

**Originating Committee:** Grasslands and Prairie  
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**Intended Recipients:** Missouri Congressional Delegation

## **Support for the Passage of the North American Grasslands Conservation Act**

**WHEREAS**, prairies and other native grasslands are ecosystems composed mostly of grasses and non-woody plants that provide vital habitat for birds, pollinators, and other wildlife, sequester large amounts of carbon, minimize flooding and soil erosion, and have economic significance; and

**WHEREAS**, in Missouri, less than one half of one percent of original prairie remains and only five percent remains across the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, in the United States millions of acres of native grasslands and sagebrush are privately owned; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the North American Bird Conservation Initiative's 2022 State of the Birds Report, millions of acres of North American grassland that provide critical habitat to grassland-dependent wildlife have been converted for residential use and cropland; and

**WHEREAS**, the Partners in Flight Avian Conservation Assessment Database indicates that U.S. grasslands provide vital breeding habitat for over 30 grassland-obligate birds; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2019, an article in the journal *Science* reported that North American grassland bird populations have declined by 53% since 1970; and

**WHEREAS**, of the state's 15 million acres of prairie prior to Euro-American settlement, Missouri has fewer than 50,000 fragmented acres of unplowed, intact prairie, with only approximately 25,000 of those acres being protected by state agencies and other conservation organizations; and

**WHEREAS**, the North American Grasslands Act, introduced in the United States House of Representatives in July 2022, calls to preserve and restore grasslands and sagebrush in North America while benefiting private landowners, rural communities, farmers, ranchers, tribal nations, sportsmen and women, and other interests; and

**WHEREAS**, The North American Grasslands Act will establish national and regional councils to provide funding for voluntary prairie projects, seed and grazing research, and outreach and education; and

**WHEREAS**, the North American Grasslands Act is modeled after the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA), which has helped protect more than 26 million acres of wetland and wildlife habitat through more than 2,200 projects; and

**WHEREAS**, actions resulting from NAWCA employ 7,500 individuals annually, with the potential for the North American Grasslands Act to have a similar economic benefit; and

**WHEREAS**, the North American Grasslands Act can benefit Missouri agriculture through improved livestock grazing, wildfire reduction, and flooding and erosion mitigation; and

**WHEREAS**, significant funds would be allotted towards agronomic and native seed crop research and towards regenerative grazing data collection; and

**WHEREAS**, the North American Grasslands Act can protect Missouri plant and wildlife biodiversity to ensure healthy ecosystems, mitigate severe drought, improve water quality, and increase carbon sequestration; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED**, that the Conservation Federation of Missouri assembled in Osage Beach, Missouri, this 25th day of February, 2023, supports the passage of the North American Grasslands Act to implement conservation and restoration of North American grasslands through voluntary conservation efforts, funding for grassland projects, grazing and seed research, and outreach and education while supporting private landowners.

**Searchable Keywords:** North American Grasslands Act, prairie, birds, native, grasslands

**Expires:** February 25, 2028