

June 9, 2025

Dear Member of Congress,

The undersigned organizations respectfully request that you **cosponsor the Forest Conservation Easement Program (FCEP) Act of 2025 (H.R. 3476)**, which was introduced by U.S. Representative Trent Kelly (R-MS-1) and U.S. Representative Maggie Goodlander (D-NH-2) with the following original cosponsors: U.S. Representatives Madeleine Dean (D-PA-4), Michael Guest (R-MS-3), Barry Moore (R-AL-1), Bennie Thompson (D-MS-2), and Paul Tonko (D-NY-20). We also urge you to support the inclusion of the FCEP Act in the conservation title of the Farm Bill with mandatory funding. The purpose of FCEP is to keep forests as forests through the use of conservation easements that purchase development rights from willing private and tribal landowners to prevent conversion to non-forest uses. Private forests in a conservation easement can remain privately owned and working.

FCEP is designed to:

- Significantly improve and enhance the ability of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to effectively conserve working forests at scale through conservation easements;
- Prioritize keeping forests as forests continuing to provide a multitude of environmental, economic, and societal benefits;
- Help landowners restore, enhance, and protect habitat for at-risk species while increasing carbon sequestration; and
- Provide landowners with two proven options for placing voluntary conservation easements on their land, with one held by the federal government and one held by eligible entities like land trusts.

It accomplishes this via two program components: **Forest Land Easements** (modeled after Agricultural Land Easements under NRCS's Agricultural Conservation Easement Program) and **Forest Reserve Easements** (as the successor to and modeled after NRCS's Healthy Forests Reserve Program).

Under **Forest Land Easements (FLE)**, eligible entities such as land trusts, state and local agencies, and tribes, purchase working forest conservation easements from willing private and tribal landowners. Landowners may continue to manage their land as a working forest. NRCS will provide up to 50 percent of the fair market value for the purchase of the easement, with the remaining share coming from any combination of cash resources from the entity, landowner donation/bargain sale, and costs associated with the acquisition of the easement. In the case of forests of special environmental significance or land owned by socially disadvantaged landowners, NRCS will provide up to 75 percent of the fair market value.

Under **Forest Reserve Easements (FRE)**, NRCS helps landowners restore, enhance, and protect forest resources by purchasing easements on private and tribal lands, while allowing landowners to continue working forest production and related uses. Enrolled land will be subject to a forest reserve easement plan that describes the practices and measures necessary to restore, maintain, and enhance habitat for at-risk species. Landowners will also have the option to enter into safe harbor agreements or similar assurances to avoid future regulatory restrictions on the use of that land under the Endangered Species Act. NRCS will purchase permanent easements from the landowner for fair market value of the easement and will provide financial assistance up to 100 percent of the eligible costs of practices and measures identified in the forest reserve easement plan. Financial assistance for 30-year easements and contracts will be 75 percent of that which would be paid for a permanent easement.

FCEP will fill gaps in federal forest easement funding to ensure we can preserve working forestlands at scale and put working forestland on par with other working lands. To cosponsor the FCEP Act of 2025

(H.R. 3476), please contact Abbey Herfurth ([abbey.herfurth@mail.house.gov](mailto:abbey.herfurth@mail.house.gov)) in Representative Kelly's office or Ana Dulskiy ([Ana.Dulskiy@mail.house.gov](mailto:Ana.Dulskiy@mail.house.gov)) in Representative Goodlander's office. For more information about FCEP, visit [foresteasement.org](http://foresteasement.org).

Signed,

Adirondack Land Trust, NY	Caddo Lake Institute, TX/LA	Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina, NC
Agricultural Stewardship Association, NY	Capital Region Land Conservancy, VA	Forest Investment Associates, National
Alabama Forest Land Trust, AL	Carbon180, National	Forest Landowners Association, National
Alachua Conservation Trust, FL	Catawba Lands Conservancy, NC	Forest Society of Maine, ME
Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley, VA	Catch-A-Dream Foundation, North America	Forest Stewards Guild, National
American Bird Conservancy, National	Catoctin Land Trust, MD	Forever Maryland, MD
American Chestnut Land Trust, MD	Center for Large Landscape Conservation, MT	Forterra NW, WA
American Forest Foundation, National	Central Virginia Land Conservancy, VA	Franklin Farm LLC, MD
American Forest Management, National	Chesapeake Conservancy, Mid-Atlantic	French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust, PA
American Forests, National	Clifftop NFP, IL	Friends of the Mississippi River, MN
American Woodcock Society, National	Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts, OR	Friends of Wilson Pond Area, Inc, ME
Appalachian Mountain Club, Eastern U.S.	Coastal Land Trust, AL	Galveston Bay Foundation, TX
Appalachian Trail Conservancy, National	Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust, ME	Gathering Waters: Wisconsin's Alliance of Land Trusts, WI
Archery Trade Association, National	Colorado Open Lands, CO	Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, MI
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, National	Columbia Land Trust, OR/WA	Green Diamond Resource Company, National
Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, National	Congaree Land Trust, SC	Greenbelt Land Trust, OR
Baker Valley Tree Farm LLC, NY	Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, National	Groundswell Conservancy, WI
Baltimore Green Space, MD	Conservation Florida, FL	HeadWaters Land Conservancy, MI
Bayou Land Conservancy, TX	Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast, FL	Heart of the Lakes, MI
Bernheim Forest and Arboretum, KY	Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports, National	Houston Safari Club, TX
Bitter Root Land Trust, MT	Delta Waterfowl, National	Hudson Highlands Land Trust, Inc., NY
Black Landowners Agricultural and Conservation Land Trust, Southeast	Ducks Unlimited, National	Ice Age Trail Alliance, Inc., WI
Bluegrass Land Conservancy, KY	Dutchess Land Conservancy, Inc., NY	Idaho Forest Owners Association, Inc., ID
Blue Ridge Land Conservancy, VA	Eagle Valley Land Trust, CO	Indiana Forestry & Woodland Owners Association, IN
Boone and Crockett Club, National	Environmental Real Estate Solutions, NY	Izaak Walton League of America, National
Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust, ME	Estes Valley Land Trust, CO	Jamestown, Eastern U.S.
	Florida Conservation Group, FL	Jefferson Land Trust, WA
	Florida Forestry Association, FL	

