

March 25, 2020

CONSERVATION OFFICIALS ASK FOR INCREASED FUNDING DURING NACD VIRTUAL ADVOCACY DAY

WASHINGTON – Today, conservation district officials and employees assembled online to advocate for locally-led conservation in coordination with the National Association of Conservation Districts’ (NACD) Virtual Advocacy Day.

The Virtual Advocacy Day takes the place of NACD’s annual Spring Fly-In, allowing local leaders to communicate with their Members of Congress on region-specific issues and how they can help with the locally-led conservation mission.

“Our conservation districts have a legacy of success, helping to deliver conservation solutions across a variety of landscapes,” **NACD President Tim Palmer said.** “It’s crucial that our knowledgeable, hardworking conservation district officials are heard on Capitol Hill, and that our federal representatives understand how locally-led, voluntary conservation is key to program success.”

NACD members met with their Congressional representatives over the phone, email and conference calls to emphasize the importance of adequate federal funding for conservation programs through annual appropriations. NACD requests \$840 million be appropriated in the fiscal year 2021 budget for Conservation Operations, which helps provide funding for Conservation Technical Assistance for landowners as well as Natural Resources Conservation Service staffing in local field offices. NACD also requests additional funding for Watershed Operations, Watershed Rehabilitation, 319 Nonpoint Source Grants and the Forest Stewardship programs.

Among other policy issues, NACD Advocacy Day participants discussed climate change and impacts occurring due to weather extremes. Voluntary, incentive-based conservation has a long history of successfully addressing natural resources concerns on private working lands. Improving soil health has the effect of making soil more resilient, while also mitigating climate impacts by sequestering carbon. NACD members advocated for increases to technical and financial assistance programs to promote greater adoption of soil health practices. Conservation districts help set local priorities to ensure that conservation practices are tailored to local conditions.

“America’s landowners and growers are the backbone of this nation, and conservation districts work side-by-side with them on their land every day to give them the support they need,” **Palmer said.** “We all benefit when Congress invests in greater locally-led conservation delivery.”

More information about the event, including issue papers on the range of advocacy issues NACD addressed, can be found on [NACD’s website](#).

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About the National Association of Conservation Districts:

The National Association of Conservation Districts is the nonprofit organization that represents the nation's 3,000 conservation districts, their state and territory associations and the 17,000 men and women who serve on their governing boards. For more than 70 years, local conservation districts have worked with cooperating landowners and managers of private working lands to help them plan and apply effective conservation practices. For more information about NACD, visit: www.nacdnet.org.