



POLICY ORGANIZING:
Sustaining Farm Bill Wins and Preparing for
Future Federal Advocacy Opportunities

Sophia Kruszewski, National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition

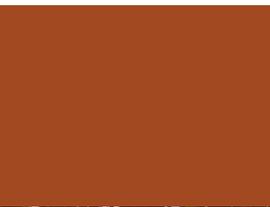
- Welcome and introductions
- Overview of the federal policy landscape
- What to do when we're in between farm bills?
- State-by-state breakout discussions
- Discussion and Q&A

- Our mission:
 - to support, build, develop, and engage the grassroots of sustainable agriculture for the health and vitality of the sustainable agriculture movement; and
 - to research, develop, and advocate federal policies relating to farm, food, and environmental issues, appropriations, and implementation to support and advance sustainable agriculture.

- An alliance of **grassroots organizations** that advocates for federal policy reform to advance the sustainability of agriculture, food systems, natural resources, and rural communities.



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Federal Policy Landscape



- What is the Farm Bill?
- How a bill becomes a law:
 - Authorization to implementation
- Important committees
 - Agriculture
 - Appropriations
 - “congressional targets”
- Current Federal Policy Issues
 - Administrative
 - Legislative



What is the Farm Bill?

- Comprehensive bill that impacts federal food and farm policy
- Reauthorized every 5-7 years
- First farm bill passed in 1933
- Last farm bill passed Feb 2014
- Almost \$1 trillion in funding over 10 years
- Farm bill includes “mandatory” and “discretionary” programs
- Everything from conservation to rural development to organic research and farmers’ markets



The 2014 Farm Bill

- Cost: \$956.4 billion over 10 years. (about 2% of all federal spending)
- Spends \$1.2 billion on sustainable ag programs and initiatives!
- Cuts to all titles overall except crop insurance.

What's in the farm bill? (Costs from FY2014-2023)

