



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Environmental Quality Incentives Program – Conservation Incentives Contracts (EQIP-CIC)

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What is EQIP-CIC?

- EQIP-CIC is a new enrollment authorized in the 2018 Farm Bill that provides payments for adopting practices, and enhancement payments for managing, maintaining, and improving practices to address resource concerns.
- EQIP-CIC blends elements of EQIP classic and CSP to serve as a steppingstone for producers between EQIP classic and CSP
- **It allows producers to apply incentive practices and enhancements on a portion of their operation, which can be a gateway to CSP enrollment and achieve a conservation stewardship.**

EQIP-CIC Eligibility

- Basic eligibility requirements for general EQIP applies and must be met:
 - Applicant Eligibility
 - Establish records with Farm Service Agency (AGI, FTE, 1026, etc.)
 - All participants must complete a CCC-902 (Individual and Entity)
 - Land Eligibility
 - Participants may select a portion of their land to enroll into CIC
 - Resource Concern Eligibility
 - At least 1 RCC must be identified and addressed

EQIP-CIC Contract and Payment Limitations

- Payment Limitation
 - \$200K Payment Limitation applies for the term (5 years) of the contract
 - EQIP-CIC payment limitation is separate from EQIP “Classic” and does not apply towards the \$450K EQIP payment limitations
- Contract Limitation
 - Individual and/or legal entity has a contract limit of \$200K
 - Joint Operations have a contract limit of \$400K

Available Funding for EQIP-CIC

- States must reserve 5% of the general EQIP allocation or \$200,000 whichever is greater for FY2021.
- MD will allocate up to \$500,000 to fund applications received during the EQIP-CIC signups
- Any unused funds will be reallocated to the MD EQIP general funds



Contracting EQIP-CIC

- Contracts may have either enhancements only, or a combination of practices and enhancements
 - Contracts can not have practices only
- Practices may be scheduled in any year of the contract
- EQIP-CIC contracts are for a term of 5 years
- State selected high priority practices may receive the higher payment rate (at 90%) in EQIP-CIC contracts

EQIP-CIC Payments

- Incentive contracts are eligible for 2 types of payments:
 - Incentive Payments
 - For adopting and installing incentive practices (eligible EQIP practices)
 - Payments will be paid at general EQIP payment rates (75%/90%)
 - Annual Payments
 - For managing, maintaining, and improving incentive practices during the contract period (enhancement activities)



Benefits of EQIP CIC

Participants

- Access to enhancements previously only available through CSP.
- Chance to implement elements of CSP on a smaller scale, which may inform future interest in applying for CSP on their entire operation.
- A new opportunity for targeted conservation on their land.

NRCS

- Another tool to help get conservation on the ground.
- Opportunity for targeted conservation
 - What HPAs, PRCCs, land uses, crop types, livestock types, etc... aren't currently well represented in our State?

EQIP-CIC High Priority Area (HPAs)

- HPAs selected must meet the following:
 - Represent areas of significant concern
 - Must encompass every region within the state
 - May encompass the entire state or overlap with other identified high priority areas within the state
 - **At least one high priority area must cover the entire state**



EQIP-CIC High Priority Resource Concerns Categories (PRCC)

- States must identify up to 3 priority resource concerns for each land use
- For each PRC, states must identify the incentive practices (practices and enhancements) that will be available
- Conservation Plans must target at least one PRC





EQIP CIC: Selecting PRCC's

- Priority Resource Concerns should be selected at the **Resource Concern Category Level**, not the Resource Concern Level

Resource Concerns Categories

Categories

Category
Air quality emissions
Aquatic habitat
Concentrated erosion
Degraded plant condition
Field pesticide loss
Field sediment, nutrient and pathogen loss
Fire management
Inefficient energy use
Livestock production limitation
Pest pressure
Salt losses to water
Soil quality limitations
Source water depletion
Storage and handling of pollutants
Terrestrial habitat
Weather resilience
Wind and water erosion

National Recommendations for FY2021

- Due to time constraints, States may choose to pursue a straightforward approach for FY21
 - Examples:
 - Designate a HPA that encompasses the entire state
 - Targets one PRC on one land use
 - Targets two PRCs on one land use
 - Targets one PRC on two land uses
 - Targets one PRC on multiple land uses

