AGRICULTURE TASK FORCE

July 29-30, 2018 | Los Angeles

JW Marriott Los Angeles L.A. LIVE | 900 W Olympic Blvd, Los Angeles, Calif. 90015
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tr>
<td>7:50 a.m.</td>
<td>JW Marriott, 900 W. Olympic Blvd., Los Angeles, CA</td>
<td>Bus Departure. Please arrive on time, so the bus can depart from the JW Marriott Los Angeles, LA LIVE promptly at 8:00 a.m. A grab and go breakfast will be available. NCSL is grateful to the California Farm Bureau for their assistance with today’s tours.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 a.m.</td>
<td>10538 Topanga Canyon Blvd., Chatsworth, CA</td>
<td>The Valley Hive. Immerse yourself in a beekeeping experience as we learn about the importance of our pollinator friends to California agriculture and the issues they face. We’ll view a fully functioning observation hive and finish up with some raw, local honey.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Larsen’s Grill, 590 Town Center Dr., Oxnard, CA</td>
<td>Lunch. Enjoy a quick lunch and networking with your fellow Agriculture Task Force Members and invited sponsors before we continue our day’s tour to learn about a specialty fruit operation’s logistics, and challenges.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 p.m.</td>
<td>11971 Darling Road, Ventura, CA</td>
<td>Petty Ranch. Join us as we tour and learn about Petty Ranch’s specialty fruit operation (avocados, dates and other citrus specialties), farm lab and how farmers deal with the water crisis in California.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6:30 – 8 p.m.</td>
<td>Mas Malo, 515 W. 7th St., Los Angeles, CA</td>
<td>Dinner. Enjoy a brief break before dinner, where you’ll have an intimate opportunity to network with your fellow Agriculture Task Force Members and invited sponsors and guests.</td>
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| 7:30 – 8 a.m.| **Breakfast**  
Diamond 10  
The task force welcomes legislators from the Natural Resources and Infrastructure Committee and other agricultural state leaders. |
| 8 – 9 a.m.   | **From Field to Cafeteria – Partnering for Local Food Systems**  
Local food systems involve the collaboration of multiple state agencies, producers, nonprofits, and businesses. Farm-to-school programs play a key role in connecting producers to institutions and teaching youth about healthy food. Food policy councils take a system-wide approach to bring stakeholders together including schools. Learn about the Los Angeles Food Policy Council and Hawaii’s new farm to school program, including efforts to expand the program while working with private funders and multiple state agencies.  
**Breanna Hawkins**, policy director, Los Angeles Food Policy Council  
**Jayson Watts**, senior advisor, Office of Lieutenant Governor Douglas S. Chin, Hawaii |
| 9 – 10 a.m.  | **Technological Innovations in Plant and Animal Improvement**  
**Gene Editing and the Future of Agriculture**  
Technological innovation is not new to agriculture and continues to impact food safety, economics and sustainability. This session will provide information on new technologies and what policy and regulatory challenges lie ahead.  
**Val Giddings**, Ph.D., senior fellow, Information Technology and Innovation Foundation |
| 10 – 10:15 a.m. | **Break**  |
| 10:15 – 11 a.m. | **For Better or For Worse: International Trade & Agriculture**  
From changes to the North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) to the withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) to trade disputes with other nations, American agriculture is disproportionately impacted by U.S. trade policy. Join us as we hear from a former California Secretary of Food and Agriculture on how trade impacts agriculture, what state legislators should know, and what they can do to strengthen the role of the agriculture community in international trade decisions.  
**A.G. Kawamura**, board of directors, Western Growers Association; owner/partner, Orange County Producers, LLC. |
**Business Session: Legislator Roundtable and Task Force Planning**
- Review of NCSL policies and resolutions (page 10)
- What did you work on this past legislative session? What are your plans for next session?