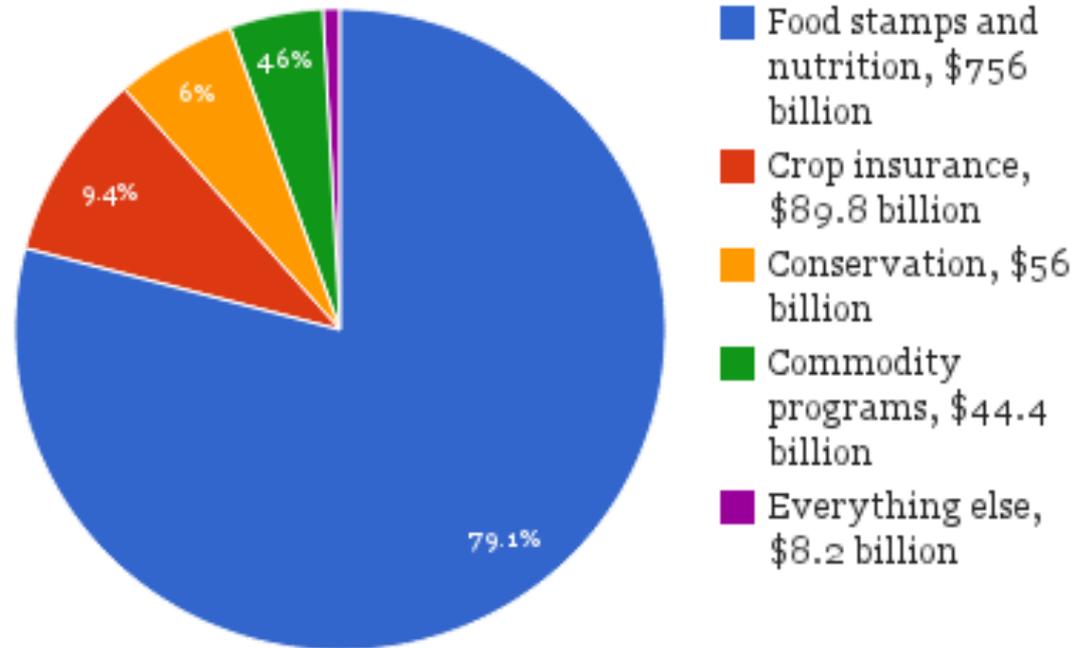


Chart credit: Washington Post

Pre-Authorization and Hearings



Authorization



Appropriation

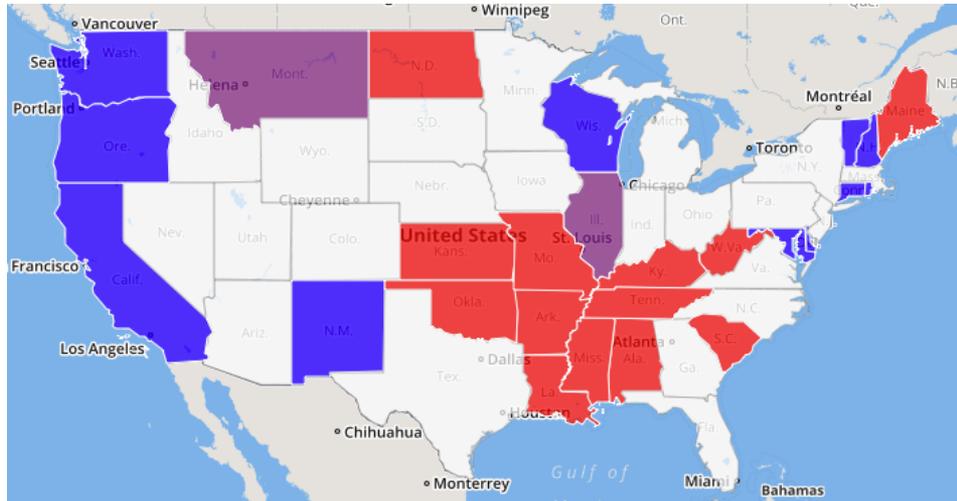


Implementation



Evaluation and Oversight

Current Approps Committee Make Up

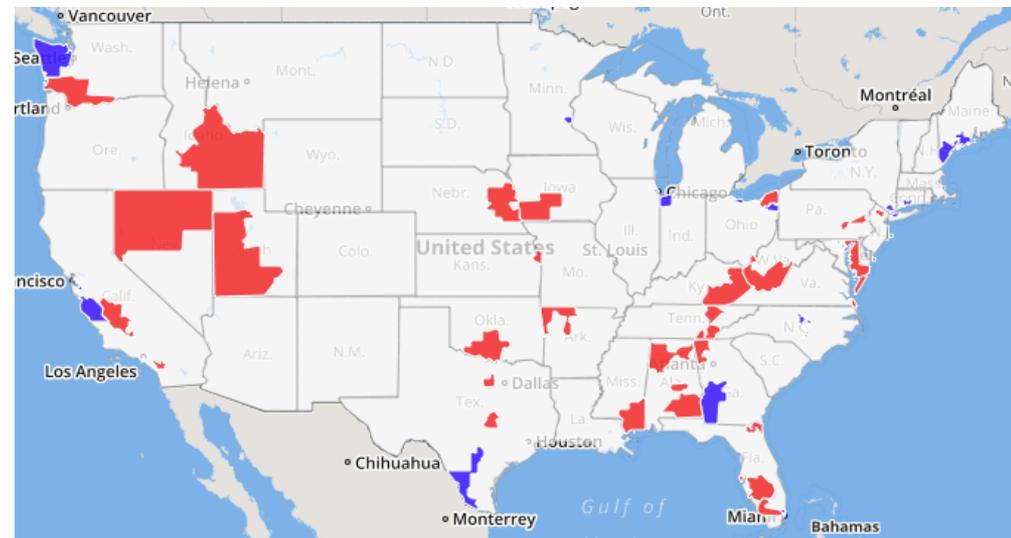


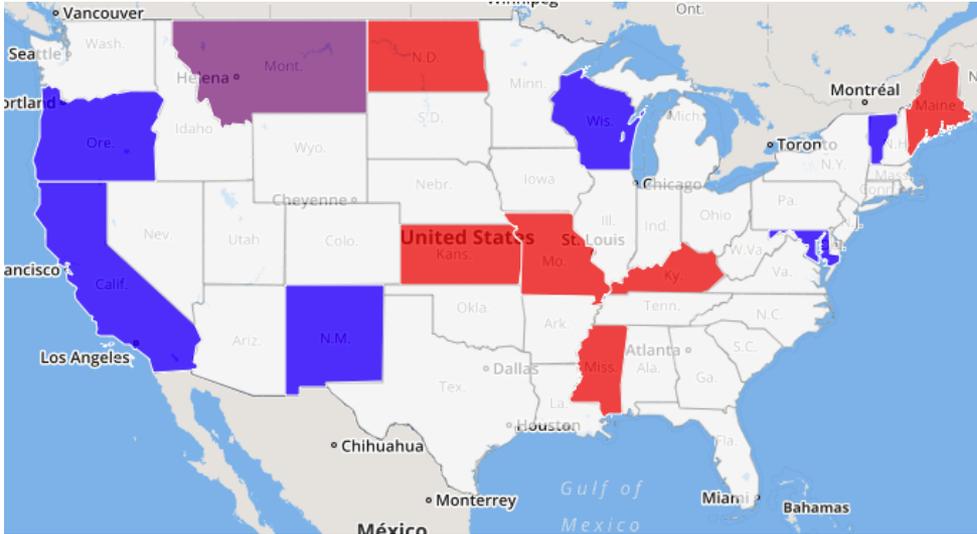
Senate Appropriations Committee 114th Congress

