

***The Protect Our Prairies (POP) Act is Estimated to Save Taxpayers Nearly \$200 Million***

**Washington, DC** – Today, Rep. Tim Walz (D-MN) and Rep. Kristi Noem (R-SD) introduced common sense legislation to encourage good land stewardship practices and preserve habitats for pheasants, ducks and other wildlife on native sod and on grasslands that haven't been farmed in the past.

This legislation would reduce crop insurance assistance for the first four years for crops grown on native sod and certain grasslands converted to cropland. By reducing crop insurance assistance so that is proportionate with the production capability of this land, rather than insuring it at the same rate as land that has been farmed for years, this legislation could save taxpayers nearly \$200 million over 10 years, according to the Congressional Budget Office's estimate from the 112th Congress.

**"I am proud to re-introduce this bipartisan legislation that will cut spending and conserve critical wildlife habitat while allowing farmers to manage their lands as they see fit,"**

said Rep. Walz, Vice Chair of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus and Ranking Member of Agriculture Subcommittee on Conservation, Energy, and Forestry.

**"By working together and promoting common sense conservation practices we can protect critical wildlife habitat, support our farmers, and support the hunting and fishing industry that is an integral part of our state's economy."**

**"Coming from a state that has both a strong hunting tradition and agriculture community, this legislation helps continue the healthy balance between production and conservation,"** said Rep. Noem. **"I was proud to introduce this legislation last Congress and am optimistic that we will see the bill move forward this year. Not only will it save taxpayer money, but the Protect our Prairies Act will allow us to maintain secure habitats for wildlife in South Dakota."**

The wildlife recreation industry is an integral part of Minnesota's economy, bringing in \$4.3 billion into the state. Protecting native sod and grassland that are vital habitats for both game and nongame wildlife will help continue the success of this industry. Native sod and grasslands that cannot be verified as having ever been tilled have significantly less yield potential for the

first several years compared to land that has been cropped for years. Producers should crop native sod and grassland based only on production potential rather than by inflated crop insurance benefits.

Pheasants Forever is one of the many groups that have voiced their support for this legislation.

**"Prairie and grasslands are treasured resources that play critical roles in reducing soil erosion, improving water quality, and enhancing wildlife habitat. It isn't often that we can encourage proper land stewardship and provide savings to taxpayers. We applaud Representatives Tim Walz, Kristi Noem and other sponsors for doing just that. Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever are pleased to support the Protect our Prairies Act,"** said Dave Nomsen, Vice President of Governmental Affairs for Minnesota Pheasants Forever.

Importantly, this legislation does not prevent producers from making their own planting decisions.

Specifically, the legislation would:

- Limit crop insurance coverage to 65 percent of the applicable T-Yield until the acreage has four years of crop production.
- Limit the premium subsidy to 50 percentage points less than the premium subsidy that would otherwise be available until the acreage has four years of crop production.
- Make the acreage ineligible for yield substitution.

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