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MGA Chair and Wisconsin Gov. Jim Doyle testifies on the reauthorization of the Farm Bill

Washington, D.C. - Wisconsin Governor Jim Doyle, who is chair of the Midwestern Governors Association, [testified before the Senate Agriculture Committee this week](#) on the reauthorization of the Farm Bill. His testimony focused on the conservation title of the Farm Bill and its importance to the Midwestern states.

Joining Doyle on the panel were Sens. Ben Cardin of Maryland (D) and Robert Menendez of New Jersey (D).

Doyle's testimony stressed the importance of the Farm Bill to the region. "Creating a Farm Bill that enhances Wisconsin's ability and the ability of the region to pursue new energy technologies from agriculture and forest products, protects our working agricultural and forest lands, provides nutrition to our families, and supports rural development is vital not only to the strength of the state of Wisconsin and the region, but to the entire nation," Doyle said.

In his [prepared written remarks](#), Doyle stressed that the USDA should better partner with state agencies, conservation districts, and qualified conservation organizations to aid with development of conservation plans, field inspection and project designs to avoid duplication of efforts and reduce the workload of USDA personnel.

He also testified that "a new farm bill will also better recognize the important role played by state governments. Increased funding of state-federal conservation partnerships, isn't just a good idea, it may be absolutely necessary for future farm policy. It is this model of partnership that should guide us as we move farm conservation policies forward in the next Farm Bill." Doyle also urged Congress to examine streamlining the funding delivery of conservation technical assistance, conservation operations, and mandatory program technical assistance.

Additionally, Doyle's submitted remarks highlighted recommendations from the [MGA's recent Farm Bill publication](#), including the need to:

- Promote whole-farm conservation management by maintaining conservation programs and practices that keep farmers, ranchers and forest landowners on the land.
- Ensure conservation compliance measures are maintained and enforced.
- Maintain conservation priorities toward water quality, soil erosion and wildlife habitat.
- Explore and encourage bio energy and bio product initiatives that are mutually beneficial to environmental priorities.
- Define roles and responsibilities (administrative vs. technical, for example) between the Farm Service Agency and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

*In addition to Doyle, the current members of the Midwestern Governors Association include: Gov. Rod Blagojevich (IL), Gov. Mitch Daniels (IN), Gov. Chet Culver (IA), Gov. Kathleen Sebelius (KS), Gov. Jennifer Granholm (MI), Gov. Tim Pawlenty (MN), Gov. Matt Blunt, (MO), Gov. Dave Heineman (NE), Gov. John Hoeven (ND), Gov. Ted Strickland (OH), and Mike Rounds (SD).*