



Kansas Agribusiness Retailers Association
Kansas Grain and Feed Association

December 8, 2021

To: 2021 Special Committee on the 30x30 Federal Initiative
From: Randy Stookey, Senior Vice President of Government Affairs, KGFA, KARA
Re: **Joint Informational Testimony on the 30x30 Federal Initiative**

Chairman Rahjes and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this issue. This testimony is jointly submitted by Kansas Grain and Feed Association (KGFA) and Kansas Agribusiness Retailers Association (KARA).

KGFA is the state association of the grain receiving, storage, processing, and shipping industry in Kansas. KGFA's membership includes over 950 Kansas business locations and represents 99% of the commercially licensed grain storage in the state. KARA is a state-wide agribusiness industry trade association with membership including over 700 companies across Kansas.

President Biden's Climate Executive Order established as a goal of the administration of conserving at least 30% of U.S. land and water by the year 2030, and would be achieved through various means, including: expanding wildlife habitat and corridor conservation efforts; increasing voluntary public access for outdoor recreation; incentivizing additional voluntary conservation efforts of fishers, ranchers, farmers, and forest owners; and creating a civilian climate corps to help restore public lands and waters.

Currently, 12% (292 million acres) of federal lands in the United States are permanently protected. Under the Climate Executive Order, an additional 18% (437 million additional acres) would need to be protected to reach the 30x30 goal.¹

Agriculture is the largest U.S. land use, and it is a potential source of land to be conserved under the 30x30 program. As the goal of the program is pursued, it is critically important for agriculture and agribusiness in Kansas that private property rights remain protected, and that federal agencies acknowledge existing voluntary stewardship efforts of private landowners.

Under current USDA conservation programs, such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), landowners are offered long term, federally funded contracts and voluntarily agree not to farm or ranch environmentally sensitive agricultural land for conservation purposes. Participants establish resource-conserving plant species to control soil erosion, improve water quality, and develop wildlife habitat.

¹ [President Biden's 30x30 Plan: Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful | Farm and Ranch Management \(unl.edu\)](https://www.unl.edu)

There is strong concern that the Biden administration might seek significant amounts of additional agricultural land for long-term enrollment into CRP to meet the objectives of the 30x30 program.

Our associations oppose spending public money to pay landowners to permanently forfeit water rights or retire or idle whole field working lands into CRP and CREP. Such actions take beneficial acreage out of production, which directly and negatively impacts rural Kansas economies and communities due to the loss of local economic activity, investment, and jobs.

However, our associations wholly support conservation programs that provide adequate flexibility to landowners to manage their land. We support programs that provide agricultural producers with options to enroll specific, narrow, environmentally sensitive acres, such as streambank stabilization and field edge buffers. In addition, we support maximum caps on the amount of acreage that is authorized for enrollment in any one county so that the program does not unreasonably impact specific production areas.

We also would support the recognition of long-standing voluntary conservation practices on actively managed working lands, currently being embraced by agriculture. Finally, we would ask for full acknowledgment of the millions of acres of land that are already under conservation by both state and federal programs.

In considering the stated goals and benchmarks of this proposed 30x30 initiative, our associations join with others in the agriculture sector in calling for this administration to act reasonably and responsibly, and to reach out to the agricultural community in order to understand the real-world effects of the proposed policies.

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to comment on this issue.