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Legacy Files Appeal in Response to Federal Reversal of \$24.6M RCPP Award

Ann Arbor, MI – July 14, 2025 – Legacy Land Conservancy filed an appeal to the National Appeals Division (NAD) in response to the Southeast Michigan Conservation Coalition 2024 Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) project \$24.6M award that was rescinded by the federal government in June.

“The landowners, families, and farmers we planned on helping through this award are our priority,” Legacy Land Conservancy Executive Director Diana Kern said. “After consulting with our legal team, filing an appeal is the appropriate next step.”

The award was originally made possible through funding in the 2024 Farm Bill and already appropriated by Congress.

A majority of the funds allocated through the award, approximately \$20M, was to be used directly by the coalition to strategically purchase conservation easements on 4,000 acres of private agricultural and forest lands in a five-county area. These conservation easements on working lands help ensure that the land remains in agricultural production permanently, protecting the region’s rich soils from development and preserving the ability to grow food for our communities for generations to come.

A copy of appeal rights included with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resource Conservation Service’s rescind notification letter listed five appeal options.

Legacy’s appeal was submitted to the NAD via a letter and a formal application on July 10, 2025. The letter was drafted with the help of an attorney volunteering with Lawyers for Good Government, a 501(c)3 organization working to ensure equal rights, equal opportunities, and equal justice under the law.

“Legacy has filed an appeal with the National Appeals Division and requested a hearing about the USDA’s decision to rescind the Southeast Michigan Conservation Coalition project award,” coalition lead and Legacy Land Conservancy Land Protection Director Susan LaCroix said. “Based on the National Appeals Division website criteria, we believe our case meets the requirements.”

The NAD website provides general timing information, but every case is different and it is not clear as to when Legacy will hear back from NAD officials about next steps.

During this process, Legacy remains focused on investing in Michiganders and southern Michigan’s future. We remain committed to helping the families, farmers, and communities who depend on us and our services.

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