

# U.S. Rep. Kind: Joins colleagues to introduce bipartisan legislation to preserve the driftless area between Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa & Minnesota

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**La Crosse, WI** – Today, **Rep. Ron Kind** joined **Reps. Cheri Bustos (D-IL), Ashley Hinson (R-IA), and Angie Craig (D-MN)** in introducing the *Driftless Area Landscape Conservation Initiative (DALCI) Act* to preserve the ecologically-unique region between Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, and Minnesota. The bipartisan legislation would re-establish efforts by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to improve management of working lands, woodlands, prairies and cold water streams in the Driftless Area.

“The Driftless Area is one of the most beautiful places in the country, but erosion from the steep slopes of this unique landscape is a threat to both habitats and farms alike. The DALCI Act will help preserve this treasured natural resource and ensure our family farmers can protect their land for years to come,” said **Rep. Ron Kind**.

“The Driftless Area is one of the most beautiful and ecologically important regions of our state and is a driving force for tourism in Northwest Illinois. Ensuring it remains intact for future generations is critical. The Driftless Area Conservation Initiative Act will recommit efforts at the U.S. Department of Agriculture to the preservation of these lands and the native species that call them home. It’s an honor to join Representatives Ashley Hinson, Angie Craig and Ron Kind on this bipartisan bill to improve management of this unique area and support the region’s family farmers in their stewardship of the land,” said **Rep. Cheri Bustos**.

“Iowa’s Driftless Area is a local gem. Preserving Iowa’s Driftless Area is a priority for the entire Northeast Iowa community including farmers, families, and our local tourism economy. The Driftless Area Landscape Conservation Initiative (DALCI) was a success story. During the five years it was authorized, the initiative helped improve water quality, mitigate flooding, and streamline agriculture conservation practices across Iowa’s Driftless Area. I am proud to introduce the bipartisan DALCI 2.0 Act with Representative Cheri Bustos to build on these successes. This legislation will reauthorize this critical program for the next five years, at no additional cost to taxpayers, to provide farmers with new conservation tools, improve flood resiliency, and enhance drinking water quality for families along the Mississippi River Watershed,” said **Rep. Ashley Hinson**.

“The Driftless Area is a unique and priceless resource for the Midwest – a fact that is well understood by farmers and ranchers in southeast Minnesota, who are prepared to use the Driftless Area Landscape Conservation Initiative to reduce soil erosion, sequester carbon and improve water quality in the region. I’m proud to partner with my colleagues in introducing this important bipartisan legislation, and look forward to the positive impacts of re-establishing this important program,” said **Rep. Angie Craig**.

The Driftless Area is a region comprising of southwestern Wisconsin, the northwest corner of Illinois, northeastern Iowa, and southeastern Minnesota that was never covered by ice during the last Ice Age, and therefore lacks glacial deposits. The geography of the area is characterized by its steep, rugged landscape and by the largest concentration of cold water streams in the world.

A previous Driftless Area Landscape Conservation Initiative was launched by the USDA in 2012 to help farmers fight erosion and restore cold water stream corridors. The program ended in 2017 and was never re-established. The DALCI Act would recommit the USDA to conservation efforts in the Driftless Area with \$5 million through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program for efforts managing working lands, woodlands, prairies and cold water streams in the region.

The DALCI Act would re-establish the Driftless Area Landscape Conservation Initiative with the following objectives:

- Manage working lands for year-round ground cover to rebuild soil, sequester carbon, improve water quality, increase water holding capacity of soil, reduce soil erosion, and mitigate flooding and other climate impacts.

- Manage woodlands for increased biodiversity to improve the health of woods to provide habitat and sequester carbon.
- Restore prairies and manage grasslands, oak savannas, and barrens to expand habitat and sequester carbon.
- Restore cold water streams by reducing stream bank erosion and threats of flooding while improving trout habitat.