*The following NCSL Legislative Summit sessions may be of interest to Agriculture Task Force members. All sessions will take place in the Los Angeles Convention Center. Please see the NCSL mobile app and the main agenda for more information.*

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<tr>
<td>Monday, July 30</td>
<td>Herbalife Nutrition &amp; DuPont Reception</td>
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<td>7–9 p.m.</td>
<td>Herbalife Nutrition and DuPont invite you to a reception at Herbalife Nutrition’s Corporate Office.</td>
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<td>Tuesday, July 30</td>
<td>Increasing Consumer Access to Cleaner, Healthier and Cheaper Fuels</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:15 – 1:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Americans drove more than 300 billion miles last year, emitting almost 1 billion tons of carbon dioxide. Over 90 percent of all gasoline is blended with 10 percent ethanol, resulting in cleaner air and reduced fuel costs. Join us for a lunchtime discussion of how we can continue to both reduce carbon dioxide and ozone forming emissions while reducing the price of gasoline at the pump, all without having to tell people to stop driving.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Room: 404 AB</td>
<td>Moderator: Senator Deb Peters, South Dakota, president, NCSL Executive Committee</td>
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<td>Panelists: Michael Lorenz, executive vice president of petroleum supply, Sheetz Inc. Angela Tin, vice president environmental health, American Lung Association</td>
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*NCSL is grateful for ADM’s support for this session.*
Thursday, August 2

9:45 a.m.– Noon
502 B

**Strengthening Rural Communities**
The divide between rural and urban culture and priorities is being felt across the country, including in state legislatures. As urban areas continue to grow, rural legislators increasingly find themselves having to explain the needs of rural constituents to their urban counterparts. This interactive session includes audience polling and a facilitated discussion about rural demographics and other data, with a look at how legislatures have addressed the needs of rural communities. You’ll learn about: state innovations and successes that promote rural development; legislative options and promising state strategies to improve rural initiatives; and how to clarify the rural voice within the policymaking process.

Moderator:
**P.J. Huffstutter**, agriculture reporter, Reuters News

Speaker:
**Anne Hazlett**, assistant to the secretary for rural development, U.S. Department of Agriculture

**Chris Mehl**, economist, Headwaters Institute

**Michael Santorelli**, director, advanced communications law and policy institute, New York Law School

**Senator Elaine Bowers**, Kansas

**Senator Benny Shendo**, New Mexico

**Senator Jerry Sonnenberg**, Colorado

**Martha Wigton**, director, house budget and research office, Georgia General Assembly

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NCSL gratefully acknowledges the following companies & organizations for supporting the NCSL Agriculture Task Force!

ADM

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Agriculture Division of DowDuPont™

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CropLife America

THE Scotts Miracle-Gro Company

MONSanto
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POLICY DIRECTIVES AND RESOLUTIONS

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WHEREAS, the Black Vulture is a scavenger and feeds primarily on already-dead animals; and,

WHEREAS, they also feed on living animals, often attacking birthing animals; and,

WHEREAS, the species has proliferated over the last 30 years and broadened its geographical range; and,

WHEREAS, maintenance of the species must take into consideration that the Black Vulture is protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act; and,

WHEREAS, the US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) is authorized, under certain conditions, to issue a depredation permit for Black Vultures; and,

WHEREAS, USFWS has developed pilot programs in Tennessee and Kentucky in which a single, statewide depredation permit is granted for each state; and,

WHEREAS, the holder of the statewide permit is authorized to include persons seeking relief from the damage caused by Black Vultures; and,

WHEREAS, the authorized “sub-permittees” are bound by all the terms of the primary permit.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), calls upon USFWS to make a transition in the statewide
depredation permit process from pilot program to standard operational procedure in the management of Black Vultures; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that USFWS, in each state that is experiencing livestock predation/injury from Black Vultures, determine the appropriate state agriculture/wildlife agency or non-governmental organization (NGO) recognized for farm advocacy and award that agency/NGO the aforementioned permit.
The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) believes a strong animal production agriculture capacity is imperative in maintaining domestic and international consumer confidence in the safety of the United States meat supply.

Animal Identification
NCSL believes a national animal identification program, if properly implemented in cooperation with the states and territories, could be beneficial in maintaining consumer confidence in meat from the United States, an invaluable tool in reducing and tracking future outbreaks of infectious disease, and serving as an important firewall against any attempted terrorist attack on the food production system in the United States.

