

An Assessment of the Transition Incentives Program

Dr. Megan Horst

November 2022



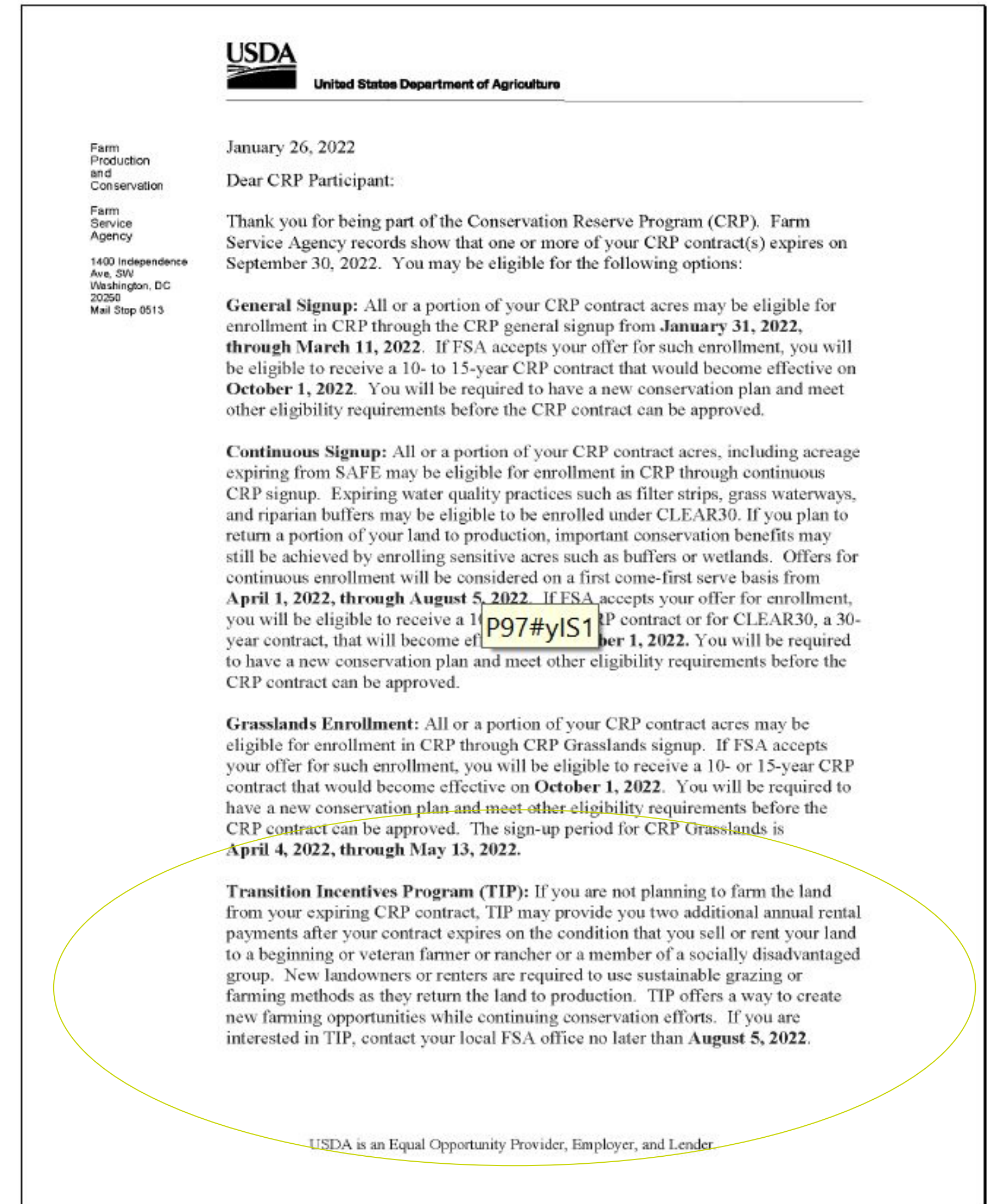
WHAT IS TIP?

Provides land owners or operators with two additional annual rental payments on land enrolled in expiring Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts, on the condition they sell or rent this land to a beginning farmer or rancher or to a socially disadvantaged group.

New land owners or renters must return the land to production using sustainable grazing or farming methods.

Expiring CRP Contract Letter Example

Following is an example of the Expiring CRP Contract Letter.





A SMALL BUDGET

Farm Bill and Year	TIP Allocation for 5-year time period	Money spent on rental payments to participating landlords
2008 Farm Bill (The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008) 2009-2013	\$25 million	Do not have data
Agricultural Act of 2014/ 2013 Farm Bill (Agriculture Reform, Food, and Jobs Act of 2012) 2014-2018	\$33 million	\$22.7 million
2018 Farm Bill 2019-2023	\$50 million (including \$5 million earmarked for data analysis and increased outreach)	\$19.6 million as of April 2022



TIP PROMOTION AND ADMINISTRATION

Promoted and administered in each state primarily by staff at the Farm Service Agency who do it as part of their larger portfolio of work. Typically, county officers manage the direct communication with interested landowners and Emerging farmers. Meanwhile, staff at National Resources Conservation Service often offer technical support to TIP. Other USDA staff who play a role include the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coordinators, or USDA appointed staff leads in all fifty states

CLOSE

This form is available electronically.

