the advantages of this program is that it is not mandatory. It is purely a voluntary program.

How much land it would move out of wheat production will, of course, depend on two things: What the Secretary decides to pay and what the price of wheat is in the market at the time.

Obviously if wheat went to \$5 a bushel, nobody will put their land into conservation practices for \$30 an acre. But if the piece of wheat stays at \$2 a bushel, there will be a whole lot of people putting it in.

Those are things that we cannot know just what will turn out to be. But we do give the Secretary leeway here. We give him a great deal of leeway as to how attractive he makes this program.

As I said awhile ago, I think he can make this program cost almost as much as he wants to, from practically nothing to half a billion dollars or thereabouts, depending on how much he thinks he needs to use it. He is going to need a great deal more if we were to grow another 2 billion bushels of wheat crop this year.

Certainly there will be a great deal more need for this program than there would be if we only grow 1.5 billion bushels or 1.8 billion bushels.

This is not contemplated as being the complete Government control of your acreage. It does not give the Government complete control of your acreage because nobody has to go into it unless he wants to.

But it would be attractive to a great many farmers. There are a great many others who would not want to get into it. I think that is one of the virtues of the thing. You leave it up to the individual as to whether he comes into it or not. We think we know from experience that the number that will come in will depend largely upon the price of wheat.

Mr. MARLENEE. Thank you.

Mr. Freeman, you stated that you estimated that perhaps 5 million acres of class IV cropland had been seeded to wheat. Was it cropland that you referred to or class IV lands?

Mr. FREEMAN. Class IV lands, I believe it was.

Mr. MONDLOCH. We referred to NACD's testimony that there were 5 million more acres in cropland of land subject to wind erosion at the present time than there was 5 years ago.

Mr. MARLENEE. I see.

We have a situation in some of the States where several thousands of acres have been turned from native sod, without any history of production or grain production on it, to cropland in the past 1 and 2 years. It would be somewhat inequitable to the person, that is, the operators, with established production history, to have these people included under the Great Plains program.

The committee may want to consider a separate approach on those particular lands, I think.

Mr. POAGE. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MARLENEE. Yes.

Mr. POAGE. There is a provision that you cannot pay unless the land has actually been in cultivation. I think it says within the last 2 years, but I do not find the exact wording yet.

But there is a provision protecting against letting somebody like that get payment on just plowing up a pasture and putting it in.

Mr. MARLENEE. We may raise the question as to whether the 2 years is a sufficient amount of time.

Mr. POAGE. I think it is 2 years.

Mr. MARLENEE. Thank you, Mr. Poage.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. JONES of Tennessee. Thank you, Mr. Marlenee.

Mr. Poage, I am advised by staff that it is 2 years.

Mr. Grassley is not a member of the Conservation and Credit Subcommittee, but is a member of the full Agriculture Committee. He also has a bill that he has introduced which has gone to the Ways and Means Committee.

I would like for him to have an opportunity to ask some questions.

Mr. Grassley?

Mr. GRASSLEY. Thank you. I want to compliment Congressman Poage for his leadership in this area. To the gentlemen of the panel, I would say this.

Would you find, that is, would you have any way of determining whether a tax incentive program for people to establish wind erosion control belts—that is, these would not be complete fields—would accomplish what Mr. Poage wants to accomplish, on a larger scale?

I also mention the fact that my bill stems from the philosophy that we have a big job of soil erosion control lying ahead of us. I have seen estimates for water and wind erosion control in the neighborhood of \$100 billion. At the rate we are going, that is a 200-year-long wait that we would have to do the job right.

If we were going to wait for the money to come entirely from the Federal Treasury, that would be the case.

The theory of my approach would be to encourage private capital to get into this as well.

Let me ask this. Would you feel that this would be a reasonable alternative and a supplementary one? Surely it would not do the job immediately and as thoroughly as Mr. Poage's bill would do.

Mr. MUSE. Are you referring to the reduction in individual farmer's taxes in order to assist this?

Mr. GRASSLEY. Income tax credit, yes.

Mr. MUSE. In our area, that would be no help at all because very few farmers pay income tax and with wheat at \$2.30, we do not need a tax credit.

Mr. GRASSLEY. This could extend and carry over to other years as well.

Mr. MUSE. We are faced with a carry forward loss now.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I understand.

Mr. UNGER. Mr. Grassley, on behalf of NAC, let me say that we are familiar with your bill and are studying it. Some of our members have raised the same question as the gentleman just did to its applicability in cases where the tax being paid is available to be reduced of differing land owners, would be rather different in many cases and would it be as much incentive for one as it would be for another.

But certainly the idea of a further incentive to encourage the planting of windbreaks and wildlife habitat would prove desirable.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I would see it as long term and not dependent upon congressional appropriations from year to year. A person who was looking far ahead could plant accordingly and would have a chance to take advantage of it at those times when he did have a high enough income to pay income tax.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate this opportunity, Ed.

