



SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
301-501-5886

February 20, 2025

The Honorable Senator Angela Alsobrooks  
The Honorable Senator Chris van Hollen  
The Honorable Representative April McClain Delaney

Dear Senator Alsobrooks, Senator van Hollen and Representative Delaney,

As chairman of the Board and on behalf of the five members of the Board of Supervisors of the Garrett County Soil Conservation District, we are requesting your support of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) funding and programs critical to agricultural producers.

The Administration has recently taken actions to pause and review critical conservation funding and programs. Some of these actions threaten direct conservation assistance to farmers as well as negatively impacting the administration of our nation's voluntary, locally led conservation delivery system.

The partnership between USDA, state, and local governments, led by conservation districts, remains the backbone of conservation delivery in the United States. NRCS works closely with conservation districts to administer voluntary, locally led conservation programs that provide cost-share and technical assistance to help American producers and land stewards across the country plan and adopt proven conservation practices.

In Maryland and Garrett County, these conservation practices include planting cover crops, adopting nutrient management systems, and installing fences to address critical resource concerns such as soil health, water quality, and sediment and erosion control.

Located at the Eastern Continental Divide, Garrett County's topography, climate and geology differs greatly from that of Maryland with our waters flowing to two of our nation's watersheds, both the Mississippi and the Chesapeake Bay drainage basins.

In 2024, the Garrett County Soil Conservation District, developed 66 soil and water conservation plans, installed 473 best management plans (BMP'S), reviewed 242 existing plans, approved 192 sediment and erosion control plans, and developed 33 forest harvest plans covering 2,344 acres with 1115 acres of cover crops planted. The Garrett District also maintains three flood control dams in the county. These practices enhance productivity and profitability of working lands and farms, increase resilience, and improve environmental outcomes throughout the county.

We urge you to call on the Administration, incoming USDA leadership, and Congressional agriculture committees to support the urgent restoration of NRCS funding and programs that

make producers' operations more efficient and resilient, improve water quality, bolster soil health, and improve the environment in our local communities.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

James R. ("Smokey") Stanton, Chairman,  
Garrett Soil Conservation District Board of Supervisors