CRP-1R (05-14-10) U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE Commodity Credit Corporation CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM TRANSITION INCENTIVES PROGRAM CONTRACT	1. ST. & CO CODE & ADMIN. LOCATION		2. TIP CONTRACT NUMBER	
	3. ACRES FOR ENROLLMENT	4. FARM NUMBER	5. TRACT NUMBER(S)	
6. COUNTY OFFICE ADDRESS (Include Zip Code)	7. RENTAL RATE		8. CONTRACT PERIOD	
			A. BEGINNING (MM-DD-YYYY)	B. ENDING (MM-DD-YYYY)
TELEPHONE NUMBER (Include Area Code):				

NOTE: The following statement is made in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 USC 552a, as amended). The authority for requesting the information identified on this form is 7 CFR Part 1410, the Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act (15 U.S.C. 714 et seq.), and the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Pub. L. 110-246). The information will be used by CCC to consider and, if so decided, process the offer to enter into a Conservation Reserve Program contract, to assist in determining eligibility, and to determine the correct parties to the Conservation Reserve Program contract. The information collected on this form may be disclosed to other Federal, State, and Local government agencies, Tribal agencies, and nongovernmental entities that have been authorized access to the information by statute or regulation and/or as described in applicable Routine Uses identified in the System of Records Notice for USDA/FSA-2, Farm Records File (Automated). Information provided hereunder will be subject to the provisions of section 1010 of Pub. L. 110-246, section 2004 of Pub. L. 107-171, the Privacy Act, and other applicable privacy laws. Providing the requested information is voluntary. However, failure to furnish the requested information will result in a determination of ineligibility to offer to enter into a Conservation Reserve Program contract.

This information collection is exempted from the Paperwork Reduction Act, as it is required for administration of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (see Pub. L. 110-246, Title II, Subtitle J - Miscellaneous Conservation Provisions). The provisions of appropriate criminal and civil fraud, privacy, and other statutes may be applicable to the information provided. RETURN THIS COMPLETED FORM TO YOUR COUNTY FSA OFFICE.

9. CERTIFICATION:

By signing below, the retired or retiring participant in Item 10A(1) certifies to all of the following: (1) I/we have either retired from farming or am retiring from farming within 5 years; (2) effective on the date in Item 8A, I have sold, have a contract to sell, or leased under a non-revocable long-term lease of at least 5 years, the acres identified in Item 3 to the beginning or socially disadvantaged farmer(s) or rancher(s) identified in Item 10B(1); (3) I will no longer operate the acres identified in Item 3 beginning on the date in Item 8A; and (4) the beginning or socially disadvantaged farmer(s) or rancher (s) in Item 10B(1) may: a) begin Organic Foods Production Certification, b) develop a conservation plan and install practices and initiate land improvements consistent with the conservation plan as necessary, and c) offer to enroll under continuous Conservation Reserve the acres identified in Item 3.

By signing below, the beginning or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher identified in Item 10B(1) certifies: (1) I am a beginning farmer or rancher or a socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher as defined in the regulations at 7 CFR Part 1410; (2) I agree to develop and implement a conservation plan in compliance with the Conservation Compliance Provisions of the Food Security Act of 1985, Pub. L. 99 - 198 (the 1985 Act), which requires completion of form AD-1026; (3) I agree to develop and implement a conservation plan that meets applicable standards for sustainable grazing and/or crop production methods on the acres identified in Item 3; (4) I understand that I may be eligible to enroll in the Conservation Stewardship Program under 7 CFR Part 14.70 or the Environmental Quality Incentives Program under 7 CFR Part 14.66; (5) I understand that I may be eligible to enroll under the continuous Conservation Reserve Program; and (6) I understand that I may begin Organic Foods Production Certification.

10. PARTICIPANTS: (As a signatory to CRP contract _____, I agree to allow this contract to be modified under the TIP provisions.)

A(1) RETIRED OR RETIRING FARMER OR RANCHER NAME AND ADDRESS (Zip Code):	(2) SHARE %	(3) SIGNATURE (BY):	DATE (MM-DD-YYYY)
		(4) TITLE/RELATIONSHIP (of Individual Signing in the Representative Capacity) <i>(If more than three individuals are signing, continue on attachment.)</i>	
B(1) BEGINNING OR SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED FARMER OR RANCHER NAME AND ADDRESS (Zip Code):	(2) SHARE %	(3) SIGNATURE (BY):	DATE (MM-DD-YYYY)
		(4) TITLE/RELATIONSHIP (of Individual Signing in the Representative Capacity) <i>(If more than three individuals are signing, continue on attachment.)</i>	
C(1) PARTICIPANT'S NAME AND ADDRESS (Zip Code):	(2) SHARE %	(3) SIGNATURE (BY):	DATE (MM-DD-YYYY)
		(4) TITLE/RELATIONSHIP (of Individual Signing in the Representative Capacity) <i>(If more than three individuals are signing, continue on Page 2)</i>	