EQIP CIC Examples

- Example 1- Entire state is the only HPA
 - Pro: Simplest option for FY2021
 - Con: Not as targeted
- Example 2- Create new HPAs
 - Pro: Can focus on new areas of the state not addressed by existing initiatives
 - Pro: Can target resource concerns that are under-addressed in other Programs
 - Pro: Could provide opportunity to attract under-served producer groups
 - Con: Still must ensure the entire state is covered with other HPA(s)
- Example 3- Utilize existing initiatives as HPAs
 - Pro: Existing resource concerns and practices may have already been selected
 - Pro: Producer can take conservation to a higher level with enhancements
 - Con: Still must ensure the entire state is covered with other HPA(s)

Example 1: Selecting PRCs

Goal: Increase participation in soil health initiative/practices

Outcomes:

- Increase soil health in State
- Due to positive experiences under EQIP CIC, some participants go on to pursue further conservation benefits on their entire operation through applying for CSP

Land Use: Crop

Priority Resource Concern: Soil Quality Limitations

Example 1: Selecting Incentive Practices

Goal: Select practices/enhancements that target soil health

Example Practices:

340- Cover Crop

328- Conservation Crop Rotation

329- Residue and Tillage Management, No-Till

Example Enhancements:

E328E- Soil Health Crop Rotation

E328F- Modifications to improve soil health and increase soil organic matter

E329D- No till system to increase soil health and soil organic matter content

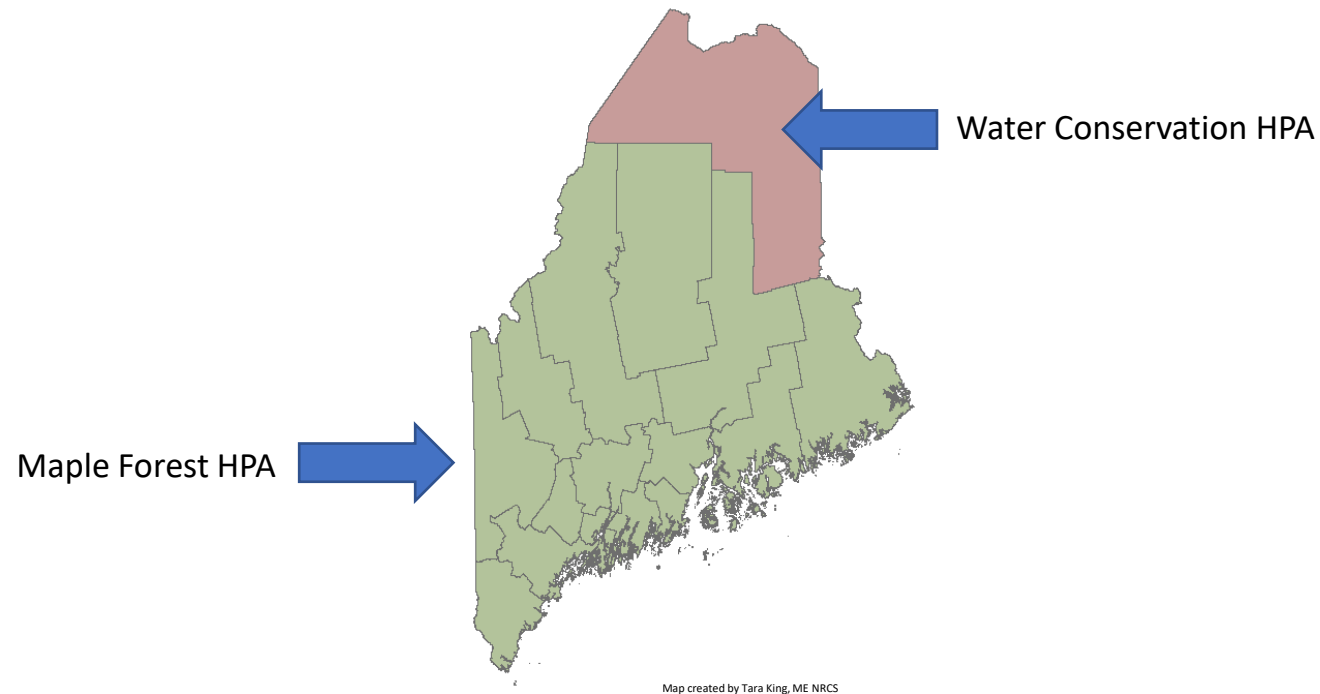
E340A/B/C- Cover crop enhancements

Example 1: Example Contract Layout

- Year 1: Schedule 340- Cover Crop
- Year 2: Schedule 340- Cover Crop
- Year 3: Schedule 340- Cover Crop
- Years 4 and 5: Schedule E340C- Use of multi-species cover crops to improve soil health and increase soil organic matter

Example 2: Create New High Priority Areas

- After consultation with the State Technical Committee, new HPAs were identified.