Mr. JONES of Tennessee. Thank you very much.

Mr. Coleman?

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. Chairman, I hope I am not being repetitious. I am sorry I was not here earlier.

Was there any discussion about the extension of the program from a 2-year to a 5-year program? Is there universal agreement on that subject?

Mr. WILSON. I think it certainly would be much more effective as a 5-year program. The planting of cover crops is an expensive operation. Certainly the results would be longer-lasting under a longer program because some of this area that was planted in cover crops might come out, not immediately, but in a fairly short period of time, if the program was not continued.

Mr. DATT. Our Board felt that maybe a 3-year period would be better than a 1-year period. You could start out with a 2-year period as the bill now provides and then add 1 year on each time. You could follow the 2-year period by another 2-year period. Five years may be too long than some of our folks would want. Certainly they would support it longer than simply one year.

Mr. POAGE. I wonder if the gentleman would yield?

Mr. COLEMAN. Certainly.

Mr. POAGE. This is deliberately put at 2 years with a 1-year extension rather than the longer period in order to reach a different problem from what you are discussing in conservation.

I think we all recognize that the existing Great Plains program, which is based on a 10-year contract, has some fine points which are advantageous from the standpoint of conservation.

But this bill attempts to deal with two different problems. One is conservation and one is the supply of maintaining a stable, yet non-excessive supply of wheat. It is an effort to give the flexibility that is needed to protect us from a shortage of wheat at any time.

We have set upon the 2-year period for the signup period because you simply cannot get people signed up and adjusting their farm practices the very first year.

By guaranteeing them the 2 years, then you allow them the 1-year extension if in the judgment of the Secretary there is no need for the production of that need.

Then we continue the diversion.

But should the world situation develop such—

Mr. COLEMAN. But there is a provision in the bill that the producer and the Secretary can mutually agree to rescind the contract or withdraw from it, isn't there?

Mr. POAGE. After a 1-year period of time. That is, after the 2-year period, there is a provision that they can do it 1-year at a time.

The reason for that is that we fear we might run into situations such as we did some 3 years ago when the world supply of wheat was rather short and it was a bull market for it. There was a demand for a substantial amount of wheat.

Obviously we would want to grow more wheat then. Obviously neither the producer nor the Secretary would want to be bound to produce more.

So we do provide that you can change this situation year by year after that first 2 years.

That is one of the big changes that this makes between the Great Plains program, which is a 10-year situation. You have no way there and no flexibility there to take care of changes in the world situation.

If we grow another 2 billion bushel crop this year, certainly no one will suggest that we need to be producing more wheat. On the contrary we are probably going to be paying for the wheat that we have grown at a great deal more than this is going to cost us. Nobody knows what this is going to cost us, but it cannot cost you but \$30 an acre and in that area, that is something which is really just about a dollar a bushel. That is about what it will run to.

If you grow that wheat and if the price of wheat should suddenly go up, you might be paying \$5 a bushel in order to take care of their wheat. This is a much cheaper way of balancing your supply and demand situation than it is to go to the expense of growing the wheat and then buying it off the market.

It was with that in mind that we tried to blend the two situations, the production controls and—that is, production limitation without any statutory control but with a reduction in production and at the same time take care of our land.

This will remove from production the very land that we know should be removed from production.

Mr. COLEMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, may I ask one more question?

Mr. JONES of Tennessee. Yes.

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. Freeman, how would you administer, when you talk about the Secretary having the discretion to permit grazing or harvesting of the crop? How does the Department go about determining that? Are you talking about individual landowners or individual States or counties or what?

Mr. FREEMAN. It would probably be on a State or area basis, depending on the situation. Forage is limited in the Great Plains now. I think the Secretary would say that land in such programs as this could qualify.

Mr. COLEMAN. For the whole State?

Mr. FREEMAN. It would depend on the determination by some drought group within the State as to what area of the State was hurt. It probably would not be a smaller political subdivision than a county.

Mr. COLEMAN. Thank you.

Mr. JONES of Tennessee. Mr. Unger, you might want to elaborate a bit on the extension idea. Your statement recommends an increase there.

Mr. UNGER. Mr. Poage has put it very well. The bill has these two objectives of production adjustment and conservation. Our association, of course, is concerned with the conservation objective primarily. We tend to favor the diversion of as many acres into permanent cover and permanent grass as possible. We see a longer term contract as being a desirable way of approaching that.

Obviously this committee would have to determine to what extent the production versus the conservation objectives would have to be made in a program that would be approved.

Mr. JONES of Tennessee. Thank you, Mr. Unger.

Gentlemen, I have a question or two I would like to ask.

We have had our first round and I think Mr. English would like to ask some more questions.