11. CCC USE ONLY – Payments according to the shares are approved.

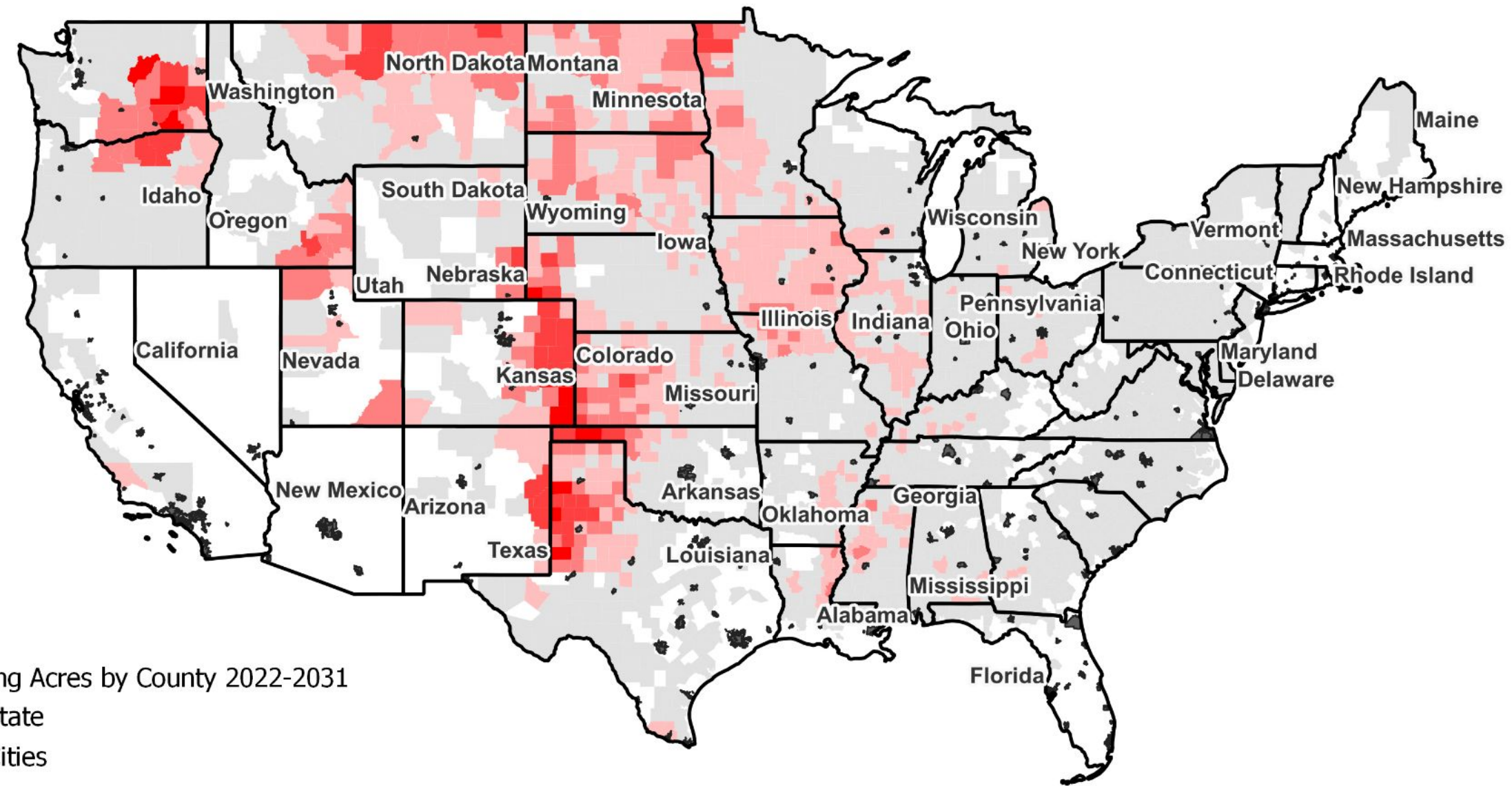
A. SIGNATURE OF CCC REPRESENTATIVE	B. DATE (MM-DD-YYYY)
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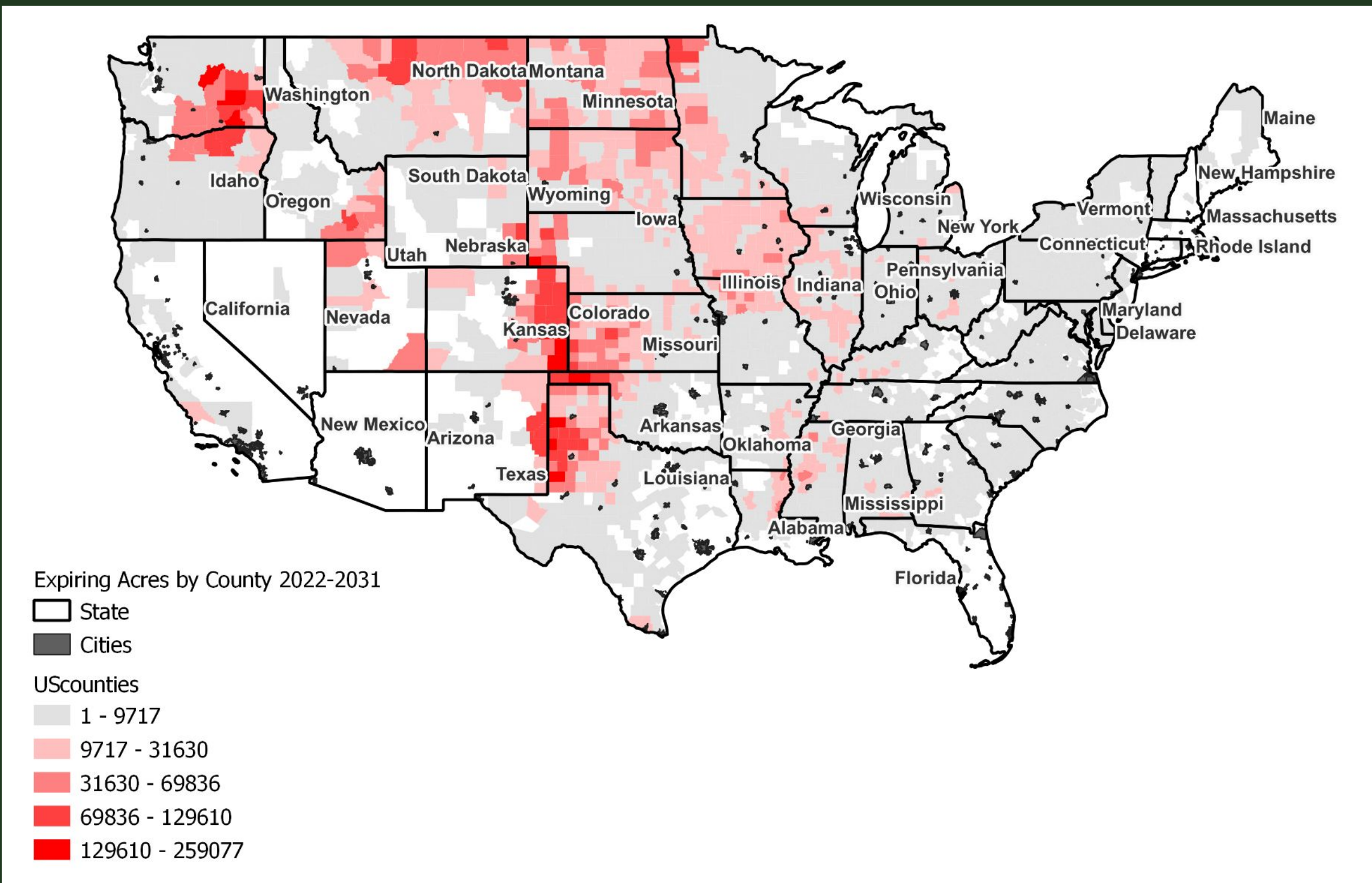
EXPIRING ACRES BY STATE



