



FIGHTING FOR SOUND CONSERVATION PRACTICES IN SOUTH DAKOTA

South Dakota farmers and ranchers are the original conservationists, and Senator Thune has prioritized conservation policies that help producers maintain land and resources for generations to come.

Through his involvement in drafting four farm bills, Senator Thune has fought for improvements to programs and policies that play a critical role in supporting South Dakota producers' conservation efforts.

Highlights of Senator Thune's Commitment to Conservation

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

- South Dakota has more than 1.7 million acres enrolled in General, Continuous, and Grasslands CRP, which helps support wildlife habitat that contributes to South Dakota's hunting and recreation economy.
- In the 2018 farm bill, Sen. Thune [secured](#) an increase in the CRP acreage cap and improved haying and grazing flexibility, including during difficult drought conditions, on CRP acres.
- During the 2021 drought, Sen. Thune [urged](#) the U.S. Department of Agriculture to provide emergency haying flexibility, and he [introduced](#) the CRP Flexibility Act, which would allow emergency CRP haying during the primary nesting season, in consultation with state technical committees, when certain conditions are met.

Soil Health and Income Protection Program (SHIPP)

- Sen. Thune [secured](#) the inclusion of SHIPP in the 2018 farm bill. SHIPP is a voluntary income protection program that provides participating farmers with a short-term acreage conserving use program, which unlike traditional CRP only requires a commitment of three to five years. SHIPP is authorized and funded as a 50,000-acre pilot program in South Dakota and five other Prairie Pothole Region states.
- Sen. Thune [worked](#) closely with USDA to rollout SHIPP and later [secured](#) an additional sign-up opportunity and improvements to the program.

Supporting Cover Crop Adaptation

- Sen. Thune [introduced](#) the Cover Crop Flexibility Act, which would remove the prohibition on harvesting or grazing cover crops on prevented plant acres before the arbitrary November 1 date restriction without reduction in payment.
- Sen. Thune secured relief from the November 1 rule in [2019](#) and [2020](#), and in 2022, USDA [announced](#) a permanent solution that allows producers with crop insurance to hay, graze, or chop cover crops at any time and receive 100 percent of their prevented planting payment.