Example 2: Create New High Priority Areas

Water Conservation HPA

Goal: Conserve water in Northern Maine, where producers, such as potato farmers, have large-scale irrigation projects.

Outcomes:

- Producers in Northern Maine adopt practices and enhancements on desired fields under EQIP CIC, which in turns leads to the conservation of water.
- Due to positive experiences under EQIP CIC, some participants go on to pursue further conservation benefits on their entire operation through applying for CSP.

Land Use: Crop

Priority Resource Concerns: Inefficient irrigation water use,
Naturally available moisture use

Example 3: Create New High Priority Areas

Water Conservation HPA

Example Practices

- 329 Residue & Tillage Mgmt., No Till
- 340 Cover Crop
- 345 Residue & Tillage Mgmt., Reduced Till
- 449 Irrigation Water Management
- 484 Mulching
- 587 Structure for Water Control
- 442 Sprinkler System
- 441 Irrigation System, Micro-irrigation
- 533 Pumping Plant
- 430 Irrigation Pipeline

Example Enhancements

- E329C No till to increase plant-available moisture
- E345C Reduced tillage to increase plant-available moisture
- E449A Complete pumping plant evaluation for water savings
- E449D Advanced Automated IWM - Year 1, Equipment and soil moisture or water level monitoring
- E449C Advanced Automated IWM - Year 2-5, soil moisture monitoring
- E449I Sprinkler Irrigation Equipment Retrofit

Example 2: Example Contract Layout

Participant previously installed Sprinkler System (442), Pumping Plant (533), Irrigation Pipeline (430), Reduced Till (345), and basic record keeping (IWM) on their own.

- **Year 1:**
 - E449A Complete pumping plant evaluation for water savings
- **Year 2:**
 - E449I Sprinkler Irrigation Equipment Retrofit
 - 449 Irrigation Water Management Intermediate IWM > 30 acres
- **Year 3:**
 - 449 Irrigation Water Management Intermediate IWM > 30 acres
 - E345C Reduced tillage to increase plant-available moisture
- **Year 4:**
 - 449 Irrigation Water Management Intermediate IWM > 30 acres
 - E345C Reduced tillage to increase plant-available moisture
- **Year 5:**
 - E345C Reduced tillage to increase plant-available moisture

Example 2: Create New High Priority Areas

Maple Forest HPA

Goal: Promote conservation in Maine's Maple Syrup industry

Outcomes:

- Producers conserve energy and improve sugarbush condition.
- New, targeted enhancements are developed.
- Some producers go on to enroll their entire operation in CSP.

Land Uses: Forest, Farmstead

Priority Resource Concerns (Forest): Plant Structure & Composition; Productivity & Health

Priority Resource Concerns (Farmstead): Energy efficient equipment and facilities

Example : Create New High Priority Areas

Maple Forest HPA

Example Practices

- 314 Brush Management
- 612 Tree/Shrub Establishment
- 660 Tree/Shrub Pruning
- 666 Forest Stand Improvement
- 374 Farmstead Energy Improvement



Opportunity!



Example Enhancements

- E612F Sugarbush management
- E666F Reduce forest stand density to create open stand structure
- E666K Creating structural diversity with patch openings
- E666L Forest Stand Improvement to rehabilitate degraded hardwood stands

Develop Energy Enhancements targeted to the Maple Syrup Industry for future FYs

Example 2: Example Contract Layout

Participant previously completed an Agricultural Energy Management Plan (128) and a Forest Management Plan (106). They have completed forestry conservation work and some maple syrup equipment upgrades on their own.