Mapped by M Horst, data from
<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/conservation-programs/reports-and-statistics/conservation-reserve-program-statistics/index>

STATE	Expiring Acres, 2022-31+	STATE	Expiring Acres, 2022-31+
TEXAS	1,332,747	MICHIGAN	85,609
IOWA	1,288,217	WYOMING	83,769
KANSAS	1,007,227	MARYLAND	40,979
NORTH DAKOTA	933,539	SOUTH CAROLINA	34,761
COLORADO	840,848	UTAH	32,093
SOUTH DAKOTA	829,319	VIRGINIA	24,355
MINNESOTA	798,440	CALIFORNIA	22,822
NEBRASKA	763,413	NORTH CAROLINA	22,263
WASHINGTON	710,574	NEW YORK	13,748
ILLINOIS	635,779	FLORIDA	10,976
MISSOURI	557,884	WEST VIRGINIA	6,165
MONTANA	552,317	MAINE	3,134
MISSISSIPPI	405,767	DELAWARE	2,846
IDAHO	305,068	VERMONT	1,912
NEW MEXICO	290,844	NEW JERSEY	1,427
OREGON	263,891	HAWAII	1,281
OKLAHOMA	262,773	PUERTO RICO	495
LOUISIANA	196,967	ALASKA	184
ARKANSAS	167,331	RHODE ISLAND	28
OHIO	160,889	MASSACHUSETTS	10
INDIANA	160,660	CONNECTICUT	0
GEORGIA	159,920	NEVADA	0
KENTUCKY	154,771	NEW HAMPSHIRE	0
WISCONSIN	143,651	TOTAL	13,573,003
ALABAMA	103,038		

TOP COUNTIES WITH EXPIRING ACRES



	STATE	COUNTY	EXPIRING ACRES, 2022-31+
1	WASHINGTON	DOUGLAS	145,998
2	COLORADO	KIOWA	119,931
3	COLORADO	WELD	116,836
4	NEW MEXICO	QUAY	116,446
5	WASHINGTON	ADAMS	116,338
6	NEBRASKA	KIMBALL	102,325
7	TEXAS	BAILEY	100,818
8	IDAHO	POWER	98,930
9	NEBRASKA	BOX BUTTE	90,493
10	WASHINGTON	WHITMAN	88,116
11	COLORADO	BACA	85,348
12	WASHINGTON	LINCOLN	85,292
13	KANSAS	HAMILTON	83,238
14	TEXAS	DEAF SMITH	77,542
15	MINNESOTA	MARSHALL	77,172
16	OREGON	UMATILLA	71,157
17	MINNESOTA	KITSON	65,035
18	NEW MEXICO	CURRY	64,189
19	TEXAS	FLOYD	61,439
20	WASHINGTON	FRANKLIN	61,351
21	OKLAHOMA	CIMARRON	61,126
22	TEXAS	GAINES	59,410
23	COLORADO	YUMA	58,735
24	TEXAS	HOCKLEY	58,397
25	NEW MEXICO	ROOSEVELT	53,903

Mapped by M Horst, data from <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/conservation-programs/reports-and-statistics/conservation-reserve-program-statistics/index>



WHAT I DID

- Document review
- Descriptive and spatial analysis data (using QGIS) on TIP participation oriented via FOIA (Some important limitations)
- Talked with key informants (FSA and NRCS staff, plus representatives of Emerging Farmers)