Any future effort by USDA to develop a national animal identification program must be designed and implemented in full consultation with state legislatures to ensure proper attention to public interest and financial considerations. Any program must be designed and implemented in cooperation with the departments of agriculture of the states and territories. USDA must work to ensure that any animal identification system is compatible with the current inspection and enforcement systems of the state governments. Any applicable federal program should not be applied to animals involved in intrastate commerce without state consultation.

**Amendment**

Equine Industry and USDA Inspection of Horse Meat
The processing of horses has become a controversial and emotional issue, resulting in the closure of the last horse processing facility in the United States. Without affordable and economic alternatives, unwanted horses are abandoned. The nation's inadequate
and overburdened horse rescue and adoption facilities cannot begin to handle the influx. These additional unwanted horses will compete for adoption with wild horses that are currently fed and sheltered at a public expense. In the Western United States (US), the additional pressure on public lands from horses turned out to run wild is only intensifying the over-population, over-grazing, and ultimate destruction of the ecosystem.

NCSL urges members of Congress to:

- Recognize the need for humane horse processing facilities in the United States.
- Not to interfere with State efforts to establish facilities in the United States. State livestock programs that were once able to recoup the costs of caring and feeding for abandoned animals by marketing them, are now forced to greatly increase their budgets at the expense of taxpayers.
- Recognize the positive economic impact of willing market for the US horse industry. These, and ethnic markets inside the US would appreciate an additional source of high-quality protein untainted by disease concerns of other species of livestock.
- Oppose legislation that would restrict the market, transport, processing, or export of horses. Horse processing in the United States is particularly tightly regulated, and the horse is the only animal whose transportation to processing is regulated. Horse processing facilities in the United States are required to have United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) veterinarians supervise the euthanasia, and the euthanasia method is humane, according the American Veterinary Medical Association and the United States Department of Agriculture.
- Oppose limitations under federal appropriations law prohibiting the use of federal dollars to be spent on the salaries of inspectors for ante-and post mortem inspections.

**Substitute Amendment**
The processing of horses has become a controversial and emotional issue. Without affordable and economic alternatives, unwanted horses are abandoned. The nation’s inadequate and overburdened horse rescue and adoption facilities cannot handle the growing number of unwanted horses. In the Western United States (US), the additional pressure on public lands from this growing population is intensifying harm to the ecosystem from over-grazing and increasing costs to state and local governments.

**NCSL urges members of Congress to:**

Recognize the need to address the growing number of unwanted horses by increasing resources to enhance rescue and adoption while opposing legislation that would restrict slaughter when these methods fail to adequately resolve the growing population of wild and abandoned horses.

Not interfere with individual state efforts that aim to similarly address the growing population of unwanted horses.

Recognize the positive economic impact and relief of budgets at the state and national level created by the establishment of a market for the US horse industry resulting from global, cultural solutions.

Maintain current United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) horse slaughter veterinary regulations concerning supervision and euthanasia.

NCSL also urges Congress to reclassify equine as a nonamenable species

**Interstate Sale of State-Inspected Meat and Poultry**

The Farm Bill program authorizes USDA to promulgate rules to establish the parameters of the state programs. The proposed draft rule would allow these states to establish an interstate meat shipment program and request selected establishment status for those businesses who wish to remain state inspected, but wish to market
products in interstate commerce. The creation of interstate sales of state-inspected meat and poultry programs will level the economic playing field for small business, spur more competition in the marketplace, create a more uniform inspection system, and enhance consumer confidence in the food supply—all of which will benefit farmers, ranchers, processors, small business, and consumers.

NCSL supports the establishment of interstate shipment of state-inspected meat and poultry programs in qualifying states and urges USDA to create rules that facilitate the program.
The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) believes that maintaining a strong production agriculture capacity is critical to our nation’s strength and is a matter of national security. NCSL recognizes that decisions affecting American agriculture must reflect a working partnership of the federal government with the states in both the formulation and implementation of policy.

