



Office of the Secretary
Washington, DC 20250

September 9, 2024

MR. JOHN DEVNEY
Vice-Chair, Hunting and Wildlife Conservation Council
5275 Leesburg Pie, MS EA
Falls Church, Virginia 22041

Dear Vice-Chairman Devney:

Thank you for your letter of May 2, 2023, regarding your support for the USDA's leadership in implementing the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and conservation practices, and for your suggestions on ways to maximize the environmental and climate benefits of these investments.

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) responded to feedback received from conservation partners like the Hunting and Wildlife Conservation Council, producers, and NRCS staff across the country. NRCS considered and evaluated activities based on scientific literature demonstrating expected benefits to climate change resilience and greenhouse gas mitigation. For fiscal year 2024, NRCS is increasing Climate-Smart Agricultural and Forestry Mitigation Activities eligible for IRA funding through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). New activities for 2024 include strategically planned patch burning for wildlife habitat, biochar production from woody residue, restoration to enhance floodplain connectivity, and others.

We appreciate your additional recommendations for strengthening our efforts in climate-smart agriculture, conservation technical assistance, and improving wetland determinations. We will continue to take your recommendations into consideration as our programs grow and develop.

Again, thank you for your letter and for your thoughtful recommendations.

Sincerely,

THOMAS J. VILSACK
Secretary