Kaniksu Land Trust, ID/MT	National Association of State Foresters, National	Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust, ME
Kennebec Land Trust, ME	National Bobwhite & Grassland Initiative Foundation, National	Rensselaer Plateau Alliance, NY
Kennebunkport Conservation Trust, ME	National Deer Association, National	Resource Management Service, LLC, National
Kentucky Natural Lands Trust, KY	National Wild Turkey Federation, National	Rhode Island Land Trust Council, RI
Kentucky Woodland Owners Association, KY	National Woodland Owners Association, National	Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, West
KKAC Organization, AR	Native Prairies Association of Texas, TX	Ruffed Grouse Society, National
L&C Carbon, OR	Natural Land Institute, IL	Safari Club International Foundation, National
Land Clinic, CA	Natural Lands, PA/NJ	Salisbury Association Land Trust, CT
Land Trust Alliance, National	New Jersey Conservation Foundation, NJ	Santa Fe Conservation Trust, NM
Leavitt Lake Ranches, CA	New River Land Trust, VA	Scenic Hudson, NY
Leelanau Conservancy, MI	Northeast Carbon Alliance, Northeast	Scenic Rivers Land Trust, MD
Legacy Land Conservancy, MI	Northern Neck Land Conservancy, VA	Sebasticook Regional Land Trust, ME
Loon Echo Land Trust, ME	Northern Prairies Land Trust, SD	Shasta Land Trust, CA
Lowcountry Land Trust, SC	Northern Virginia Conservation Trust, VA	Shenandoah Valley, Conservancy, VA
Lyme Timber Company, National	Northwest Arkansas Land Trust, AR	Sierra Cascade Land Trust Council, CA
Mahoosuc Land Trust, Inc., ME	Open Space Institute, Eastern U.S.	Society for the Protection of NH Forests, NH
Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust, ME	Openlands, IL	Society of American Foresters, National
Maine Coast Heritage Trust, ME	Orion: The Hunters Institute, MT	Somerset Woods Trustees, ME
Manada Conservancy, PA	Outdoor Alliance, National	Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy, TN/NC
Manulife Investment Management	Palmer Land Conservancy, CO	Southern Virginia Land Conservancy, VA
Timberland and Agriculture, National	Palouse Land Trust, ID	Sportsmen's Alliance Foundation, National
Massachusetts Forest Alliance, MA	Partners in Forestry Cooperative, MI/WI	Summit Land Conservancy, UT
Michigan Society of American Foresters, MI	Pheasants Forever, National	Sustainable Forestry Initiative, National
Minnesota Forest Industries, MN	Pines and Prairies Land Trust, TX	Tall Timbers, FL
Minnesota Forest Resources Council, MN	Pingree Associates, ME	TennGreen Land Conservancy, TN
Minnesota Society of American Foresters, MN	Pope & Young Club, National	Texas Conservation Alliance, TX
Minority Outdoor Alliance, GA	PotlatchDeltic, National	Texas Land Trust Council, TX
Mississippi Land Trust, MS/AR	Potomac Conservancy, MD/VA/WV/DC	The Carbon Fund, National
Mississippi River Trust, AR/MS/LA	Prairie Hills Resource Conservation and Development, IL	The Climate Trust, National
Mohonk Preserve, NY	Prairie State Conservation Coalition, IL	The Conservation Fund, National
Montana Association of Land Trusts, MT	Putnam Land Conservancy, FL	The Frontera Land Alliance, TX/NM
Mother Lode Land Trust, CA	Quail Forever, National	
Mule Deer Foundation, National		
National Alliance of Forest Owners, National		
National Association of Forest Service Retirees, National		

The Molpus Woodlands Group,  
LLC, National  
The Nature Conservancy, National  
The Vital Ground Foundation, MT  
The Watershed Association, TX  
The Westervelt Company, National  
The Wildlife Society, National  
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation  
Partnership, National  
Top Notch Farms, LLC, NY  
Trust for Public Land, National  
Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust,  
NY

Unique Places to Save, National  
Upper Saco Valley Land Trust, NH  
Valley Conservation Council, VA  
Vinalhaven Land Trust Inc., ME  
Wagner Forest Management, Ltd.,  
NH/ME  
Washington Association of Land  
Trusts, WA  
WeConservePA, PA  
Western Foothills Land Trust, ME  
Western New York Land  
Conservancy, NY

Western Pennsylvania  
Conservancy, PA  
White Oak Initiative, Eastern U.S.  
Whitetails Unlimited, National  
Wolf River Conservancy, TN  
Wild Sheep Foundation, National  
Wildlife Forever, National  
Wildlife Management Institute,  
National  
Wildlife Mississippi, MS  
Winston County Self Help  
Cooperative, MS