Mr. Freeman, I would like to ask you about your statement. I am a little bit surprised that you folks come up here with a statement like this in the first place. I am upset that this is the attitude that the Department of Agriculture now has.

Have you conferred with the Secretary of Agriculture, Mr. Bergland, and is this his feeling today?

Mr. FREEMAN. On the overall statement and our objections to the bill, because of the activities and the authority we now have in the conservation area and in the production adjustment area, yes, sir, I am confident that Secretary Bergland would go along with that.

Mr. JONES of Tennessee. Can you give the committee the reasons other than anything you have stated, like, is it the cost? Is it the fact that it does not cover a certain portion of the country? Just why? Why has this direction been taken?

Mr. FREEMAN. The two principal objections of the Department would be the fact that there is authority now to operate conservation programs that could do this thing.

Also, I would trust that in the upcoming legislation that there would be authority to address the subject of production adjustment, the other phase of this bill.

It could be a production adjustment on an annual basis, not committed to any 2-year basis or anything such as that.

Mr. JONES of Tennessee. By authority to go ahead and do this program, you are talking about the Soil Conservation Service. Is that right?

Mr. FREEMAN. Yes, to go ahead under the Great Plains conservation program.

Mr. JONES of Tennessee. In contrast to that, here is the NACD recommending today we take this direction. That is, that legislation be promulgated which would further the Great Plains program.

Mr. MONDLOCH. The Secretary has indicated that he definitely wants to take a look at the total soil and water conservation problems in the country. He has talked about a Blue Ribbon Commission, which he is intending to institute taking a look at what the total water and soil conservation situation is in the United States.

On the basis of that, he would evaluate the conservation programs that we have and the direction. It seems like with that intent on his part, this proposed legislation would be another piecemeal approach to the Nation's efforts in soil and water conservation.

That is one of the basic reasons why the conservation aspect is objected to in this particular bill and the fact that we do have existing programs that could address the erosion problem at this time.

Mr. JONES of Tennessee. Thank you, gentlemen.

Mr. DATT, let me commend you for the statement that you made. To me, it seems to me like it is an about-face for the Farm Bureau.

I am a member of the Farm Bureau and have been all my life, ever since I was a kid.

I am glad to see this position taken by the American Farm Bureau Federation. I congratulate you for it. I am even glad to see you recommend that we not even wait for the farm bill and that we give serious consideration to try to do something about legislation that pertains to this field.

I have one question. I would also like to ask Mr. Unger the same question.

You are for this piece of legislation which involves 10 States in the United States. I am wondering how you feel about a national program that would relate to the whole country just like this does to the 10 States. The reason I am asking you, gentlemen, is that you represent two national programs that operate in each State of the Union.

Mr. DATT. First of all, let me say, Mr. Jones, that this does not represent an about-face on behalf of the Farm Bureau.

Mr. JONES of Tennessee. I would expect you to say that. [Laughter.]

Mr. DATT. I want the record to be clear. We have historically supported the original soil bank idea. We have supported the use of the set-aside approach. So in terms of Farm Bureau philosophy, which relates to production adjustment, the record is clear that we have supported that approach. Some of that same approach is in this bill.

So I am simply saying that this is consistent with what we have supported over the years as it relates to making the production adjustments that we have had to make from time to time.

In answer to your second question, I cannot answer it because I do not know what our attitude would be in terms of the broader national program.

In discussing this with the board, they felt there is an immediate problem in this immediate area and that this dealt with it. They felt that action was necessary and that it was immediately necessary.

I can only deal with what I have in front of me today.

Mr. JONES of Tennessee. It might be well that we take a look, if we get this program off the ground, and if it is successful. I think there is no doubt about it that the majority of the professional agricultural people are today agreeing that we do have somewhat of a national problem in many areas of the country which would receive some assistance such as this.

Thank you, Mr. Datt.

Mr. Unger?

Mr. UNGER. Nationally we are concerned with the fact that of the 60 million acres of land that was released for production a couple of years ago from the old farm program, something like 44 million acres have been put back into production. There are some serious erosion hazards according to the studies we have seen. About half the land was put back into production so there are problems in other parts of the country.

As far as the Great Plains is concerned, we do feel this is an emergency situation. We so stated. We feel that the emergency action would be helpful in retiring some of this land back to cover.

We are concerned, at the same time, about the kinds of money that we are talking about here, that over the 20 years of the Great Plains conservation program, there has only been something like \$220 million spent for 20 years.

Here we are talking about a rather substantial amount of money in just 1, 2, or a short number of years.

So there is a proportion to be kept in mind there.

Our feeling is that the long-term problem of conservation in the Great Plains would be best met by the Great Plains conservation program.

