The Community Food & Water and Farm Bill addresses the enduring challenges of climate resiliency by empowering communities and farmers with a comprehensive set of economic tools to establish successful, locally-adapted food and water economies designed to depend on healthy ecosystems to sustain life and cool the planet.

Pragmatic Solution to an Economic Problem

Whether we shop at a farmers’ market, belong to a CSA or a food co-op—even if we grow our own food, everyone pays the cost of the industrial food chain. Communities are tethered to a food economy that is unsustainable. We need an economic solution to this economic problem.

The purpose of the Community Food & Water and Farm Bill is to take our right to a publicly funded regenerative food economy seriously—placing it firmly in the public agenda as a practical necessity.

The idea of establishing every community as an economic engine for sustainable living is neither naïve nor unrealistic. It is the only pragmatic solution to the challenges of food and water security and climate change.

All communities must be organized to participate in and benefit from economies designed to be resilient in the face of climate change.

Together, we can leverage our need to meet climate readiness goals to demand public investments and policies that empower communities and farmers with the economic tools necessary to transform local communities into engines for sustainable living.
Why This Bill is Needed

Every community shares the risks and responsibility to organize economies that sustain life and vitality of ecosystems. Right now, communities do not have the economic tools they need to care for themselves and the planet. Public resources are tied up in the industrial food chain—the very industry whose success depends on practices that create greenhouse gases, food and water scarcity, soil and water contamination and biodiversity destruction.

We cannot afford to continue to subsidize an economic system that erodes the very foundation for sustaining life today and for future generations.

Where We Are Now

There are three things fuel the current food economy:

- Billions of public dollars (annual subsidies)
- Public policy (as defined by the Farm Bill)
- Trade arrangements (crafted to create markets for the products the industry produces)

Together these provide a powerful combination of tools. It is a winning combination.

How We Turn the Tables

The Community Food & Water and Farm Bill adopts this same combination, but redirects the public investments, replaces the Farm Bill, and establishes trade arrangements that are fair to people and the planet.

We need a publicly funded food and water economy—just not the one we have now

What This Bill Does

1. Over the next decade, the COMMUNITY FOOD & WATER and FARM BILL directs public dollars to create a comprehensive economic infrastructure to:
   - Establish successful, local and regional economies dependent on regenerative food and water systems to capture carbon and sustain life
   - Revive native and perennial landscapes and ecosystem health
   - Establish a holistic research system to capture Local Ecological Knowledge (LEK) to support enduring regenerative food and water economies
   - Establish fair trade arrangements to advance local and regionally-organized regenerative economies globally
   - Establish legal infrastructure grounded in Community Rights and Rights of Nature

2. Places the right to food and water at the center of every local economy and integral to their success

3. Restores health to ecosystems and cools the planet

4. Aligns our public investments with our needs to establish successful local economies defined by equity and regenerative design to provide a strong foundation for the future
COMMUNITY FOOD & WATER and FARM BILL

Why This Bill Is Important

Problem

70% of the world's freshwater is used to irrigate a handful of commodity crops produced for the industrial food chain. Thousands of miles of water sources and soils are contaminated by the industry's use of toxic chemicals. The industry's practices contribute to greenhouse gases and economic and food insecurity in communities across the globe.

While eroding the foundation for sustaining life, the industry claims that this approach is needed to feed the world.

Climate change demands that we challenge this claim.

Opportunity

Authentic food and water security and climate readiness are in effect two sides of the same coin. Local ecosystem health is the key to both. Regenerative food systems can be adapted to local conditions and provide a wealth of food using practices that depend on healthy ecosystems, plant and seed diversity and animals. With every acre of land restored to health and food produced sustainably, communities can capture carbon and meet their goals for climate readiness. With our public investments driving regenerative economies, communities can be engines for sustainable living.

Every Community an Engine for Sustainable Living

Every community is impacted by the demands of climate, so each community needs to have a plan to respond and the economic tools to implement it. To maximize success, the economy must be designed to ensure that all members of any given community can participate and benefit from the new economy.

The challenges of climate and food and water security are significant, so organizing an economy designed to help communities live and work together as neighbors is essential. Facing a common challenge, urban and rural communities have a powerful incentive to collaborate to meet goals outlined by city, county and state comprehensive plans. Those plans can guide decisions for strategic investments to support local economic development defined by equity and regenerative systems.

Climate Adaptation Is Not a New Concept

For thousands of years, communities operating in challenging climates across the globe worked in partnership with nature to design successful, locally-adapted food economies and generated a wealth of diverse sources of food and seed while protecting the vitality of ecosystems.

