



TO: Senate Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee

FROM: Scott Christensen, State Chair
Ducks Unlimited

DATE: March 21, 2022

RE: Support S.F. 3020, concerning conservation reserve program incentives

Chairman Ingebrigtsen and members of the committee,

On behalf of nearly 50,000 Ducks Unlimited members across Minnesota, I wish to express support for S.F. 3020, which would make a one-time appropriation of \$5 million to further assist farmers, ranchers, and other conservation-minded landowners enroll in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). The services to society that these enrolled lands provide, range from wildlife habitat and water quality improvements to soil health and groundwater protection. These collective services undoubtedly hold a value far greater than the cost of this legislation's proposed investment.

As the World leader in wetlands and waterfowl conservation since 1937, DU has conserved over 237,000 acres of wetlands and associated habitats across Minnesota since our founding. Our accomplishments, along with those of all the other conservation organizations operating in the state are significant but the fact is that there remain places where 90% or more of wetlands and grasslands have been lost, meaning there remains a lot of work to do to replace ecosystem functions in harmony with working lands. CRP is a vital option for landowners interested in keeping some of their lands in conservation while still receiving financial support for doing so.

The future brings a whole new set of challenges and complexities, and we therefore need policies in place that give landowners as many tools as possible for stewarding their land to produce the previously mentioned suite of ecosystem services that people rely on. S.F. 3020 is this kind of policy. As a waterfowl breeding ground state and pheasant hunting gem, it is vital that we work to keep CRP enrollment strong in MN. This investment in habitat supports a multi-billion-dollar hunting economy and is widely supported by our membership.

We strongly encourage the committee to approve this bill and move the legislation one-step closer to the finish-line.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Christensen", written over a light gray rectangular background.

Scott Christensen
State Chair, Minnesota
Ducks Unlimited