

# SBARE ASK: Program Support Funds for State Soil Conservation Committee

**On behalf of North Dakota's 54 soil conservation districts (SCDs), we respectfully request an increase in state support.**

- Across the state, SCDs employ 97 full-time and 37 part-time staff, but turnover is high, especially in rural areas, largely due to an inability to provide competitive salaries and benefits.
- This workforce is the backbone of the conservation system and provides support to rural producers and communities.
- Strengthening SCDs helps to sustain services that protect North Dakota's soil and water resources for current and future use.

## Statewide Contributions, 2023-2025:

Over the last two years, soil conservation districts have delivered measurable results:



**Soil Health:** Seeded **5,718 acres of cover crops** and **17,881 acres of grasslands**, improving soil function, forage and habitat.



**Tree Planting and Erosion Control:** Installed over **1,467 miles of weed barrier**, planted **63,453 trees by hand** and machine-planted more than **1,375 miles of tree rows**, enough to surround North Dakota's borders.



**Producer Engagement:** Hosted **6,014 participants** at workshops and field days, completed **978 field visits** and provided more than **9,784 hours of direct technical assistance**.



**Science-driven Support:** Delivered **1,043 hours of soil testing** and **1,178 hours of soil mapping**, giving producers the data they need to make informed decisions

These results are more than just numbers and reflect real benefits for the state of North Dakota. Cover crops and grasslands build organic matter, reduce erosion and boost yields, helping producers achieve higher productivity on healthier soils. Windbreaks and other conservation practices act as powerful tools for risk management, protecting farms from drought, flooding and extreme weather. They also provide direct livestock benefits by improving calving survival, reducing feed costs and offering valuable fall and spring forage. In addition, conservation strengthens communities by ensuring cleaner water, reducing dust, making roads safer in winter and supporting wildlife habitat.

## Why Increased Support Matters

- Expands districts' capacity to deliver conservation at the local level.
- Leverages state dollars to secure federal matching funds, multiplying impact.
- Protects soil and water resources for future generations.
- Strengthens local leadership and ensures conservation remains rooted in the community.

## Conclusion and Call to Action

Increased state support for SCD staffing is needed to build on these accomplishments. To increase soil conservation district capacity across the state, the SSCC requests that SBARE prioritize district assistance funding. This increase would help offset inflationary forces and directly impact soil conservation in North Dakota. As with the current allocation, this increase would be strategically distributed by the SSCC to maximize its impacts.

By investing in SCDs, you are investing in agriculture, rural economies and the long-term productivity of North Dakota's land and water.



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