FINDINGS

1

Overall Participation

2

**Who Participates and
Where**

3

**Environmental and
Farming Practices**

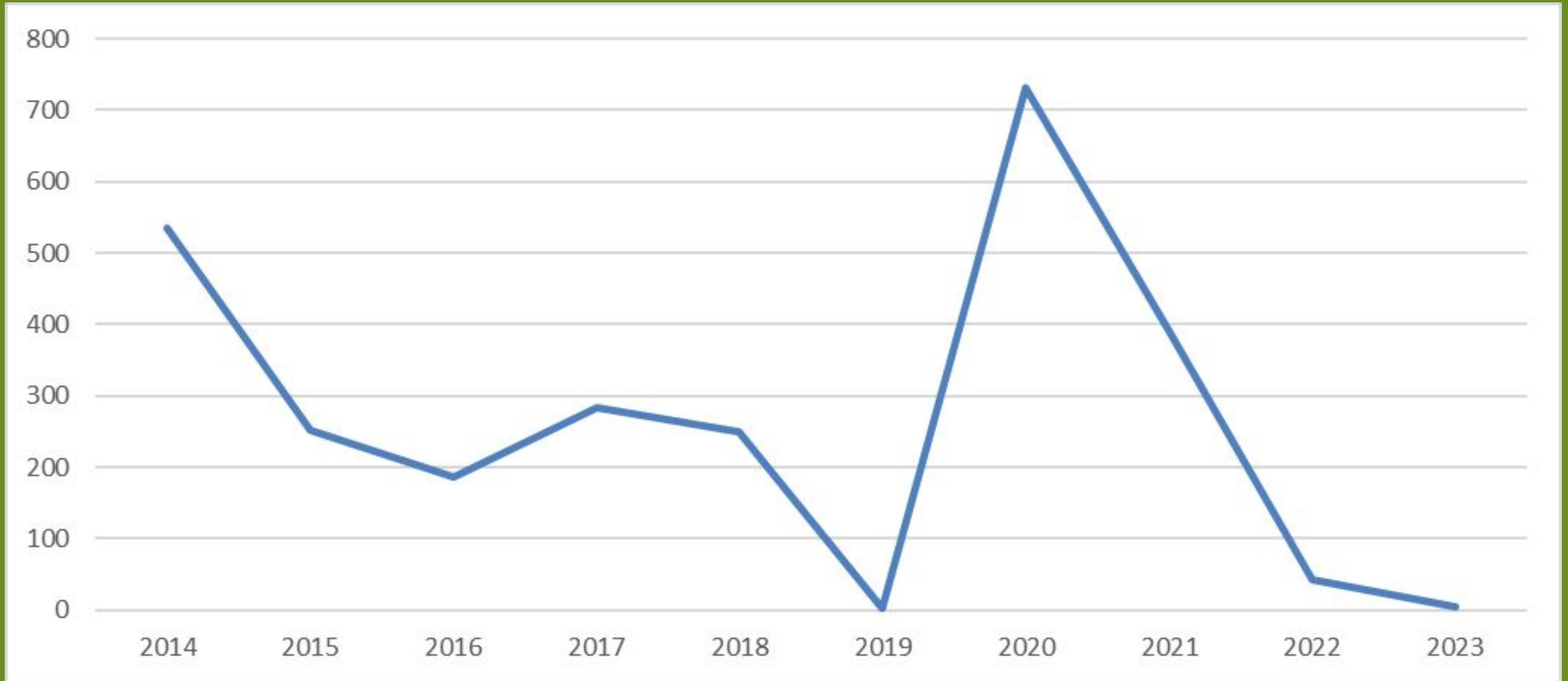
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**Insight from Key
Informants on
Motivations to
Participate and
Barriers**

1

Overall Participation

TIP PROJECTS PER YEAR



1

Overall Participation

ANNUAL SUMMARIES OF TIP

Year	Total TIP contracts	Sum of acres enrolled in TIP	Sum of total TIP payments	Average acres per contract	Average payment per contract
2014	534	85,446	\$8,548,804	160	\$16,009
2015	253	39,765	\$4,039,906	157	\$15,968
2016	186	33,489	\$3,737,993	180	\$20,097
2017	284	46,380	\$3,806,516	163	\$13,403
2018	250	19,658	\$2,616,740	79	\$10,467
2019	3	95	\$12,168	32	\$4,056
2020	732	126,237	\$11,560,462	172	\$15,793
2021	392	71,886	\$7,221,972	183	\$18,423
2022	43	9,818	\$726,280	228	\$16,890
2023	4	150	\$15,752	37	\$3,938
Sum or average	2681	432,923	\$42,286,593	161	\$15,772.69

