



Farmland Protection Policy Act Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2023

August 2024

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Farm fields and a barn in the mountains of West Virginia (© Jon Bilous–stock.adobe.com).

Progress of Federal Agencies in Implementing Farmland Protection Policy Act

Under the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA), federal agencies are required to evaluate the impacts of federally funded projects that may involve permanently converting prime and important farmlands to nonagricultural uses and to consider alternative actions that would lessen the effects of converting that productive agricultural land. In complying with the FPPA, federal agencies request assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) by submitting a Farmland Conversion Impact Rating Form (Form AD-1006 or CPA-106). The requesting agency then conducts a Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) of the project area. NRCS provides the land evaluation information necessary for the responsible federal agency to complete the site assessment portion of the analysis. To implement the FPPA, federal agencies address the potential conversion of agricultural land when reviewing internal projects or providing assistance to local communities.

Prime farmland is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and is available for these uses. The land could be cropland, pastureland, rangeland, forestland, or other land but not developed urban land or water. Land used for a specific high-value food or fiber crop is classified as “unique farmland.” Generally, additional “farmlands of statewide importance” include those that are nearly prime farmland and that economically produce high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. In some local areas, there is concern for certain additional farmlands, even though these lands are not identified as having national or statewide importance. These farmlands are identified as being of “local importance” through ordinances adopted by local government. The NRCS state conservationist reviews and certifies lists of farmland of state and local importance. These lists, along with state and locally established LESA systems, where applicable, are used by federal agencies to review and evaluate activities that may impact farmland.

As defined in 7 CFR part 657, important farmland encompasses prime and unique farmland, as well as farmland of statewide and local importance. Table 1 summarizes the proportion and amount of important farmland considered for conversion as a part of federal projects under the FPPA in fiscal years 2008 through 2023.

Table 1.—Important Farmland Evaluated Under FPPA in Fiscal Years 2008 Through 2023

Fiscal year	Acres of important farmland within land evaluated	Percent of important farmland within land evaluated	Number of agencies that submitted requests
2008	87,902	71%	25
2009	58,106	67%	23
2010	54,103	38%	30
2011	99,386	49%	29
2012	36,146	33%	33
2013	245,972	60%	33
2014	106,136	67%	32
2015	44,886	48%	34
2016	32,370	77%	22
2017	42,561	63%	35
2018	31,557	50%	36
2019	47,297	67%	31
2020	43,416	54%	35
2021	97,416	63%	35
2022	48,610	39%	32
2023	27,131	53%	34

In fiscal year 2023, NRCS received 2,770 AD-1006 or CPA-106 forms from 34 federal departments and agencies, 10 states, and 1 federal and state partnership entities requesting assistance to evaluate the impact of proposed conversions of lands that would result from their projects. A total of 51,088 acres of land in 48 states and U.S. territories were proposed for conversion to nonagricultural uses. Of the acres reviewed, about 53 percent (27,135 acres) were identified as important farmland (as defined in 7 CFR part 657). Of the important farmland, 22,229 acres were prime or unique farmland, and 4,906 acres were state or locally important farmland.

Arkansas and Illinois had the highest number of farmland acres proposed for conversion, with 3,709 acres and 3,283 acres, respectively (table 2). Five states reported no acres, and 16 states reported less than 100 acres of farmland proposed for conversion (table 3; see table 4 for an example of the previous year's report).

In fiscal year 2023, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) reported the largest number of important farmland acres proposed for conversion, with 19,366 acres (table 5). This accounts for about 36 percent of all important farmland acres proposed for conversion in 2023.

Table 2.—Top Five States or Territories with Acres of Farmland Proposed for Conversion by Federal Projects

State	Acres
Arkansas	3,709
Illinois	3,283
Nebraska	1,814
Caribbean Islands	1,649
Texas	1,624

Table 3.—Acres of Farmland Proposed by State or U.S. Territory for Conversion by Federal Projects

State	Total acres proposed	Total acres proposed/ nationwide total	Acres of important farmland proposed	Acres of important farmland proposed/ nationwide total of proposed important farmland
AK	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
AL	2,500	4.9%	146	0.5%
AR	5,149	10.1%	3,709	13.7%
AZ	1,290	2.5%	376	1.4%
CA	1,363	2.7%	787	2.9%
CB	1,779	3.5%	1,649	6.1%
CO	258	0.5%	0	0.0%
CT	12	0.0%	6	0.0%
DE	24	0.0%	14	0.1%
FL	1,852	3.6%	438	1.6%
GA	811	1.6%	375	1.4%
IA	563	1.1%	484	1.8%
ID	1,816	3.6%	525	1.9%
IL	3,856	7.5%	3,283	12.1%
IN	1,044	2.0%	1,044	3.8%
KS	993	1.9%	650	2.4%
KY	3,338	6.5%	970	3.6%
LA	1,105	2.2%	691	2.5%
MA	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
MD	264	0.5%	274	1.0%
ME	34	0.1%	29	0.1%
MI	574	1.1%	574	2.1%
MN	245	0.5%	221	0.8%
MO	778	1.5%	445	1.6%
MS	2,152	4.2%	566	2.1%
MT	35	0.1%	33	0.1%
NC	2,159	4.2%	1,385	5.1%
ND	705	1.4%	109	0.4%
NE	3,772	7.4%	1,814	6.7%
NH	91	0.2%	51	0.2%
NJ	451	0.9%	11	0.0%
NM	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
NV	1	0.0%	0	0.0%
NY	967	1.9%	302	1.1%
OH	316	0.6%	199	0.7%
OK	2,977	5.8%	1,168	4.3%
OR	74	0.1%	58	0.2%
PA	1,669	3.3%	491	1.8%
PIA	106	0.2%	51	0.2%



