

VIA CERTIFIED MAIL RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

<<Date>>

«Decision\_Maker\_Common\_Name»

«Decision\_Maker\_Information\_Address\_Line»

«Decision\_Maker\_Delivery\_Address\_Line»

«Decision\_Maker\_Address\_City», «Address\_State» «Address\_Zip\_Code»

Application #: «Contract\_Number»

Dear «Decision\_Maker\_Common\_Name»:

This letter is to notify you that the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has determined that your application for financial assistance through the 2018 Farm Bill Conservation Stewardship Program – Grassland Conservation Initiative (CSP-GCI) is ineligible.

We have determined your application is ineligible because:

[Include the applicable reasons such as, but not limited to, the following:

- Federal, State, county, and local governments, and political subdivisions of State government (e.g., school districts, conservation districts, etc.) and entities containing these units of government or subdivisions, are not eligible for CSP-GCI.
- To be eligible to participate in CSP-GCI, an applicant must be compliant with adjusted gross income provisions (AGI) of the 2018 Farm Bill. The records you provided do not meet this requirement.
- To be eligible for CSP-GCI, the land being offered for program consideration must be grassland, cropland, idle, or fallow, upon which eligible base acre have been maintained, as determined by the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA). The land you are offering does not meet this requirement.
- Nonindustrial private forestland is not eligible for CSP-GCI.
- To be eligible for CSP-GCI, an applicant must be the operator, owner, or other tenant have an interest and share risk in the agricultural operation.
- Land currently enrolled in CSP is not eligible for enrollment in CSP-GCI. Land identified in your CSP-GCI application is already included in an active CSP contract.]

You may contact this office by calling [insert field office telephone number] to determine whether any adjustments can be made to your application to make it compatible with the objectives of the CSP-GCI. Your adjusted application may then be considered for funding during the next signup period.

This is a final NRCS program decision. As such, you may seek an administrative review through the appeals process. The options available to you are provided below.

If you disagree with the determination that your application is ineligible for the reasons identified, you may file your appeal with supporting documentation no later than 30 calendar days from the date that you receive the notification letter. You have the right to appeal when there is a question of fact or when there is some dispute as to the correct application of a rule, regulation, or generally applicable provision. The following four options are available for you to furnish facts and evidence to show how the decision is in error or contrary to the applicable program rules:

1. **Informal Review** – You may request that the NRCS State Conservationist (STC) reconsider this decision by filing a written request no later than 30 calendar days after you receive this notice in accordance with NRCS’s appeal procedures found at 7 CFR Section 614.9 “NRCS Appeal Procedures.” If you request reconsideration, you will have an informal hearing with the NRCS STC that you or your representative may attend personally or by telephone. If you choose to seek reconsideration, you may later appeal any adverse decision using your remaining appeal options. To request reconsideration, write to the NRCS STC at the following address and explain why you believe this determination is erroneous:

[STC Name and address].

2. **Request Mediation** – Mediation is an informal appeal process in which a trained, impartial person will help us look at mutual concerns, consider options, and determine if we can agree on a solution. Any agreement reached during, or as a result of, the mediation process must conform to the statutory, regulatory, and policy provisions governing the applicable program. The mediator has no decision-making authority but may be able to help all parties to improve communications, understand the relevant issues, and explore alternatives. Requesting mediation will cause the 30- calendar-day time clock that determines a timely appeal to be paused. If mediation is unsuccessful, the 30-calendar-day time clock will resume with the remaining balance of the 30 calendar days in which you may request an informal review from the STC or file an appeal with either the Farm Service Agency County Committee (COC) or with the National Appeals Division (NAD). You may request mediation by writing to the NRCS STC at the following address:

[STC name and address].

3. **Appeal to the Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Committee (COC)** – You may appeal this program decision to the FSA COC by filing a written request no later than 30 calendar days after you receive this notice pursuant to the FSA appeal procedures found at 7 CFR Part 780. If you appeal to the COC, you will have an informal hearing that you or your representative may attend either personally or by telephone. If the COC believes that the challenge to the NRCS determination is not frivolous, the COC will refer the case to the NRCS STC to review the determination. The COC decision must incorporate and be based upon the results of the NRCS STC review and subsequent determination. If you appeal this determination to the COC, you may later

appeal an adverse determination of the COC to NAD. To appeal, write to the COC, include a copy of the adverse decision notification letter, and explain why you believe this decision is erroneous at the following address: [address].

4. **Appeal to the National Appeals Division (NAD)** – The appeal must be filed within 30 calendar days of the date of this notification and include the reasons why you disagree with this decision. If you appeal to NAD, you will have a hearing that you or your representative may attend in person or by telephone. You may also choose to request that a NAD administrative judge review the documents in your file, without a personal appearance, to see if the agency decision was correct. Once a hearing with NAD begins, you waive any rights you might have to reconsideration, appeal to FSA, and mediation. To appeal directly to NAD, mail your request to the following address: [insert applicable from choices below]

Eastern Region of NAD	Southern Region of NAD	Western Region of NAD
Regional Director P.O. Box 68806 Indianapolis, IN 46268-0806	Regional Director P.O. Box 1508 Cordova, TN 38088	Regional Director 755 Parfet Street, Suite 494 Lakewood, CO 80215-5506

You must send your written appeal to NAD and include a copy of the adverse decision notification letter. In addition, please provide NRCS STC with a copy of your appeal request at the following address: [STC name and address].

Thank you for your interest in this program. We look forward to assisting you in the future.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Title]