



MICHAEL BENNET
U.S. SENATOR *for* COLORADO

Progress for Colorado in the 2018 Farm Bill

Colorado U.S. Senator Michael Bennet, a member of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry and Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Conservation, Forestry, and Natural Resources, secured a number of bills and amendments important to Colorado in the bipartisan Farm Bill.

More than 25 Bennet-led priorities were included in the [conference report](#):

Improving Forest and Watershed Health

- [Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program](#): doubles funding for community driven, science-based forest management, which has a proven record of success.
- [Flexible Partnerships Act](#): provides rural communities an avenue to engage with the Forest Service to lease unused facilities to address housing, infrastructure, and other needs.
- [Forest Health](#): improves good neighbor authority and continues Bennet's insect and disease treatment program, both of which were established in the [2014 Farm Bill](#) and modified in the [2018 Omnibus](#), to expedite hazardous fuel reduction projects.
- [Watershed Health](#): includes a new Water Source Protection Program to support innovative forest health partnerships; authorizes the Forest Service to evaluate the condition of our watersheds to prioritize forest restoration efforts and monitor their effectiveness.
- [Wildfire Protection](#): establishes a [pilot program](#) to protect utility infrastructure from passing wildfires by encouraging vegetation management on Forest Service land.
- [Small Tracts Act](#): expands the Forest Service's authority to protect high-priority lands and promote efficient land management.
- [National Forest Foundation](#): reauthorizes the National Forest Foundation (NFF), a key partner in Colorado, through 2023 to support conservation and stewardship projects.
- [West Fork Fire Station Act](#): provides Dolores County land for the construction of a new fire station along the West Fork of the Dolores River, where wildfires pose a growing threat to homeowners.

Conserving Land, Water, and Wildlife and Adapting to Climate Change

- [*Drought Resilience*](#): provides new tools for producers to mitigate drought and conserve water in the West; funds the *Watershed Act* (“PL-566”) to support off-farm water infrastructure projects in western watersheds and waives duplicative planning requirements.
- [*Soil Health*](#): creates a pilot program to increase the amount of carbon stored in soil and improve soil health; ensures the pilot prioritizes drought-prone areas and evaluates economic outcomes.
- [*Healthy Habitat and Rangelands*](#): improves access to conservation planning, rewards grazing practices that promote drought resilience, soil health, and wildfire management, and directs more conservation funding towards [*wildlife habitat*](#) improvements.
- [*Conservation Easements*](#): increases funding for agricultural conservation easements and makes it easier for western landowners to pass their land on to the next generation.
- [*Outdoor Recreation*](#): reauthorizes and [*increases funding*](#) for the Voluntary Public Access program to improve habitat and provide access to hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation on private lands.
- [*Data for Drought Monitoring*](#): improves the data used for [*drought monitoring*](#) to provide disaster assistance to livestock producers and mitigate economic the effects of climate change.

Expanding Economic Opportunity

- [*Hemp Agriculture*](#): legalizes hemp as an agriculture commodity, providing certainty and economic opportunity for Colorado, including the ability to access crop insurance and federal grants.
- [*Rural Broadband*](#): increases funding 14-fold for loans and grants to extend broadband service to high-need rural areas.
- [*Farmer and Rancher Stress*](#): reauthorizes the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network to assist states and nonprofits that establish helplines, suicide prevention training, and support groups.
- [*Food Waste*](#): requires a study to identify opportunities to reduce waste and improve farm income.
- [*Data for Disaster Assistance*](#): encourages the USDA to consult with the bison industry to use the best available market value data for the [*Livestock Indemnity Program*](#).
- [*Research Advances*](#): prioritizes USDA research to improve [*hop plant health*](#) and the use of big data for precision management of dryland farming.

Reducing Carbon Pollution and Increasing Energy Security

- [*Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency*](#): provides \$625 million to increase renewable energy and energy efficiency in rural communities.
- [*Energy Storage*](#): makes energy storage technologies eligible for USDA Rural Energy for American Program funding and financing.
- [*Carbon Capture and Utilization*](#): establishes a new \$10 million program to provide technical assistance to rural communities investing in carbon capture projects.
- [*Biogas Technologies and Clean Energy*](#): promotes the use of biogas technologies to reduce carbon emissions in rural communities.
- [*Cyber and Grid Security*](#): ensures cybersecurity and grid improvement projects are eligible for \$5 billion in USDA Rural Utility Service loans.
- [*More Effective Clean Energy Funding*](#): allows the U.S. Department of Energy to provide technical assistance to the USDA to increase the utilization of USDA loans for rural energy systems.
- [*New Research for Carbon Utilization*](#): allows carbon dioxide created during a biobased production that is permanently sequestered or utilized to be eligible for Biomass Research and Development.