1

Overall Participation

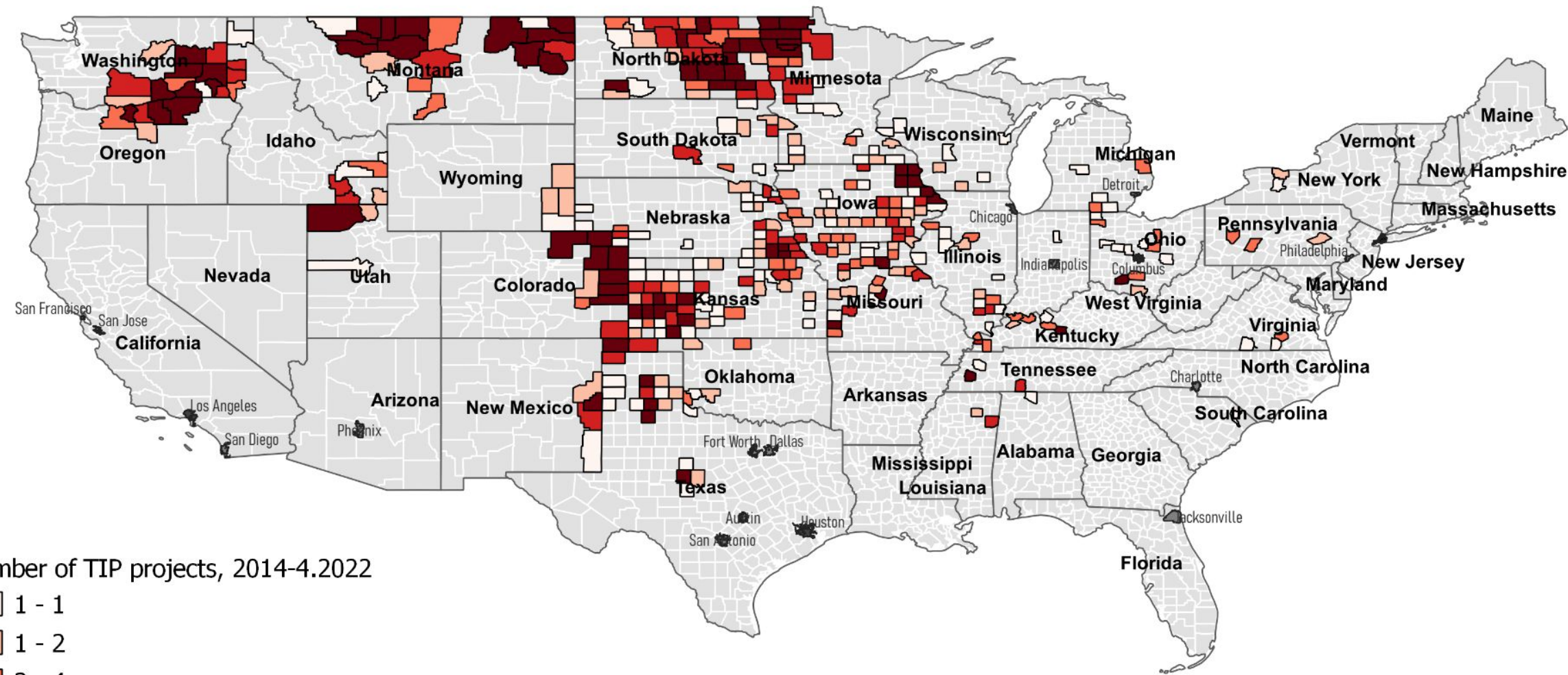
STATES, IN ORDER OF TOP PROJECTS

	State	Number of TIP Projects	Total Acres	Total Rent Payments		State	Number of TIP Projects	Total Acres	Total Rent Payments
1	Montana	408	90,014	\$6,137,878	16	Kentucky	37	1,609	\$378,150
2	Minnesota	295	31,723	\$3,174,006	17	Ohio	32	874	\$167,602
3	North Dakota	259	35,079	\$2,731,629	18	South Dakota	21	1,892	\$231,476
4	Kansas	248	38,312	\$3,133,361	19	Utah	18	6,525	\$453,693
5	Iowa	224	12,765	\$3,585,268	20	Tennessee	18	720	\$126,370
6	Washington	168	50,681	\$6,056,773	21	Pennsylvania	10	356	\$73,875
7	Nebraska	163	11,605	\$1,939,491	22	Mississippi	10	713	\$75,928
8	Colorado	145	38,994	\$3,143,114	23	Michigan	10	564	\$70,757
9	Missouri	123	8,430	\$1,364,416	24	Wisconsin	9	491	\$71,855
10	Texas	78	17,074	\$1,294,109	25	Wyoming	7	6,244	\$342,756
11	Oklahoma	75	16,657	\$1,128,728	26	Virginia	5	204	\$19,178
12	New Mexico	62	16,949	\$1,344,605	27	New York	3	203	\$19,199
13	Oregon	58	24,423	\$2,724,494	28	South Carolina	1	22	\$2,128
14	Idaho	41	7,159	\$740,578	29	Indiana	1	23	\$4,856
15	Illinois	38	1,713	\$370,529	30	Alabama	1	53	\$5,270