### Agricultural Fiscal Policy

NCSL urges federal efforts designed to enhance farm income while increasing agricultural exports. Monetary policies must be implemented which promote low interest rates and maintain dollar exchange rates which enhance the potential for sale of this nation's commodities in international markets. The federal government must also maintain a stable financial network capable of supplying adequate amounts of affordable credit to the agricultural industry. The government must also continue to search for innovative financing tools which enhance the ability of agricultural producers to manage risk and stabilize income. In addition, any domestic farm program must work in conjunction with a strong, aggressive export program which protects and expands our export markets.

State legislators should be represented on any working or study group for the purpose of addressing long term agriculture lending and payment needs established by Congress or the executive branch. NCSL urges Congress to review the existing payment limitations for individual farmers and program eligibility requirements to ensure that they provide support to economically efficient farming operations and promote the preservation of the family farm. In addition, the Conference recommends that all federal agricultural adjustment payments, price-support program loans, payments and other
benefits not related to soil conservation efforts be limited to citizens of this country or aliens lawfully admitted for permanent residence.

Secondary Market for Long-Term Loans: NCSL urges the federal government to work with states to assure that the provisions of the Agricultural Credit Act of 1987 continue to be fully implemented.

Bankruptcy law: NCSL supports federal legislation to permanently extend allowing farm operations to declare Chapter 12 bankruptcy.

Farm Credit System (FCS): NCSL encourages farm credit institutions to work with farmer-borrowers to restructure debt. NCSL urges that any disposition of land and assets held by the System or its units be conducted in an orderly fashion so that such disposition does not adversely affect the value of those assets or of other property within the community. NCSL also urges that FCS institutions continue to work with producers to provide necessary financing for changes in payments and crops resulting from adjustments to federal programs.

Commercial Lending Institutions: NCSL believes that as federal financial assistance is provided to member institutions of the FCS, assistance should also be provided to commercial lending institutions that provide credit to agriculture. Furthermore, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) policies and federal bank regulation procedures must be reviewed to ensure that the maximum assistance is being provided to troubled borrowers, without compromising the safety and soundness of the institution or the assets of the FDIC.

Agricultural Bonds: NCSL supports exempting agricultural bonds from the federal volume cap placed on industrial revenue bonds in each state. Furthermore, NCSL recommends that the President and U.S. Congress amend the federal Internal Revenue Code to make the use of agricultural bonds more attractive to banks and other financial
institutions. NCSL also recommends that the federal government permit deductibility for loans financed by issuers that are not necessarily small issuers as defined by the Internal Revenue Code.

**Crop Insurance:** NCSL supports a state-federal partnership to develop a fair and affordable crop insurance program that complements other risk management tools available in the marketplace for all crops. NCSL supports an efficient program that promotes informed production and management decisions. NCSL also supports federal efforts to encourage private-sector development of innovative risk management tools. However, any plan for crop insurance must not adversely impact a state's ability to levy premium taxes, regulate the business of private insurance or set solvency standards for private crop insurers.

**Marketing**
NCSL seeks a federal policy that will sustain a vibrant agricultural marketplace and strong farm economy while providing for competition and fair practices. The federal government should cooperate fully with states' efforts to supplement private sector marketing programs by providing comprehensive marketing, promotion and market development activities. These should include, at a minimum, sustained commitments to the provision of data on market trends and consumer demands, technical assistance, financial assistance and public education campaigns.

Special emphasis must be placed upon the development of new markets through the creation of demand for new crops or products or additional sources of demand for existing commodities and products; the improvement of linkages between buyers and sellers; a shift toward the sale of processed, not raw, commodities and high value cash crops; and the identification and analysis of potential markets. All parties, both public and private sector, must work together to develop effective strategies to exploit those opportunities fully and to maintain an ongoing ability to respond to changing consumer demands.
**Direct Marketing Arrangements:** NCSL recommends that Congress review the Packers and Stockyards Act as a mechanism for addressing unfair practices that may occur under direct marketing arrangements, monitor activities in this area, and enact appropriate and timely legislation to safeguard the welfare of producers. NCSL urges Congress and USDA to strengthen and diligently enforce the provisions of the Packers and Stockyards Act in concert with the clear intent of the Act to curb monopolistic abuses in the concentrated meatpacking sector.