Today, we face a similar challenge and must have an economy designed to manage it successfully.

https://www.justfoodandwater.org
What Needs to Change

1. Rights for Nature

Under the current structure of law, Nature has no rights. She is treated as property. Natural systems sustain life, but they have no protection.

For decades, the practices of industrial food systems have contaminated millions of acres of ecosystems with chemicals, destroyed forests and native grasslands.

That same industry uses 70% of the world's fresh water to irrigate commodity crops. In regions where industrial agriculture operates, aquifers are disappearing. The Ogallala located in the Great Plains of the United States—one of the world's largest aquifers will be gone in 30 years if irrigation continues at the current rate. Other aquifers face a similar fate.

http://www.waterencyclopedia.com/Oc-Po/Ogallala-Aquifer.html#ixzz4ahqm2si3

2. Rights for Communities

Under current legal structure, our inalienable right to life and well being can be preempted by state and federal laws granting corporations permission to use and abuse the land and water we rely on. So if a company identifies a location for a mining operation or an industrial hog farm or any similar industry, it simply has to complete a permitting process to gain access to that location. Local communities are not protected from this kind of economic ‘development’.

This presents both a challenge and an opportunity.

Communities have been fighting back by organizing and writing local ordinances designed to override the state and federal laws. These efforts have helped communities to identify what they value and establish legal protections for those values.

(For information: Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund celdf.org)

3. Economic Rights for Everyone-Foundation for Thriving Communities

All members of a community have the inalienable right to live, participate and thrive in economies designed to sustain the health and well-being of the community and recognizing the common needs of the population including affordable and accessible sources of these necessities: food and water, housing and land, transportation, education, childcare, eldercare, comprehensive healthcare, economic opportunity and just compensation for all forms of employment.

Even in the best of times, our society and our government have failed to honor these inalienable rights. Climate change provides an opportunity to set a new course that aligns our values and aspirations with our public investments.

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4. Economy of Food Cultivation-Local Regenerative Food Systems

Between 44% and 57% of all greenhouse emissions come from the publicly subsidized industrial food chain. Contributing to those numbers are practices of deforestation, large scale cultivation with toxic chemicals, transportation, processing and packaging, waste and retail and freezing. Economic dependence on this system tethers communities to an economy that cannot be sustained. Communities need an economic solution to this economic problem. Locally-adapted regenerative economies are designed to depend on practices that nurture the health and well-being of people and the ecosystems that sustain them.

https://www.grain.org/article/entries/4357-food-and-climate-change-the-forgotten-link

5. Necessary Reforms and Restoration of Rights

In the current economy shaped by the Industrial Food Chain, small scale producers are marginalized. These are the changes needed to empower these communities:

• Restore right to freely save, plant, exchange, sell and breed seeds and livestock
• Agrarian reform-right to land, water, forests, fishing, foraging, hunting
• Remove regulations to block local markets and diversity
• Direct public $ for research (to small scale producers)
• Establish fair wages, working conditions
• Fair trade determined by peasant-led policies

What Success Looks Like

Communities Thrive: Public Investments Aligned with Needs

Every community has a plan to be climate-ready and food and water secure and the public investments to implement it. Local economies are organized to depend on healthy ecosystems to produce food.

Urban and Rural Communities Connected by Common Purpose

With the right to food and water integral to the success of local economies, urban and rural communities will establish vibrant networks for collaboration across regions and borders.

Landscapes Transformed

• Regenerative farming and food sources integral to every local economy
• Regenerative farming and culinary arts’ professions are highly respected and desirable professions
• Perennial landscape economies designed to restore vital biodiversity are the norm
• Soil Economies-designed to capture carbon, sustain pollinators and biodiversity and source food in rural and urban communities
• Water economies-designed to rejuvenate aquifers, conserve water, and sustain life

• Neighborhood Food Hubs-operating like a public library for food—a resource available for people of all ages to participate and offering a variety of options of locally-sourced, affordable food (prepared daily), culinary arts center, a gathering space

• Neighborhood Farmers’ Markets with connections to rural and urban farming systems

• Urban and Rural Research Centers-designed to elevate the professions related to food and water and advance local ecological knowledge and comprehensive skills for food sourcing, preservation, preparation, delivery and storage

• Restored ecosystems

• Thriving, healthy communities with public resources dedicated to providing common needs including: affordable and accessible sources of food and water, comprehensive healthcare, housing and land, transportation, education, childcare, eldercare, and provide economic opportunity with just compensation for all forms of employment.