Our feeling nationally is that the long-term needs for erosion protection and sediment control around the country as a whole will be best met by an expansion of that type of program, a long-term contracting program, whereby technical and financial assistance is provided over a period of years through a long-term contract.

Perhaps the growth of individual efforts in the States to enact sediment and erosion control legislation is another trend we see.

So although we would have to study a proposal for expansion nationally, our general feeling is that the approach ought to be through an extension of the Great Plains concept nationally.

Mr. JONES of Tennessee. Thank you, Mr. Unger.

I see my time has expired.

I think it would be a good idea if we keep these programs in mind. If we are able to move with this one, then we can look at them nationally.

Mr. Bedell?

Mr. BEDELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am sorry I was a little late, but I tried to read through the testimony here.

Mr. Freeman, in your answer to the chairman's question as to whether Secretary Bergland had been consulted in this, and indeed

represented his viewpoint, was your answer yes, that he has been consulted and it does represent his viewpoint?

Mr. FREEMAN. On this particular bill, yes.

Mr. BEDELL. I must tell you that I am quite disappointed. Does he have a proposal or something that he will bring forth other than what we have been doing with regard to these problems?

Mr. FREEMAN. As Mr. Mondloch mentioned, yes, the Secretary is constituting a group to look at the overall conservation efforts in the United States and will develop recommendations as a result of that group to deal with this problem and more.

Mr. BEDELL. I guess the disappointment I have is this. I have been on a number of committees. We have had people from the new administration come forth and I have been absolutely delighted in the change that I have perceived in attitude.

That attitude, as I perceive it, is that we indeed are going to do something about our problems and we are not going to say, as I felt was true in the past, "No, no, no," to everything that comes along.

I must tell you that I am disturbed because as I read your testimony, it sounds to me like the same old story that we were getting from the old administration. Many of us were most hopeful that it would be quite different under Secretary Bergland. Particularly as a member of his party, I am most disappointed to see testimony that sounds to me like the same thing I have been hearing for the last 2 years.

If you do not agree with it, I think you have a burden to come forth quickly with some proposals as to what you are going to do with regard to two problems that face us: One has to do with the conservation problems that we face and the other has to do with the surpluses that we face. It would seem to me that this bill is at least an effort to attack both of those problems. It did not have to deal with my particular area, so it does not have to deal with me.

But I think all of us had better worry about this problem. I hope that if you do disagree with this, you will quickly come forward with some amendments or recommendations or how you think we should attack these two problems.

Mr. FREEMAN. I do not mean for the "no" on this bill to mean that Secretary Bergland is not interested in both aspects of this, that is, of production adjustment and the conservation. Not favoring this proposal merely says that this proposal at this time in this way is not what he wants. The subject will be addressed. I am sure the Secretary is very concerned with both aspects. I think recommendations will be forthcoming.

Mr. BEDELL. I think the burden is not upon you. A proposal has come forth. It may be good or bad. I do not know. But at least we brought forth a proposal. I think it is up to your Department that if you do not agree with this, to come forward with a better one, because surely you must agree that we do have a problem.

Mr. MONDLOCH. Yes.

Let me add one other thing. There is provision for a long-term agreements under the current Agriculture conservation program which would, in effect, provide for a Great Plains type program on a nationwide basis. The authority was included in the 1972 Rural

Development Act and was restated in 1973 in title X of the Agriculture Act.

So we do have provisions for long-term agreements under ACP as well as long-term agreements provided for under the Great Plains conservation program. So we feel we have the legislative authority to begin to address the conservation problem already.

Mr. BEDELL. You feel you are doing it adequately?

Mr. MONDLOCH. As you know, the previous administrations, of course, have come with the "no, no, no." This is the first time that an administration has requested funding for ACP in a number of years.

It would seem that with that type of an attitude on the part of Secretary Bergland and the administration, and the opportunity to proceed from here, that I think we can begin to address the problem working jointly with the people here on the Hill on that.

Mr. BEDELL. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. JONES of Tennessee. Thank you, Mr. Bedell.

Mr. Baldus?

Mr. BALDUS. I have no questions.

Mr. JONES of Tennessee. Mr. English?

Mr. ENGLISH. Let me follow up on Mr. Bedell's question with regard to the statement that the past administrations have been somewhat lax in their requests for funding.

Is it not also true, though, that the Congress has underfunded those programs, and it is not the plain simple truth that we are still having the problem and that the problem still exists regardless of whether or not the problem was funded or not?

Mr. MONDLOCH. Yes; but because of the on-and-off situation as far as knowing whether or not there would be funding has made it very difficult to develop a program that might be effective and to instill in county ASC committees who make the approvals at the county level, the attitude necessary to really do a good job.

It has been very difficult.

Mr. ENGLISH. Let me interrupt you. My time is short.

Have you had any funds left over due to the fact that you have not had enough requests? I believe we had testimony here that there have been a tremendous number of requests that have not been funded.