**Competition**

Family farmers ultimately derive their income from the agricultural marketplace. Congress must set rules to improve the competitive environment of agriculture so that farmers are able to retain a greater portion of their income.

**Natural Resource Conservation**

All federal government actions affecting natural resources should be conducted in close cooperation and only after consultation and coordination with the states. A strong commitment to conduct research, in the area of improved methods of natural resource conservation and protection, must be maintained. The federal government should work with state and local governments to develop agricultural land use policies, but should leave the responsibility for establishment of these policies to the state and local governments. NCSL favors a block grant approach that gives states maximum flexibility. NCSL supports the use of science, technology and effective practices to reduce nutrient losses to water, including nitrogen and phosphorus, from point and nonpoint sources.

We encourage significant federal investment in state-supported projects -- with an emphasis on watershed-based public-private partnerships -- that provide for accountability and transparency, as evidenced by the establishment of goals, timelines, milestones, monitoring, measurement and regular public reporting documenting improvements in the quality of water in public waterways. Fundamentally, NCSL
believes that states must be given a much stronger voice in ensuring that federal
wetlands, endangered species, and land management policies respect the rights of
local landowners and states.

**Wetlands and Endangered Species**
The federal government should delegate authority to states for the development,
administration, and enforcement of wetlands protection and endangered species
programs. The national government, acting through USDA, should set broad national
goals and standards for wetlands protection and preservation of endangered species,
but states should have the flexibility to meet those goals. The federal government,
furthermore, should provide financial and technical assistance as incentives to
encourage states to assume primacy over wetlands and endangered species programs.

**Pollinator Health**
NCSL recognizes the importance of pollinators and stresses the negative ramifications
of continued pollinator loss, while supporting federal efforts to protect pollinators. We
also recognize the key roles that the federal government plays as a landowner and
manager, regulator of pesticide products, and financial and technical assistance
provider to farmers and other private landowners. As such NCSL supports and calls
upon the federal government to:
- develop best management practices and enhance pollinator habitat on
  federally owned or managed lands;
- incorporate pollinator health as a component of all future federal restoration
  and reclamation projects;
- revise guidance documents for designed landscapes and public buildings in
  order to incorporate pollinator-friendly practices;
- increase both the acreage and forage value of pollinator habitat in the
  Conservation Reserve Program and other federal conservation programs;
- provide technical assistance in collaboration with land-grant university-based
cooperative extension services to federal departments and agencies, state, local, and tribal governments, and other entities and individuals including farmers and ranchers;

- assist states and state wildlife organizations, as appropriate, in identifying and implementing projects to conserve pollinators through the revision and implementation of State Wildlife Action Plans;
- assess the effects of systemic pesticides and parasites on bee and other pollinator health and take corresponding action, as appropriate, to protect pollinators from pesticides and parasites;
- take immediate measures to support pollinators with proper habitat and nutrition during the current growing season and thereafter, including planting pollinator-friendly vegetation, increasing flower diversity in plantings, limiting mowing practices, and reduce or avoid, when necessary, the use of pesticides in sensitive pollinator habitats through the use of integrated vegetation, pest and colony management practices; and
- work closely with the states to align pollinator protection efforts and share best practices.

NCSL and the states identify as willing partners in the federal government’s pollinator protection efforts and will closely monitor federal actions and progress on these, and related efforts of utmost importance to the states and our nation’s food supply, urban and rural agriculture economies, environment and natural resources.

**Land Management**

Devolution of authority to states should also be a goal of federal land management policies. Demonstration projects should be established to determine if state administration of national forests, grasslands, parks and other federal property will result in cost savings to taxpayers and greater sensitivity to the concerns of local citizens and property owners. NCSL, moreover, encourages Congress and federal agencies to hold
hearings and public meetings in order to hear the concerns of state and local officials
and of ordinary citizens and property holders regarding the impact of federal
landownership and regulation.