Regenerative Systems Everywhere
Regenerative design rewards practices and behaviors that help communities live sustainably and nurture well-being of its members and the landscapes in which they live. Transitioning to regenerative economies offers communities the opportunity to create new businesses and pursuits that support sustainable living.

Soil Biology Revived
Healthy soil captures carbon, absorbs and retains water and nourishes plants. We need soil economies designed to nourish the health and well being of soil.

Water Systems Restored
Run off from industrial agriculture (pesticides, fertilizers) destroy the biology of water systems. Ecosystems recover when industrial agriculture is eliminated.

Pollinators Revived
Economic investments in healthy ecosystems will provide habitats for pollinators to thrive.

How This Bill Changes Farming
Locally-adapted Economies of Food Cultivation
We can meet the demands of climate with a farming system designed to work in partnership with Nature. To do this we need to increase the number of small-scale local farmers in every landscape and provide effective economic infrastructure to ensure their success. This precludes use of competitive grants currently offered to farmers operating outside of the industrial food system. Investments must be adequate to transform local economies and sustain success.
Regenerative Farmers

The bill directs public investments to **establish or augment** systems that successfully depend on healthy ecosystems.

For farmers **currently** engaging in organic, regenerative agriculture, subsidies would support their operations to develop:

- Research: on-site research system for capturing local ecological knowledge
- Seed and plant exchange (local and regional)
- Soil, water and pollinator economy-augmentation, restoration, landscaping
- Aquifer restoration
- Ecosystem design planning for diversification
- Farm habitat-adequate facilities for personnel, staff, storage, delivery, production
- Leadership training and network facilitation
- 365 Local Food-year-round system for producing food including greenhouses, storage facilities
- Crop insurance
- Affordable healthcare and dental care provided by a single payer system to maximize benefits and minimize costs and waste

We Need Thousands of Successful Small-Scale Farmers

To advance development of **new** regenerative farms subsidies provided for:

- Land access
- Training and mentor programs
- Equipment and facilities
- All of the items outlined for current farmers (see list above)

Farmers Producing Commodity Crops

This set of farmers will be provided with a public subsidy to participate in a transition plan linking local climate readiness goals to landscape rehabilitation, carbon sequestration and economic dependence on regenerative systems.

The **HEAL the EARTH to COOL the PLANET** campaign eliminates subsidies for industrial-scale crops and directs that public resource to restore the health and diversity of landscapes and water systems.

Under this initiative, farmers receive a financial subsidy for:

- An annual income during time when the land is recovering from chemical contamination
- Transition planning options (land transfer, division or reorganization for regenerative farming)
- Participate in planning for landscape restoration-perennial landscapes
- Participate in training for regenerative, diversified farming
- Creation of new regenerative farming system in partnership with local community

We need to keep in mind that in our current economy, farmers are paid to produce commodity crops for the industry. It is reasonable to conclude that they would not plant these crops without a subsidy and a market created to sell them.

To achieve our goals, farmers need to be compensated to participate in the regenerative economy.
Our Neighbors in the Global South

Subsidies provided to expand the industrial food chain will be redirected to support the economic success of locally-adapted, small scale farming communities in the Global South.

This is significant departure from current agriculture policy that has promoted industrial agriculture and destabilized small-scale food producing communities resulting in forced migration, economic insecurity, loss of land and food and water scarcity.

Today, small-scale producers feed 70% of the world’s people using less than 25% of agricultural lands and approximately 10% of agricultural use of fossil energy and 20% of water. It does this while protecting biodiversity and capturing carbon.¹

We need small-scale producers to be able to live and thrive in the places they call home and continue to play a significant role as food producers and the custodians of local habitats.

Farming (and fishing and pastoralist) communities will be offered the same economic tools provided to farmers in the United States. (See the list above outlining supports for farmers.)

Organizations That Support Regenerative Economies

Across the country, a variety of organizations have emerged in rural and urban landscapes to support organically-produced food and small-sale farmers, urban farming and gardening. Public investment from the Community Food & Water and Farm Bill would help these organizations to continue their work including the vital work of community organizing.

To schedule a live presentation about this project

Email: info@justfoodandwater.org

¹ According to the ETC Group Report (etcgroup.org/whowillfeedus), food sovereignty through the members of the Peasant Food Web is the basis for food security. The Web is decentralized, has a labor base and local ecological knowledge and seeds. With the right policies, land and rights, peasant led regenerative strategies could double or triple rural employment, substantially reduce pressure for migration, improve nutritional quality and eliminate hunger while slashing GHG emissions by more than 90%.

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