



Golf Course Superintendents Association of America
1421 Research Park Drive • Lawrence, KS 66049-3858 • 800.472.7878

May 7, 2018

EMAIL

The Honorable Pat Roberts
Chairman
Senate Committee on Agriculture,
Nutrition and Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Agriculture,
Nutrition and Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Roberts and Stabenow:

As the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry drafts its version of the 2018 Farm Bill, I would like to offer the support of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) for the inclusion of language currently in Section 7208 of the House version, H.R. 2, the “Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018”. Sponsored by the National Turfgrass Federation (NTF), this language would establish the “National Turfgrass Research Initiative” (NTRI) as a high priority research and extension initiative covering all aspects of turf science. Funding competitive research programs under USDA-NIFA provides vital information and extension for our nation’s commercial, residential, and recreational turfgrass areas, including the greens, tees, rough, and fairways found on golf courses.

Turf comprises 60 million acres and is the 4th largest crop in the United States. It provides numerous benefits, including mitigating soil erosion, protecting against pollutant runoff into waterways, absorbing carbon dioxide, and providing cooler temperatures in urban areas. The 2 million acres on our nation’s golf courses provide golfers with playing conditions that promote health and well-being while serving as important greenspaces.

NTRI language in the new farm bill would help increase USDA’s focus on turf research’s benefits for our environment and landscapes, the visual appeal of commercial properties and transportation corridors, the recreational enjoyment of public spaces and athletic fields, and the aesthetics of private residences. For GCSAA, this additional focus on turf science would supplement the best management practices that golf course superintendents use every day which have reduced water usage by 21% and nitrogen use by 33.6%, as well as other significant environmental improvements during the past decade. These positive impacts are identified



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within the Golf Course Environmental Profile, <https://www.gcsaa.org/environment/golf-course-environmental-profile>.

As the Senate Agriculture Committee drafts its version of the Farm Bill, I urge the Committee to follow the House's lead and include this vital language.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Rhett Evans". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

J. Rhett Evans
GCSAA Chief Executive Officer