So you have had the adequate number of requests. You have had all the money used and you have had the fullest efforts made on behalf of those funds regardless of whether you could count on them in the coming years or not.

Is that not true?

Mr. MONDLOCH. Yes; the funds have been used, but the criticism that we received in a GAO report recently points that out. The actual priority setting and how the funds have been used have been questioned. Part of that is because of the ability to even try to get the county committees to adequately reflect on what the problems are and how best they should use their cost sharing funds.

Mr. ENGLISH. Mr. Freeman, you state that drought conditions would frequently prevail in this designated area and you are talking there about one that does not require any emergency type measure.

But is it not true that we are in the midst of a drought and a wind erosion problem now that is the worse since the early 1950's?

Mr. FREEMAN. It probably is at the present time.

Mr. ENGLISH. You are talking about a 20-year cycle. Is that not true?

Mr. FREEMAN. Yes.

Mr. ENGLISH. So these are not all that frequent unless you consider every 20 years frequent?

Mr. FREEMAN. We kill off a wheat crop in Oklahoma every year, it seems like. That is after the rumors get back to Washington.

Mr. ENGLISH. I am using USDA statistics when I state that this happens once very 20 years. This is the worst that has occurred since 1950, so I am using your own figures there.

Mr. FREEMAN. It depends on—

Mr. ENGLISH. They say—the USDA figures say this is the worst difficulty that we have had.

Mr. FREEMAN. It is inaccurate; perhaps I should have referred to it as frequently talked about drought.

Mr. ENGLISH. But the problem itself is not that frequent. Would you agree?

Mr. FREEMAN. It is touch and go. There are droughts of varying degrees often not as serious drought as we face presently.

Mr. ENGLISH. I have a map here [indicating] that points it out. It is produced by USDA that shows it since the 1930's and you are talking about a 20-year cycle, is what you had.

You also say that the 2-year limit would be a handicap due to the fact that you have erratic authorization. Would it not also be true that simply because of the fact that this is a 2-year bill and basically what you are talking about is dealing with an emergency type situation that you would not be all that handicapped by an erratic type authorization?

Mr. FREEMAN. Maybe I misread the bill. I thought the bill authorized appropriations for 4 years. That is, up through fiscal year 1981 or 1982.

Mr. ENGLISH. We are talking about contracts for 2 years.

Mr. FREEMAN. Initial contracts would be for 2 years. That is right.

Mr. ENGLISH. I believe you also state that the measure would not effectively accomplish either the two goals—erosion control or production adjustment.

What makes you think that it would not accomplish those two goals?

Mr. FREEMAN. I think the farmer would look at what he was faced with and he would be driven into it more by his prospects of favorable weather or crop conditions or favorable price.

I think the farmer's decision whether to participate or not would be more a decision of what he thought the weather would be like and the price rather than the conservation issue.

As for production adjustment, I would hate to tie up too much land in long-term contracts because we have seen in recent years the extreme variation in world demand for wheat. I would think production adjustment could better be accomplished on an annual basis.

Mr. ENGLISH. Do you believe that 2 years is a long term? Is that what you are stating?

Mr. FREEMAN. It is when you tie up land in a production adjustment program where you try to match supply and demand and trying to equate them on a year-to-year basis.

Mr. ENGLISH. What do you think a set-aside program is going to cost, let us say, in a couple of years? You say you want to wait a year or two and see how this production broke out. What do you think that program is going to cost if we have an average crop for the next 2 years, given the amount of surplus that we now have on hand?

Mr. FREEMAN. It would be a very costly situation.

Mr. ENGLISH. Will it not be somewhat in the neighborhood of \$2 to \$3 billion?

Mr. FREEMAN. It could be on wheat alone in the neighborhood of \$2 billion, depending on the magnitude of the problem and how the crops turn out in the meantime.

Mr. ENGLISH. Is it not also true that basically what we would be doing here would be to slow down production and at the same time conserve land at a maximum cost of \$450 million? Would this not be a reasonable investment given the fact that all we need would be an average crop for the next 2 years before we find ourselves in difficulty with the Federal Government spending so much money?

Mr. FREEMAN. I do not believe that with this program in place it would necessarily come anywhere near alleviating the problem that would cause us to implement at the \$2 billion program.

The type of land that would come into this program—at least I would hope—would not be the most productive land that we had.

Therefore, to try to attain all of the production adjustment that would be necessary under very favorable conditions is not going to be done by this program.

Mr. ENGLISH. But it is going to make progress toward reducing the amount of production each year. Is that not correct?

Mr. FREEMAN. Perhaps.

Mr. ENGLISH. Can it have any other result if you take 5 million acres out of production?

Mr. FREEMAN. The amount of adjustment that would obtain with that acreage would be questionable and depend very much on the year.

