

**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Rep. Sharice L. Davids**  
**Kansas Third District**

September 27, 2024

The Honorable Robert Bonnie  
Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation  
United States Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave S.W.  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Under Secretary Bonnie,

Thank you for your ongoing leadership and efforts to improve support for producers in Kansas and across the country. I am proud to represent Kansas the Wheat State. In the 2023 crop year, Kansas farmers planted 8.1 million acres of winter wheat<sup>1</sup>. Wheat is produced on the third largest area of commodity production in the United States, resulting in food produced for both domestic and international consumption. Recent years have seen a shift in production as a result of several factors benefitting other commodities including markets, biotechnology adoption, and shifts in cropping systems. Wheat may have dropped from rotations in several regions of the US, but the importance of diverse crop rotations remains. Wheat in rotation with other crops can provide durable crop residue, break pest cycles and act as a traditional cover providing a living root system in the ground during the winter months.

Winter wheat, and the recognition of the benefits it can provide, is at the forefront of discussions with my constituents. There is concern as United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs and other administration efforts focus specifically on cover crops, they are not acknowledging the similar and important role that winter food crops provide in diverse cropping systems. Winter wheat and other food crops allow producers to grow food, feed, fuel and fiber on the same crop acres in rotation. Protecting this balance of diverse cropping systems, conservation crop rotations, and the use of cover crops when appropriate will meet the needs of all markets – food demand, renewable fuels, feed for livestock, and fiber for clothing.

I am grateful to Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Xochitl Torres Small for traveling to Kansas this past March and hearing directly from Kansas producers. Following those conversations, I am excited about USDA's commitment to addressing these concerns through a Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) technical note. I look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure that the conservation crop rotations, including harvested winter wheat, are recognized as providing the same living cover and environmental benefits as a terminated cover crop.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics\\_by\\_State/Kansas/Publications/Cooperative\\_Projects/KS-wheat-history-23.pdf](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Kansas/Publications/Cooperative_Projects/KS-wheat-history-23.pdf)

Conservation crop rotations allow for continued economic benefits to farmers, provide environmental benefits and in the case of winter wheat, help to feed the world. I urge you to address these challenges through a technical note as quickly as possible. Should you have any questions or concerns, or if I can be helpful in this process, please contact Sophia Jorgenson ([sophia.jorgenson@mail.house.gov](mailto:sophia.jorgenson@mail.house.gov)) in my office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'SD', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Sharice L. Davids  
Member of Congress