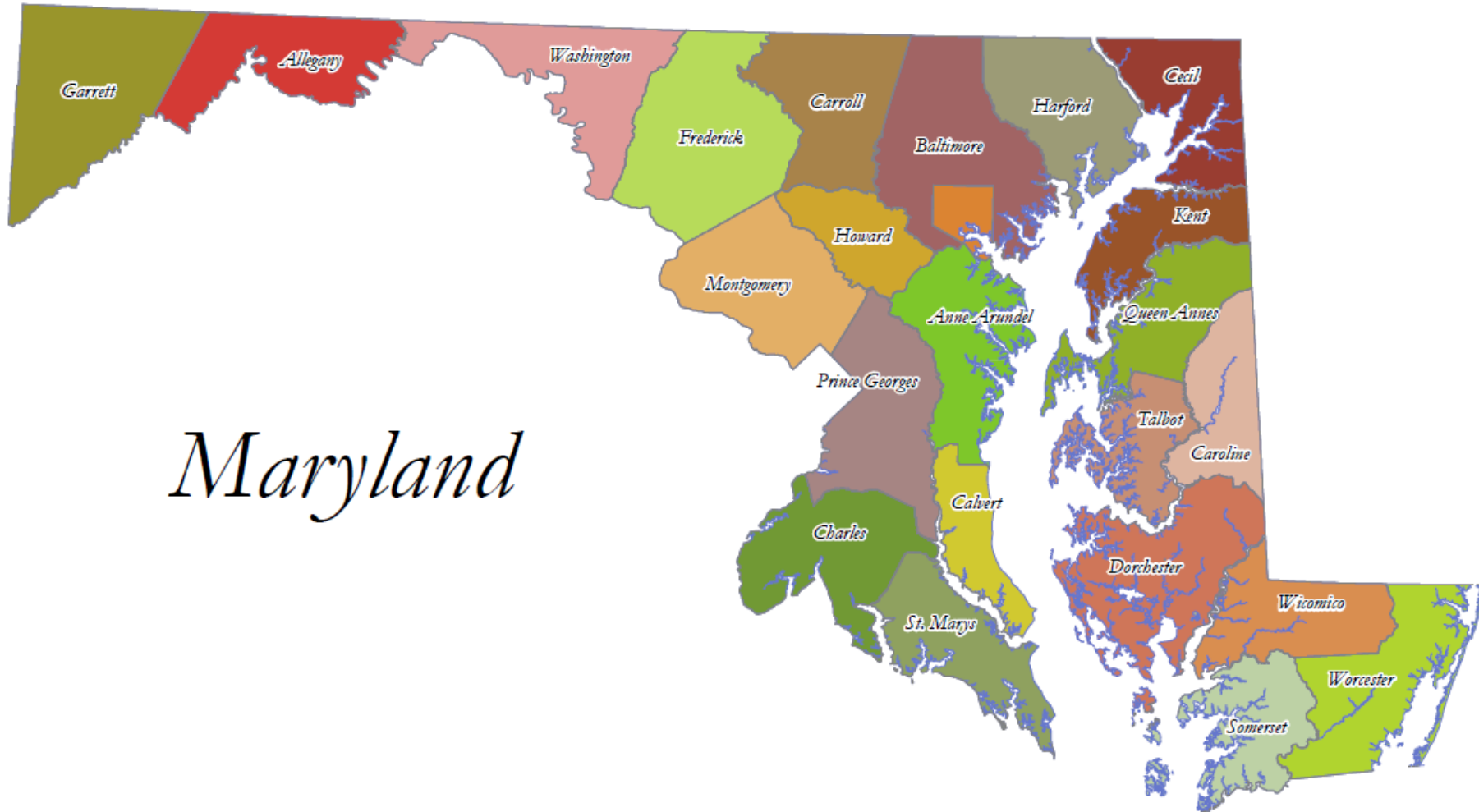
- **Year 1:**
 - 374 Farmstead Energy Improvement - Maple Syrup Pre-Heater > 24 SF
- **Year 2:**
 - No practices or enhancements scheduled
- **Year 3:**
 - 374 Farmstead Energy Improvement - Evaporator Wood-Fired, Gasifier
- **Year 4:**
 - E612F Sugarbush Management
- **Year 5:**
 - No practices or enhancements scheduled

EQIP-CIC Recommendation

- High Priority Area:
 - Statewide (All of MD)
- Land use:
 - Cropland
 - Pasture
 - Forestry
- Priority Resource Concerns:
 - Degraded Plant Condition
 - Field Sediment, Nutrient & Pathogen Loss
 - Terrestrial Habitat



EQIP-CIC High Priority Area (HPAs)





Resource Concerns Categories	
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Aquatic habitat	
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Field pesticide loss	
Field sediment, nutrient and pathogen loss	
Fire management	
Inefficient energy use	
Livestock production limitation	
Pest pressure	
Salt losses to water	
Soil quality limitations	
Source water depletion	
Storage and handling of pollutants	
Terrestrial habitat	
Weather resilience	
Wind and water erosion	

Any
Questions