Soil Conservation
NCSL supports an ongoing education program to make certain that producers are fully
aware of the need for proper soil conservation practices and of the best methods to use
in their implementation. Diligent efforts must be made by the federal government to
ensure that proper soil conservation practices are adopted and that fragile, erodible land
is protected.

NCSL supports requiring that each farm have and follow an approved soil and water
conservation plan in order to obtain government assistance. Benefits may be denied if a
crop is grown in violation of this requirement. Further, NCSL supports continued
extension of the Conservation Reserve Program and federal efforts to protect
pollinators, including those that are vital to American food production.

Cover Crop Research
NCSL supports federal efforts to further the development of and proliferation and use of
cover crops given the growing concerns about water quality, soil fertility, weed control,
nematode control, water retention and biodiversity. NCSL recognizes that cover crops
have proven to increase yields in university studies as well as in replicated farm
research; are an increasingly popular way to keep soil healthy; helps reduce the need
for Nitrogen and other nutrients, and create a healthier soil environment that resists
disease and pests; inhibit weed growth by shading them out, by preventing emergence,
and by compounds exuded by the roots; are shown to reduce populations of pathogenic
nematodes and encourage populations of beneficial ones; break up soil compaction
whether it is naturally occurring or a result of heavy cultivation and tillage; add diversity
to the natural biological life in heavily farmed soils, often working in synergy with cash
Research and Development

NCSL supports the state-federal partnership in agricultural research at state universities. Furthermore, funds must be made available to support research and development of innovative products. Funds should also be used for dissemination of information about research discoveries both domestically and abroad. It is particularly important that the land grant universities maintain their commitment to agricultural research and development and that the federal government provide sufficient research dollars to support this vital effort.

NCSL urges the federal government to maintain a strong research program for the development of adequate, cost-effective and environmentally sound control measures to ensure the eradication of all insect and plant pests and animal diseases, which should be done in close cooperation with the states. Using existing mechanisms and institutions, the federal government should work with the states in providing the basic training and retraining opportunities necessary for the successful operation of an agricultural enterprise and for the continuing adjustment of producers to changing conditions in agriculture.

Intellectual Property Rights in Publicly Funded Research

NCSL calls on Congress to review the Bayh-Dole Act of 1980 and subsequent amendments for its impact on encouraging concentration and vertical integration within the agricultural sector, and for its consistency with the mission and purpose of the Land Grant College system. Further, Congress should increase federal support for agricultural research, and retain through grant and contract provisions greater portions of technology arising from such research within the public domain. Congress should also affirm as objectives of the Land Grant Colleges' agricultural research mission to achieve broad dissemination and producer access to crop technology, and preserve
and enhance the income and economic opportunities of producers.

**Beginning Farmer Programs**
NCSL supports a state-federal partnership to confront challenges faced by farmers and beginning farmers, including the use of federal tax incentives to support state-based development and loan programs. NCSL supports changes to the federal Internal Revenue code that reduce borrowing costs for qualifying farmers and strengthen state beginning farmer programs. NCSL is particularly supportive of beginning farmer and other training programs that provide assistance for military veterans and limited-resource farmers. Furthermore, NCSL supports raising the total volume of state bonding authority to free resources for beginner farmer programs if achieved in a manner consistent with a balanced federal budget.

In collaboration with state governments, as well as public and private local partners, NCSL supports investment in joint research, demonstration and development of food systems that provide opportunity to young and beginning farmers with limited assets, to produce and deliver affordable, healthy, fresh, nutritious food to consumers within the local and regional markets where the producers operate, toward a goal of national food self-sufficiency and optimal health.

**Agriculture Biofuels**
NCSL believes that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) should be the lead federal agency to examine regulatory issues as they develop for the algaculture (Farming Algae) industry.