Mr. ENGLISH. The program is designed to accomplish two objectives. To reduce production and to save the land. As Chairman Poage has pointed out, this adequately reflects the fact that what we are trying to do is keep this wind from blowing. That is the No. 1 objective. Any side benefits that we can get by reducing production is an added plus.

That is one of the positive aspects of it.

I would also like to state, since my time has run out, like Mr. Bedell, I am disappointed at the Department's reaction to this measure. I am particularly disappointed at what appears to me to be a lack of preparation on the part of the Department before coming up here.

You cannot answer our questions. You do not know how much erosion has taken place in the last 3 years. You do not know how much money is going to be needed to solve the problem under the present program. You do not know what options the Secretary of Agriculture

is considering. And you do not know how much erosion has taken place outside the Great Plains area.

These seem to me to be basic and fundamental questions that must be answered if you are really and truly going to move in and try to solve either one of the two aims that this bill tries to reach.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. JONES of Tennessee. Thank you, Mr. English.

Mr. Glickman, any questions?

Mr. GLICKMAN. I have no questions, but I would be glad to yield my time to anybody else who would like to ask questions.

Mr. JONES of Tennessee. Mr. Bedell?

Mr. BEDELL. I would like to tell you people that you have made my stay in the Congress worthwhile again. Everybody that has been coming before the Congress I have not had any questions that I could ask because it seemed to me that they were positive and moving forward and doing what we ought to be doing.

Now I have the same answer that we have had for the past 2 years from the Department. I guess I am glad I am here so that somebody can, at least, try to ask you folks why it is that you are not willing.

If you do not agree with what we are doing, why don't you come forward with proposals?

I hope I have conveyed that. I am shocked.

Mr. JONES of Tennessee. Thank you, Mr. Bedell.

Mr. Poage?

Mr. POAGE. I do not want to take too much time of the committee, but I want to say this.

I want to be sure that the record reflects the fact that I do not live in the Great Plains area.

Mr. GLICKMAN. Mr. Poage, if you would yield, I do live in the Great Plains area, and that is why I have yielded to you.

[Laughter.]

Mr. POAGE. I have counties which are in the Great Plains area, and we think it is a great program, but I just wanted it clear that I personally do not live in the Great Plains area.

I would not personally be affected by this legislation were it to pass.

I have a very little audience now, but it is an entirely different audience than we had when we started the proceedings so I would point this out.

The legislation is intended to do two things. It does not do either one of them to perfection. But we think it comes about as close to serving both purposes as we can get.

I want it on the record also that I think the existing Great Plains program is a more nearly perfect conservation program than what we are proposing here. But it would cost us more. It is a 10-year program. We want in this—one of the purposes of this bill is to enable us to deal with consumer needs. To do that you have to have enough flexibility to move in and out of production. You have to be able to move in as well as move out.

The Great Plains program, as it exists today, ties the land up for 10 years. Should there be such a thing as a world shortage of wheat, we would want to be able to move into production.

This bill gives us that opportunity readily. That is the reason that it is limited to a 2-year time period. You can move back into production if you need it.

There is a compromise between the conservation aspects of this bill and the crop production aspect. We do compromise, but we get a compromise that we believe is flexible enough to serve both purposes and at a minimum cost.

I would say right there I would be delighted if we could apply this all over the United States. But your costs would go to astronomical figures.

I think, really, that the fear of the Department is, Mr. Freeman, that the cost would be so great, rather than what the bill would do. I do not believe the Department has any serious objection to what this bill would achieve, but, like the preceeding administration, you do not want to commit the money.

Sure, we wrote a rural development bill about 4 or 5 years ago. We put a whole lot of things in it, which have not developed because the executive branch did not want them to develop or did not want to pay the cost. I should not say that they did not want them to develop, but they did not want to pay for it. We still have that.

Obviously, if this administration wants to put up the money, they can do it.

But this program which we are suggesting this morning will give you many of those benefits with a minimum cost. If you extended this all over the United States and allow people to take any kind of land out of production, you would not have much effect on the crop.

If you take land out of peanuts in Georgia, you are not going to vitally affect how much wheat we are going to produce. But anything you take in or out on the Great Plains is going to affect the wheat crop of the United States. That is why we confined it to the area where the problem is.

The problem is in the Great Plains. The problem is with wheat. We produced 2 years in succession more than 2 billion bushels of wheat. We produced 200 million bushels more than we have ever sold for all purposes in a year.

You cannot continue to produce 200 million bushels more of wheat than you can sell and maintain any degree of stability in your wheat market. I think we all know that.

There is no purpose in spending money producing it and then storing it somewhere. You can achieve the same results much cheaper by not producing it.

If at the same time that you do not produce it, you can achieve protection of some of the land resources that we know we are going to need some years in the future, then it seems to me that makes a great deal of sense.