Majority: Republicans
Minority: Democrats

House Appropriations Committee 114th Congress

Majority: Republicans
Minority: Democrats



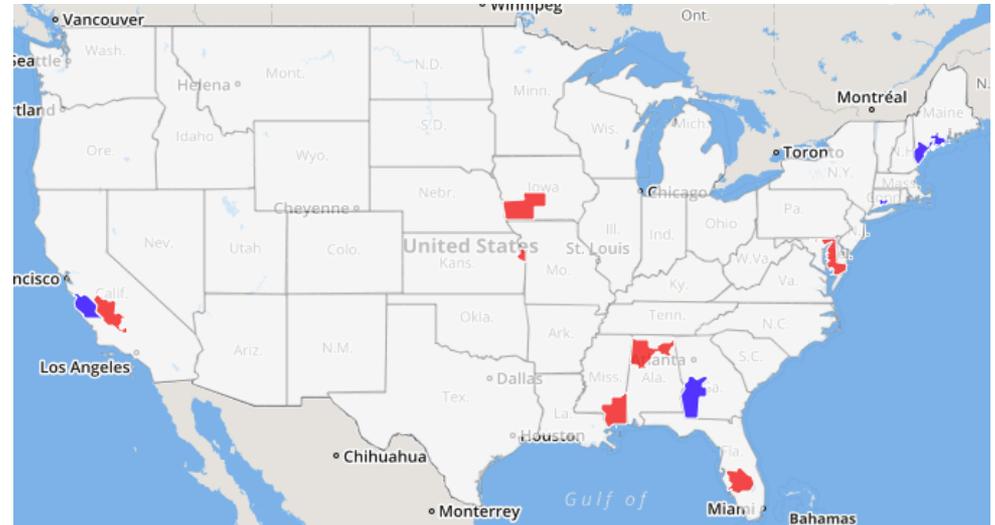


Senate Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee 114th Congress

Majority: Republicans
Minority: Democrats

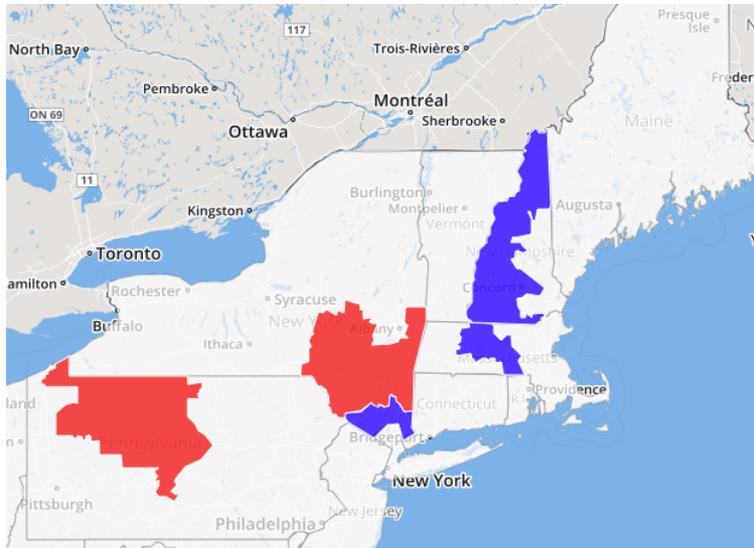
House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee 114th Congress