**Support State Regulation of Agricultural Biotechnology**
NCSL supports the responsible use of the beneficial qualities of agricultural biotechnology such as in improved crop production techniques, pharmaceuticals, anti-immune disease control, biodegradable plastics, and other potential benefits to people in their states, the nation, the world and the global environment. NCSL supports the
continued regulation of agricultural biotechnology through state and territorial
governments working in close collaboration and partnership with the Coordinated
Framework for Regulation of Biotechnology administered by the U.S. Environmental
Protection Agency (EPA), USDA, and U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

**Industrial Hemp Farming**

NCSL supports federal legislation to define industrial hemp as a distinct agricultural crop
(1% or less THC content) and allow states to regulate commercial hemp farming.
Currently 33 states have laws allowing hemp research or farming. NCSL believes that
hemp has a long history as a sustainable and a profitable crop, and has great potential
as a new crop for American agriculture and industry. According to Vote Hemp, an
estimated $687 million worth of hemp products were sold in the U.S. in 2016, including
foods, body care products, clothing, auto parts, building materials, and paper. Most of
these products were made from imported hemp due to federal policy that prohibits
commercial hemp farming. NCSL believes that federal policies that obstruct industrial
hemp farming are outdated and must be changed.

**Avian Flu Response**

The highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) represents a significant threat to U.S. agriculture
and the ability of our farmers to feed a growing world population. The federal government plays
a key role in harnessing resources and providing assistance to farmers, states, and others
affected by the virus. NCSL fully supports:

- federal efforts to protect poultry production and the nation's food supply by
  aggressively working to contain and remEDIATE outbreaks when they occur;
- federal efforts to serve as technical advisors and the clearinghouse of information
  for all sectors and employing time sensitive approaches to sharing information;
- federal agencies working closely with the states to align HPAI efforts and share
  best practices; and
- increasing federal funding necessary for state and federal agencies to continue
  development of biosecurity containment strategies; more aggressive research
into the causes of avian influenza; why some fowl are more susceptible; and prevention measures, including the development of vaccines that can be taken.

Wildfire Funding

Due to the significant increases in suppression costs in the last decade, funding transfers have depleted resources from vital fire prevention and mitigation programs. Further, increased fire activity can have substantially negative impacts on air quality, water quality, greenhouse gas emissions as well as the reduction of downstream water storage as sediment runoff lowers the effective level of dams and reservoirs; Additionally, reduced restoration and mitigation funding makes it easier for invasive pests and diseases to infest vulnerable forests; and the anticipated changes in climate will also cause fire risk to escalate in drought-ridden regions, further increasing wildfire suppression costs. Therefore, NCSL urges the federal government to:

- maintain budget mechanisms for wildfire suppression in order to fund catastrophic fires as natural disasters adopted as part of the Fiscal Year 2018 budget agreement that minimizes the risk of fire transfers from prevention and mitigation programs.
- Manage wildfires on a regional basis, understanding that increased risk for wildfires on federal lands ultimately will lead to increased costs for state wildfire programs.
COMMITTEE: NATURAL RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

POLICY: CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE

TYPE: DRAFT RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) affects cervids such as deer, elk, and moose and has been detected in more than twenty states; and

WHEREAS, the states currently grappling with CWD are incurring significant costs to respond to the disease, often requiring the wildlife management agencies to divert limited resources from other vital activities; and

WHEREAS, bills proposed in the United States Senate and House of Representatives would fund crucial CWD research and provide federal support to states to address and contain the spread of CWD.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Conference of State Legislatures urges swift enactment of federal legislation such as the Chronic Wasting Disease Management Act (H.R. 4454, 115) or the Chronic Wasting Disease Support for States Act (S. 2252, 115) that will provide federal resources that are crucial to effectively address this multi-state wildlife management crisis.
WHEREAS, farmers and ranchers, due to the nature of their work and a shortage of resources for rural mental health, suffer higher rates of depression and suicide than other professions; and

WHEREAS, difficult economic conditions are placing additional strain on our nation’s farmers and ranchers and their families. The United States Department of Agriculture projects that net farm income will fall once again in 2018, continuing a sustained downward trend that began in 2014; and

WHEREAS, the federal government can play a vital role in addressing this crisis by providing the states with additional resources for rural mental health services that are tailored to the unique needs of farmers, ranchers, and their families.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT BE RESOLVED, that the National Conference of State Legislatures urges Congress to include in the pending Farm Bill, funding for states to address this urgent need and assist our nation's farmers, ranchers, and their family members during this time of great financial stress in American agriculture.