

WASHINGTON, Jan. 17, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- American Farmland Trust today applauded Congressional action on the fiscal year 2014 omnibus appropriations bill which increases funding for conservation technical assistance and fully funds the Farm and Ranchland Protection Program, according to Andrew McElwaine, President and CEO of AFT.

"The action by Congress to fully fund the Farm and Ranchland Protection Program is welcome news and reaffirms the federal government's commitment to protecting farmland and keeping farmers on the land," said McElwaine. "We are also pleased that Congress is increasing technical assistance funds for the Natural Resources Conservation Service."

The omnibus budget bill does not implement the \$150 technical services fee adopted by Congress in December as part of the two-year budget agreement.

"While we applaud action on the budget, American Farmland Trust remains opposed to the \$150 conservation technical assistance fee Congress adopted in December," said McElwaine. "Reducing nutrients from farm runoff costs almost 60 percent less than the same reduction from a sewage treatment plant. We should be rewarding farmers who voluntarily put conservation plans in place. Instead we're going to charge them."

"We look forward to Congressional action in the near future on the full Farm Bill to resolve the many outstanding issues that have left farm families uncertain about their future and consumers vulnerable to food price increases," said McElwaine.

American Farmland Trust is the nation's leading conservation organization dedicated to protecting farmland, promoting sound farming practices and keeping farmers on the land.

For more information on the policies and programs of American Farmland Trust, visit www.far

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