Majority: Republicans
Minority: Democrats



Northeast Ag Delegation

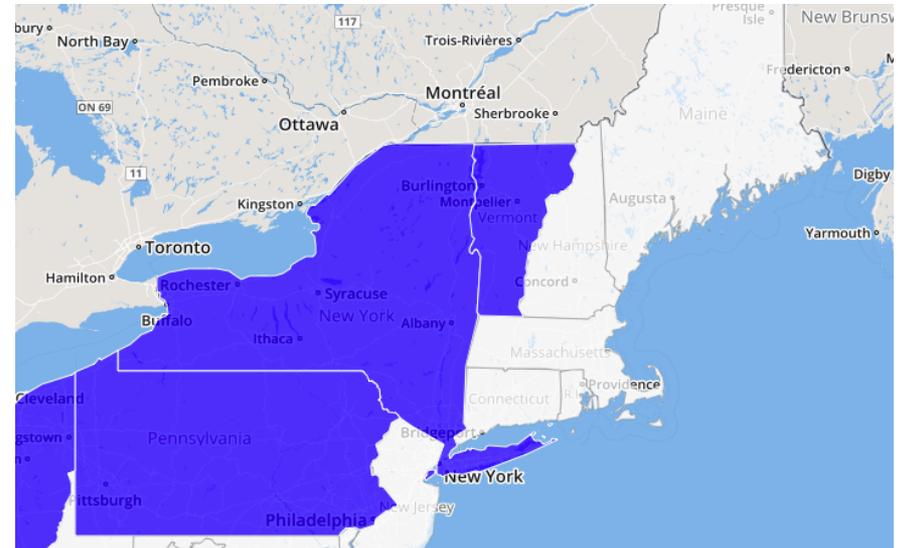
House



GT Thompson (PA-5)
Chris Gibson (NY-19)
Chris Collins (NY-27)

Jim McGovern (MA-2)
Ann Kuster (NH-2)
Sean Patrick Maloney (NY-18)

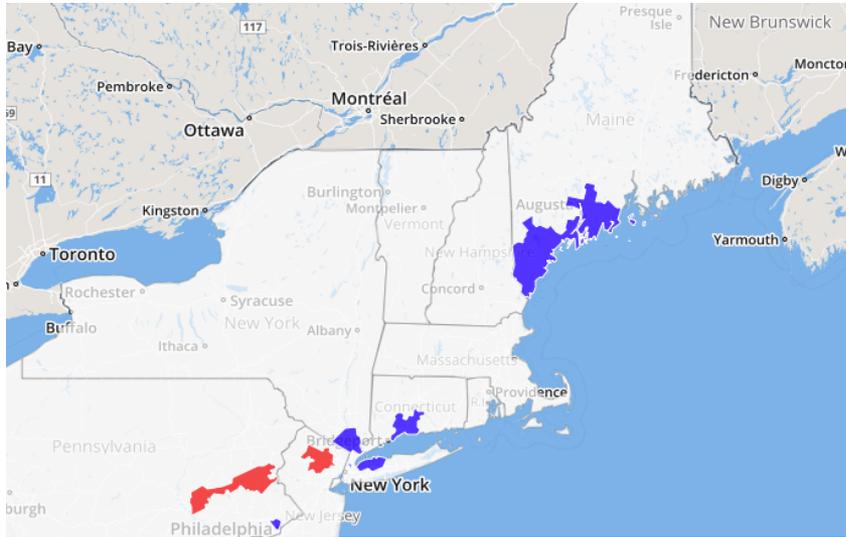
Senate



Patrick Leahy (VT)
Robert Casey (PA)
Kirsten Gillibrand (NY)

Northeast Approps Delegation

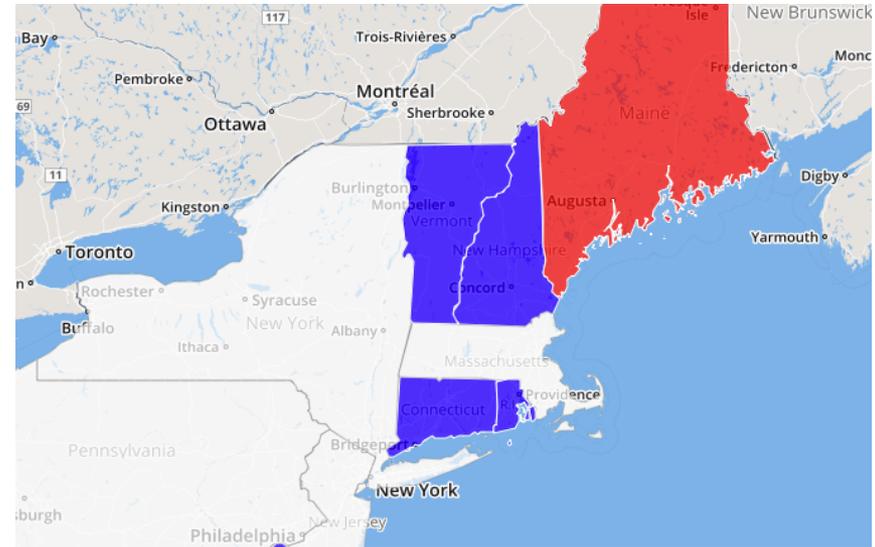
House



Charles Dent (PA-15)
Rodney Frelinghuysen (NJ-11)

Nita Lowey (NY-17 – Ranking Member)
Chaka Fattah (PA-2)
Ann Kuster (NH-2)
Steve Israel (NY-3)
Rosa De-Lauro (CT-3)
Chellie Pingree (ME-1)

Senate



Susan Collins (ME)

Patrick Leahy (VT)
Jeanne Shaheen (NH)
Kirsten Gillibrand (NY)
Chris Murphy (CT)
Jack Reed (RI)

Are we making smart investments to strengthen sustainable agriculture?

