

1 COMMITTEE: Agriculture and Energy
2 POLICY: DOD Matching Funds-Federal Conservation Programs
3 (Military Affairs)
4 TYPE OF POLICY: Draft Policy ResolutionExisting
5 STATUS: Expiring Action Item; Requires Re-Approval
6

7 ~~The sustainability and long-term viability of many Department of Defense installations and~~
8 ~~ranges continue to be threatened by incompatible development and loss of habitat in areas in~~
9 ~~the vicinity of or ecologically related to those installations and ranges.~~ **The National**
10 **Conference of State Legislatures believes that the Department of Defense's** (DoD)
11 Sustainable Ranges Initiative (SRI) and in particular the Readiness and Environmental
12 Protection Initiative (REPI), has been highly effective, within the limits of available resources,
13 in protecting DoD bases. **However, NCSL considers that** truly effective steps to protect
14 those bases requires much better integration of the conservation programs of other federal
15 agencies with the efforts of DoD and its SRI/REPI partners. ~~A critical step in enhancing the~~
16 ~~collaboration between DoD and other federal agencies would be to~~ **As such, NCSL**
17 **supports the enactment of** legislation allowing funds provided by DoD to protect bases from
18 encroachment to qualify as match or cost share in the conservation programs of the
19 Department of Agriculture and other federal agencies.
20

21 ~~One example is the Farmland Protection Program (FPP) of the U.S. Department of~~
22 ~~Agriculture. The FPP provides funds to State, Tribal and Local Governments, as well as non-~~
23 ~~governmental organizations to assist in the purchase of development rights to farm and~~
24 ~~ranchlands with the purpose of maintaining the agricultural uses of those lands.~~
25

26 ~~Prior to the 2008 Farm Bill, The FPP (formerly the FRPP- Farm and Ranchland Protection~~
27 ~~Program) provided additional benefits as well. DoD was able to use its funds to assist States,~~
28 ~~local governments, and non-governmental organizations in meeting the matching funds~~
29 ~~requirements of the FRPP for a number of easements on lands that abut military installations~~
30 ~~in states such as South Carolina, Kansas and Oklahoma. By preserving these agricultural~~
31 ~~lands and limiting the residential and commercial development on these properties, the DoD~~

32 ~~was able to achieve mutual objectives of land conservation and preventing development of~~
33 ~~critical open areas adjacent to military installations and thereby preserving DoD's ability to~~
34 ~~test and train on those installations without acquiring any new land for DoD ownership.~~

35

36 ~~However, with the passage of the 2008 Farm Bill, the Farmland Protection Program was~~
37 ~~reauthorized and modified to become a grant program similar to other federal land~~
38 ~~conservation easement programs. According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service~~
39 ~~(NRCS) which administers the FPP the changes made to the program in the 2008 Farm~~
40 ~~Bill had the unintended result of terminating NRCS's authority to accept matching funds from~~
41 ~~the DoD.~~

42

43 **NCSL believes that t**The Farmland Protection Program **(FPP)** has~~d~~ been successful in
44 maintaining farm and ranchlands for agricultural uses while simultaneously offering a great
45 benefit to the communities surrounding military installations. **As such,** NCSL believes that
46 **the ability to use DoD funds as matching funds should be restored to Farm and**
47 **Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP) program, Department of Agriculture**
48 **conservation programs in the 2012 Farm Bill and all other federal conservation**
49 **programs due to** the mutual benefits to landowners, conservation, and the military.
50 ~~experienced under the former (FRPP) by the ability to use DoD funds as matching funds~~
51 ~~should be restored to that program, Department of Agriculture conservation programs in the~~
52 ~~2012 Farm Bill and all other federal conservation programs. NCSL also believes that the~~
53 ~~mutual and reinforcing benefits to farmers, ranchers, local communities, outdoor recreation,~~
54 ~~and the military experienced under the FPP prior to the 2008 Farm Bill should also be~~
55 ~~extended to all other federal conservation easement programs through the enactment of~~
56 ~~legislation specifically authorizing the use of DoD funds as match or cost share in any such~~
57 ~~programs.~~

58