State	Total acres proposed	Total acres proposed/ nationwide total	Acres of important farmland proposed	Acres of important farmland proposed/ nationwide total of proposed important farmland
RI	8	0.0%	2	0.0%
SC	1,038	2.0%	695	2.6%
SD	147	0.3%	263	1.0%
TN	775	1.5%	373	1.4%
TX	2,112	4.1%	1,624	6.0%
UT	153	0.3%	152	0.6%
VA	667	1.3%	190	0.7%
VT	65	0.1%	39	0.1%
WA	143	0.3%	142	0.5%
WI	399	0.8%	317	1.2%
WV	129	0.3%	85	0.3%
WY	327	0.6%	322	1.2%

Note: Alaska (AK), Massachusetts (MA), and New Mexico (NM) reported 0 acres of proposed important farmland and 0 total proposed acres. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest acre. Due to this, there is a slight discrepancy between the overall total and the sum of state totals for “Total acres proposed.” This note also applies to the acreage totals for “No. of acres proposed for conversion” in Table 5.

Table 4.—Example of Previous Year’s Report

State	Total acres proposed	Total acres proposed/ nationwide total	Acres of important farmland proposed	Acres of important farmland proposed/ nationwide total of proposed important farmland
AL	663	0.4%	217	0.2%
AR	28,266	18.2%	11,003	11.3%
AZ	113	0.1%	43	0.0%
CA	33,216	21.4%	15,116	15.5%
CB	12	0.0%	12	0.0%
CO	149	0.1%	0	0.0%
CT	15	0.0%	0	0.0%
DE	8	0.0%	7	0.0%
FL	29,297	18.9%	28,814	29.6%
GA	2,035	1.3%	1,640	1.7%
IA	1,717	1.1%	1,713	1.8%
ID	470	0.3%	447	0.5%
IL	151	0.1%	147	0.2%
IN	1,028	0.7%	1,028	1.1%
KS	326	0.2%	298	0.3%
KY	3,443	2.2%	1,938	2.0%

Table 5.—Breakdown of Acres and AD-1006/CPA-106 Forms Received by Federal Agencies and Other Entities in Fiscal Year 2023

Federal agency and other entities	Number of form requests to NRCS	Number of acres proposed for conversion	Number of acres identified as important farmland	Of which prime or unique	Of which state or locally important
Appalachian Regional Commission	2	1	1	1	0
Department of Agriculture					
Agricultural Research Service	2	3	3	3	0
Natural Resources Conservation Service	25	4,215	1,633	1,569	64
Rural Business-Cooperative Service	17	444	413	292	121
Rural Development	811	11,212	6,890	5,086	1,801
Other (unspecified)	7	69	40	7	33
Department of Commerce					
Economic Development Administration	28	383	100	50	49
National Telecommunications and Information Administration	4	61	19	4	15
Other (unspecified)	1	0	0	0	0
Department of Defense					
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	59	3,607	3,074	3,018	57
U.S. Space Force	3	0	0	0	0
Other (unspecified)	2	488	51	20	31
Department of Energy					
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission	2	0	0	0	0
Other (unspecified)	7	470	419	419	0
Department of Health and Human Services					
Health Resources and Services Administration	4	116	3	1	2
Indian Health Service	1	3	3	0	3
Other (unspecified)	17	12	12	8	4
Department of Homeland Security					
Customs and Border Protection	1	0	0	0	0
Federal Emergency Management Agency	70	265	158	58	99
Department of Housing and Urban Development					
Other (unspecified)	554	3,058	1,619	1,235	384
Department of the Interior					
Bureau of Indian Affairs	10	350	105	51	54
National Park Service	1	2	0	0	0



Federal agency and other entities	Number of form requests to NRCS	Number of acres proposed for conversion	Number of acres identified as important farmland	Of which prime or unique	Of which state or locally important
Fish and Wildlife Service	1	5	4	2	3
Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement	6	51	20	7	12
Department of Justice					
Bureau of Prisons	1	2	0	0	0
Other (unspecified)	2	23	18	18	0
Department of Transportation					
Federal Aviation Administration	31	1,359	905	573	341
Federal Highway Administration	492	19,366	9,657	7,961	1,696
Federal Railroad Administration	2	49	30	20	11
Federal Transit Administration	2	36	36	33	3
Other (unspecified)	387	1,591	688	648	39
Department of Veterans Affairs	3	271	12	12	0
Environmental Protection Agency	173	2,230	846	761	85
Federal Communications Commission	3	2	1	0	1
National Aeronautics and Space Administration	1	27	2	2	0