- Annual process that provides funding for certain “discretionary” government functions and programs
- Provides funding for programs that the Farm Bill does not fund directly
- Appropriations Committee and 12 Subcommittees, including agriculture
- Sometimes appropriators rob Farm Bill programs to fund appropriated programs

Why ag appropriations matters

- ❑ Programs funded through appropriations:
 - ❑ Sustainable Agriculture Research and Extension
 - ❑ Value-Added Producer Grants
 - ❑ FSA Farm Loans and “Individual Development Accounts”
- ❑ Protect funding for programs funded through Farm Bill (like conservation!)
- ❑ Play defense on bad policy riders
 - ❑ Biotech rider (aka “Monsanto Protection Act”)
 - ❑ Packers and Stockyard Act roll-back (aka “GIPSA rider”)
 - ❑ Likely WOTUS and School Nutrition Standards, too

So what's happening on the "hill" that folks in the Northeast should care about?

Administrative (USDA, FDA, EPA)

- New food safety rules (i.e. FSMA)
- Farm Bill implementation

Legislative (House, Senate)

- Annual appropriations
- Child Nutrition Act Reauthorization

Now that we've got a farm bill, we need to make sure those programs are running smoothly!

- Rulemaking & Public Comment -- Stakeholder input is key!!
 - are programs reaching farmers?
 - problems need to be addressed?
 - how can we improve the program in the next Farm Bill?
- Utilize programs!!
 - Funding Announcements
- Outreach to Farmers & Other Stakeholders!

How to keep up with the latest news?

- NSAC's *Grassroots Guide**
- Sign up for NSAC's *Weekly Roundup**
- Sign up for *Grants.gov* funding announcements
- Check the *Federal Register*



* available at <http://sustainableagriculture.net>

Status of agriculture appropriations

- Congress passed a continuing resolution to fund the government through December 11
- Recently approved a budget deal cutting \$300 million from crop insurance
- Appropriators will be negotiating over the few weeks – elections and political dynamics will be huge factor
- Appropriators need to hear from us NOW on our funding priorities for 2016
- President preparing for FY 2017

By Dec 11, need to agree on funding rest of FY 2016 or else government shuts down...



- Funding for Farm to School programs
- Also geographic preference, WIC, & more!
- Marker bill introduced
- NSAC, National Farm to School Network and our partners in the food access community





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Successful Organizing & Advocacy: What to do in between farm bills?



Sustaining Farm Bill Wins

- Take advantage of federal resources!
- Provide feedback to USDA
- Tell your story -- to the media, your neighbors, to anyone who will listen
- Evaluate program use and efficiency in your state or region
- Participate in the appropriations process
- Join an advocacy organization to stay informed!



- Listening and reaching out for input
- Developing recommendations and reforms
- Bundling them into marker bills and platforms
- Identify legislative targets
- Rally grassroots to get better bill passed

Need for More Champions

Legislative champions are key to moving our issues through Congress!

Many of our long-time sustainable agriculture champions have now retired (or will retire soon)

There's an urgent need to cultivate the next generation of champions to fight for our issues in the future!

Absolutely need both Democrats and Republicans

Lobbyists



Who do legislators hear from?

**Constituents
who vote!**

Lobbyists

Experts

Legislator

Who do legislators WANT to hear from?

- There are few better opportunities to win over a legislator than with local, in-person events
 - Invite them to events (farmers markets, ceremonies, summits, conferences, etc)
 - Consider awards for champions
 - Farm tours / tours of grant-funded efforts (farm to school, etc)
 - Requires extra communication and logistics but it pays off!!



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Small Group Breakout

- Join others from your state or region
- Come up with at least one state or in-district action
- Include specific congressional targets (where applicable)
- Discuss possible issue areas and organizing tactics to use (i.e. town halls, in-district meetings, farm tour, delegation letters, etc)
- Present and workshop actions

QUESTIONS?

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