



Conservation Reserve Program - Maryland State Enhancement Program

USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) and Maryland have agreed on a plan to implement the Conservation Reserve Program's (CRP) State Enhancement Program in the vicinity of the Chesapeake Bay. A natural resource of national significance of special environmental sensitivity, the Chesapeake Bay was previously designated a CRP national conservation priority area making all land within that area basically eligible for enrollment.

USDA and Maryland, in cooperation with other Federal, State, and local authorities, seek to take actions to help reduce the occurrence of runoff, sediment, and nutrients in the Chesapeake Bay and which will promote enhanced wildlife habitats.

Acreage enrollment targets are:

- (1) Riparian buffers, 70,000 acres;
- (2) Wetland restoration not to exceed 10,000 acres; and

- (3) Highly erodible land with an erodibility index greater than 15, within 1,000 feet of a stream or other water body, not to exceed 20,000 acres.

CCC will pay up to 50 percent of the reimbursable costs of conservation practices up to a maximum of \$600 per acre not to exceed 50 percent of the land value. Maryland will pay up to 37.5 percent of the cost associated with planting long-term resource conserving cover or restoring the wetlands. Maryland will also provide technical support to all applicants.

A special incentive payment will be made by USDA in an amount up to:

- (1) 70 percent of the rental rate, for land to be established to riparian buffers;
- (2) 50 percent of the rental rate, for land to be established to grass filter strips; and
- (3) 50 percent of the rental rate, for wetland restoration, certain highly erodible land, and other land.

Maryland will establish a voluntary program for the purchase of perpetual easements for CRP land but will not require actions that are contrary to the CRP contract.

Producers may also otherwise offer eligible acreage for general or continuous CRP.

CRP is a CCC program implemented through the Farm Service Agency.

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