

S 909

Conservation Program Improvement Act of 2017

**Congress:** 115 (2017–2019, Ended)

**Chamber:** Senate

**Policy Area:** Agriculture and Food

**Introduced:** Apr 7, 2017

**Current Status:** Read twice and referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

**Latest Action:** Read twice and referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry. (Apr 7, 2017)

**Official Text:** <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/909>

Sponsor

**Name:** Sen. Thune, John [R-SD]

**Party:** Republican • **State:** SD • **Chamber:** Senate

Cosponsors (1 total)

Cosponsor	Party / State	Role	Date Joined
Sen. Klobuchar, Amy [D-MN]	D · MN		May 15, 2018

Committee Activity

Committee	Chamber	Activity	Date
Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee	Senate	Referred To	Apr 7, 2017

Subjects & Policy Tags

**Policy Area:**

Agriculture and Food

Related Bills

No related bills are listed.

## **Conservation Program Improvement Act of 2017**

This bill amends the Food Security Act of 1985 to modify the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and conservation easement programs administered by the Department of Agriculture (USDA).

(CRP provides payments to farmers who agree to remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and plant species that will improve environmental health and quality.)

The bill modifies CRP to:

- reauthorize the program through FY2023,
- increase the annual acreage cap to 30 million acres,
- revise the formula for determining state target acreage enrollment,
- add restrictions for land that is planted to trees,
- modify policies regarding grazing and the mechanical harvesting of vegetative cover, and
- remove payment limitations for rural water districts or associations that use land enrolled in CRP to protect a wellhead.

The bill also modifies the Transition Incentives Program (TIP), which currently provides retired or retiring land owners or operators with additional payments for land enrolled in expiring CRP contracts in exchange for agreeing to sell or rent the land to a beginning farmer or rancher or a socially disadvantaged group.

The bill revises TIP to: (1) make landowners who are at least 65 years of age and not retiring eligible for the program, (2) permit the land to be transferred to a veteran farmer or rancher, and (3) modify policies regarding the early termination and transfer of CRP contracts.

In administering conservation easement programs, USDA must allow enrolled land to be: (1) modified for specified purposes; or (2) exchanged for land that has equal or greater conservation, wildlife, ecological, and economic values.

## **Actions Timeline**

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- **Apr 7, 2017:** Introduced in Senate
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