We could take this land out now or we can take it out later on. We are going to do one or the other. We are either going to protect this blowing land now, or we are not going to have it 50 years from now when we doubtless are going to need it.

Mr. BEDELL. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. POAGE. Yes.

Mr. BEDELL. Would it not make more sense if we are going to give money back to the people of America, rather than just send a \$50 per person check to pay them to conserve the land and to do some of the things that you are talking about?

Mr. POAGE. I certainly agree with you.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate very much the time.

Mr. JONES of Tennessee. Are there any other questions from any member of the subcommittee?

Mr. COLEMAN. One brief question.

Mr. Wilson, I note that you say that several producers of New Mexico and other States joined with you. The absence of other State representatives in your testimony is not an indication of a negative view; is it?

Mr. WILSON. No, sir. It is not an indication of a negative view, but these are the States that are most influenced.

Mr. COLEMAN. How about Kansas?

Mr. WILSON. There is no reason that Kansas was not included here. The problem was a lack of time to get this together.

Mr. COLEMAN. There is no opposition that you know of in Kansas?

Mr. WILSON. As far as I know there is no opposition.

Mr. COLEMAN. Thank you very much.

Mr. JONES of Tennessee. Thank you, Mr. Coleman.

Gentleman, do any of you have any other statements that you would like to make before we adjourn the committee?

If not, may I take this opportunity to thank each of you for being here. Your statements have been most helpful. Any other information that you would like to file will be placed in the committee file.

We appreciate very much the constructive statements that have been made. Whether we agree with you totally or not, we at the same time do appreciate your being here.

We have hearings tomorrow and also on Wednesday. Any of you are invited to attend.

If there is no further business, the subcommittee will stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:55 a.m., the subcommittee adjourned.]

[The letters submitted by the National Farmers Union, American National Cattlemen's Association, and National Wildlife Federation follow:]

AMERICAN NATIONAL CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION,
Washington, D.C., March 15, 1977.

Hon. ED JONES,
Chairman, Subcommittee on Conservation and Credit,
House Agriculture Committee, Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The American National Cattlemen's Association is in basic support of H.R. 2729.

We feel that much land currently in crop production should be planted to a soil conserving cover crop. The amount of blowing dust in the high plains in 1977, compounded by the drought, certainly is an indication that much land, primarily in wheat, should not be annually cropped.

The one part of the bill which is most important to the beef cattle industry is that grazing or harvesting for hay shall not be permitted except in the most severe natural disaster emergencies. If this were not a provision of the bill, it would create an unfair competitive advantage to those who have planted soil conserving crops while receiving a government payment, which then in essence would be a subsidy to enter into the beef cattle business. It is imperative that the "no grazing or hay" provision remain in the legislation if the American National Cattlemen's Association is not to oppose the bill.

We respectfully request that this letter be made a part of the hearing record on H.R. 2729.

Cordially,

C. W. McMILLAN,
Executive Vice President.

NATIONAL FARMERS UNION,
Washington, D.C., March 15, 1977.

Hon. Ed JONES,
Chairman, Subcommittee on Conservation and Credit,
House Agriculture Committee, Washington, D.C.

DEAR CHAIRMAN JONES: After having the Board of Directors of National Farmers Union review the provisions in the "Critical Lands Resource Conservation Act" introduced by Chairman Poage and comparing it to the National Farmers Union's Policy Statement, I would like to add Farmers Union's support for this legislation.

As you know, Farmers Union has long supported efforts to conserve and rehabilitate our natural resources. The delegates to the 75th Anniversary convention of the National Farmers Union held in San Antonio, Texas, last week reaffirmed our commitment to such conservation programs. In part the delegates said:

"The Great Plains Conservation Program, Agricultural Conservation Program (ACP), Water Bank, and other soil and water programs have proven their value in achieving land use adjustment and the conservation of land and water. Such environmental programs should be strengthened and expanded and include ACP cost-sharing for both replanted and new shelterbelts and noxious weed control."

Mr. Chairman, I request that this letter of support for the "Critical Lands Resource Conservation Act" be included as part of the official hearing record of your Committee.

Sincerely,

REUBEN L. JOHNSON,
Director of Legislative Services.

NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION,
Washington, D.C., March 21, 1977.

Hon. Ed JONES,
Chairman, Subcommittee on Conservation and Credit,
House Agriculture Committee, Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for the invitation to testify on H.R. 2729, the "Critical Lands Resource Conservation Act" on March 14, 1977. We are using this means of conveying our views in lieu of personal testimony. Hence, it would be appreciated if the contents of this letter were included in the official hearing record.