1

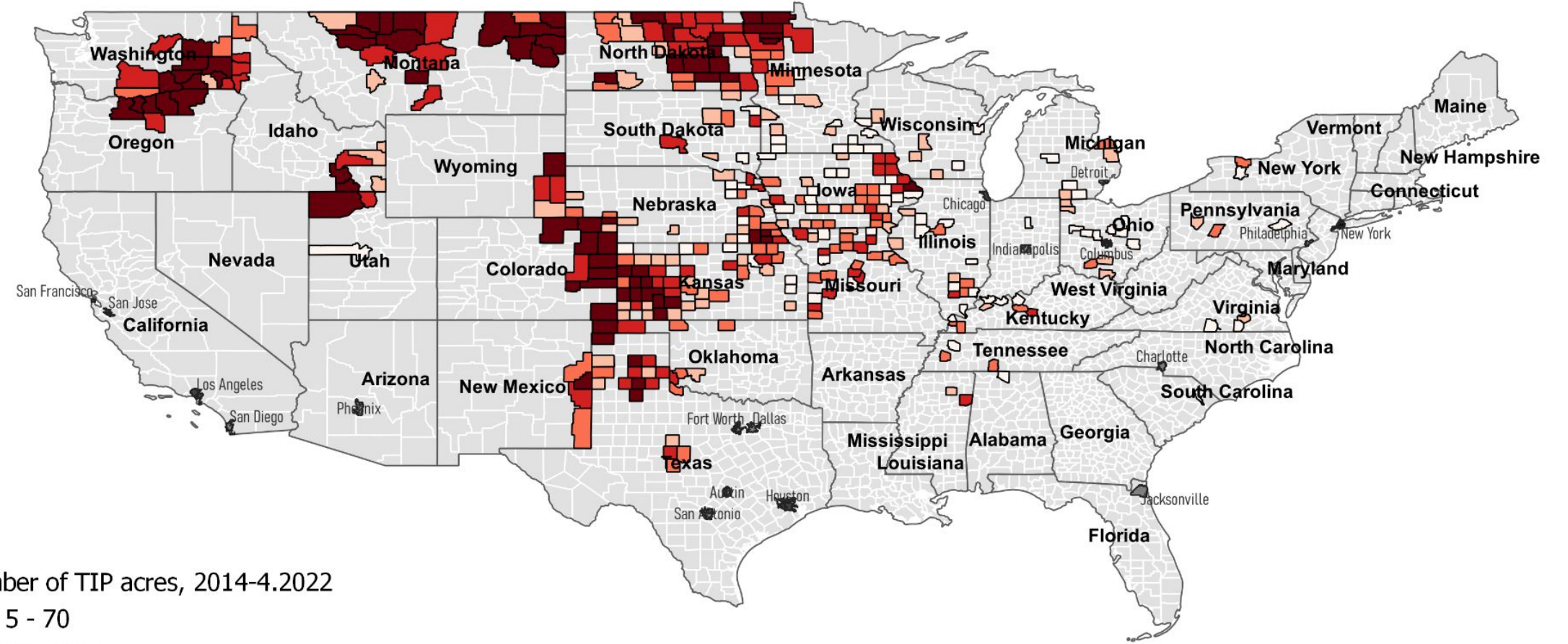
Overall Participation

TIP PROJECTS AND ACRES



Number of TIP projects, 2014-4.2022

- 1 - 1
- 1 - 2
- 2 - 4
- 4 - 9
- 9 - 95



Number of TIP acres, 2014-4.2022

- 5 - 70
- 70 - 160
- 160 - 410
- 410 - 1366
- 1366 - 21806

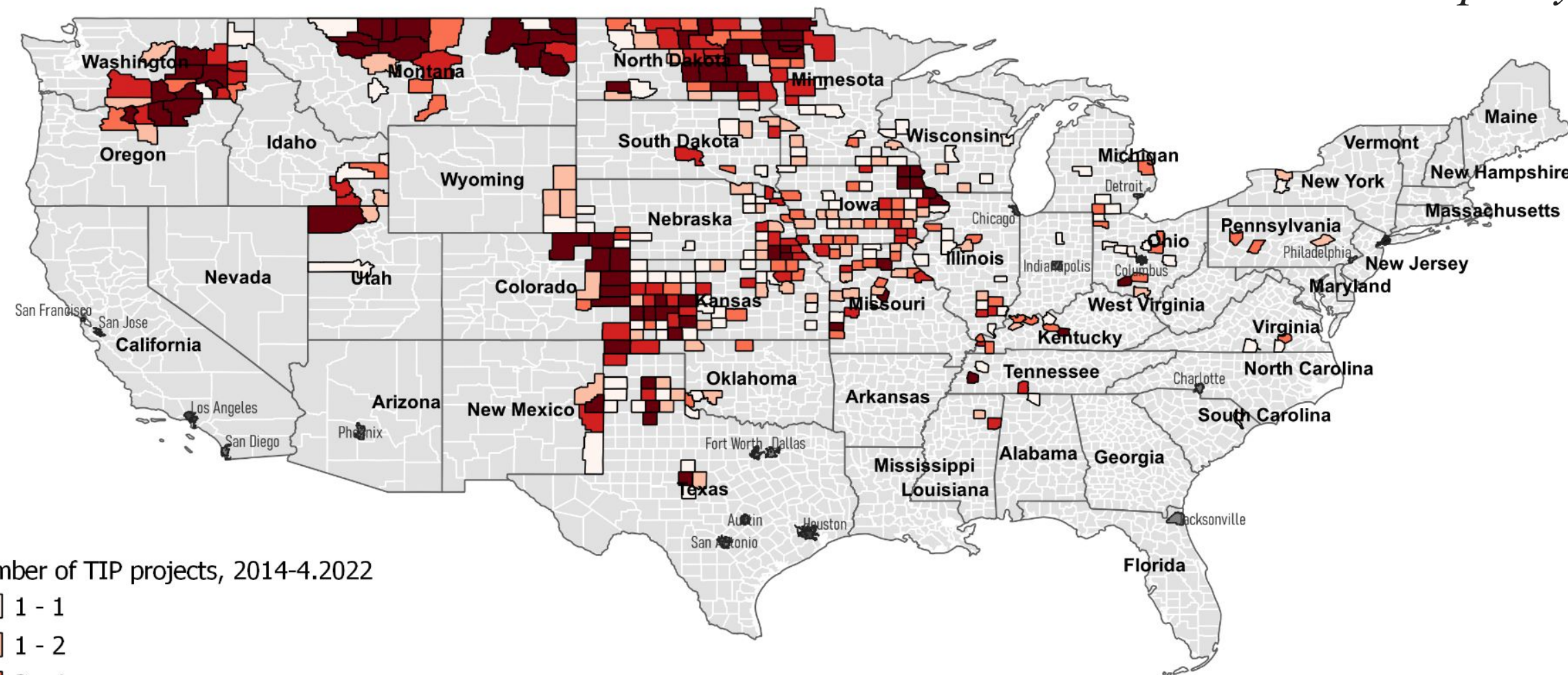
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Overall Participation