The National Wildlife Federation shares the concern of those who introduced H.R. 2729 that millions of acres of farmlands, especially in the Great Plains, are likely to suffer severe wind erosion in the near future unless better soil-conserving practices are followed. That fact was highlighted recently in the GAO report entitled: "To Protect Tomorrow's Food Supply. Soil Conservation Needs Priority Attention." The principal thrust of the report is that soil conservation can be greatly improved if national programs such as the Agricultural Conservation Program (ACP) are structured to conform to the original spirit and intent of their authorizing legislation. For example, ACP should be used to promote long-term, enduring conservation practices and not those which are production oriented. (An NWF resolution on this subject is enclosed for your information and use). The GAO report identifies similar deficiencies in the Soil Conservation Services' Great Plains Conservation Program and its Conservation Operations Program.

It seems to the Federation, therefore, that H.R. 2729 is not needed. The program envisioned in the bill to pay farmers to plant cover crops to prevent wind erosion in ten Great Plains States would duplicate nationwide efforts like ACP being carried out under existing laws. It would be much more cost-effective to redirect the thrust of ACP and other similar programs to achieve the objectives of H.R. 2729. As we see it, H.R. 2729 has another serious flaw. It requires only a two-year commitment from a participating farmer that the land under contract will not be grazed or otherwise harvested (unless the President declares the area a natural disaster). For this kind of program to be successful, the land must be set aside for a number of years, not just one or two.

In other words, a program aimed at conserving soils must require long term agreements from landowners if it is to succeed. When the current "Farm Act",

P.L. 93-86, was passed in 1973 it contained—in addition to provisions to continue ACP—the authority (in section 1005 of title X) to establish such multi-year set-aside contracts. That authority, never used by the Administration, was intended “to provide soil protection, water quality enhancement, wildlife production, and natural beauty”. In our judgment, it would be much wiser to simply extend that authority, perhaps with a few minor strengthening amendments, then to pass duplicative legislation such as H.R. 2729.

As you know, Congressman Grassley (Iowa) has introduced a bill, H.R. 1489, which proposed a different approach for resolving the serious soil erosion problem. His bill would provide tax credits, rather than direct payments, to landowners who leave unplowed areas of vegetative cover. As Rep. Grassley points out, “such strips would not only prevent wind and soil erosion, but would also provide shelter for dwindling supplies of wildfowl and game”. The Federation believes the approach contained in H.R. 1489 has considerable merit. Without any additional outlays from the Federal Treasury, H.R. 1489, if enacted, could substantially reduce soil losses while enhancing other environmental values. Therefore, we urge this committee to give the bill serious consideration, either separately or as an amendment to title X of the new Farm Act.

Thank you for inviting us to present our views in this important matter.

Sincerely yours,

THOMAS L. KIMBALL,
Executive Vice President.

Enclosure.

RESOLUTION NO. 11.—AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Whereas, The Agricultural Conservation Program (ACP), a cost-sharing program administered by the Secretary of Agriculture, has evolved over the years since its establishment in the mid-1930's into a program aimed principally at increasing agricultural production by providing federal matching funds for many short-term production-oriented practices; and

Whereas, The program was designed to get conservation practices applied on farmlands; and

Whereas, title I of Public Law 93-86 (the Agriculture and Consumer Protection Act of 1973) was intended to reorient the ACP into a program designed to obtain needed conservation on farmlands beyond that which the farmer would be willing to undertake unassisted but which is in the public's greater interest, such as wildlife conservation, tree planting, shelterbelt construction, and other long-term, enduring soil, water, and woodland conservation practices; and

Whereas, title X of Public Law 93-86 provided for the establishment of national, state, and county ASC committees and program administrators to select environmentally-sound ACP practices; and further provided authority for the purchase to perpetual easements to promote sound use and management of flood plains, shore lands, and aquatic areas; and

Whereas, The ACP has, in spite of Public Law 93-86 continued to be operated as a program principally designed to increase farm income by subsidizing short-term production-oriented farming practices rather than long-term conservation practices; and

Whereas, Advisory boards have not been established in many States, as required by section 1007(a), title X, Public Law 93-86; and

Whereas, The national advisory board, though established, has never met to carry out its responsibilities under section 1007(b), title X, Public Law 93-86; and

Whereas, The administration has never sought funds to purchase perpetual easements to promote sound use and management of flood plains, shore lands, and aquatic areas; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the National Wildlife Federation, in annual meeting assembled March 19-21, 1976, in Louisville, Ky., hereby recommends that the ACP be reoriented into a program designed to encourage long-term enduring conservation practices which are in the interest of the greater public, as intended by title X, Public Law 93-86; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of Agriculture appoint and convene a complete set of state advisory boards as provided for in Public Law 93-86; and call an annual meeting of the national advisory board provided for in Public Law 93-86 to review the proposed ACP before regulations and/or guidelines are promulgated and distributed to state and county ASC committees.