“Most of our CRP land, and all of TIP participation, is in southeast Washington state- Wallowa, Columbia, Garfield counties- they are all mostly generational farming, four to five generation communities. So you have a lot of Beginning Farmers wanting to stay in community, take over dad’s ground, the neighbor’s farm, etc. Once you have a few contracts, that sets example, get more interest. I have not seen as much in other counties like Lincoln.”

TIP PROJECTS AND ACRES

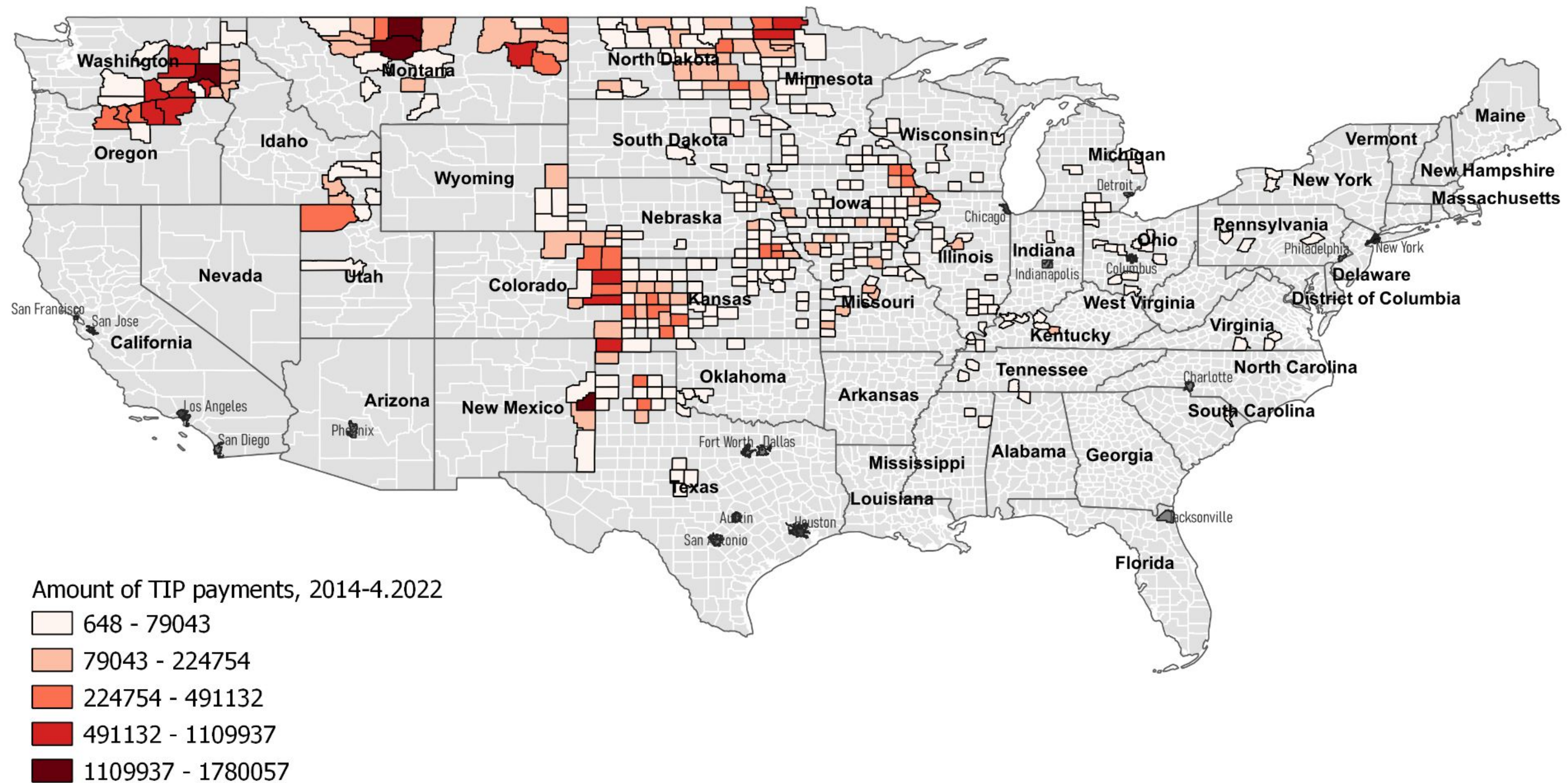
“TIP is very popular in the northwest corner of the state. Minnesota is one of the larger CRP states..Minnesota also has a fair amount of beginning farmers. In northwest Minnesota, there also tends to be large tracts of land that are enrolled in grass practices. For a beginning farmer, having access to a larger tract in one spot would be more desirable then smaller fields that are spread out. ... A beginning rancher, for example, might want to expand their herd, it would probably be pretty easy to transition for that.”



Number of TIP projects, 2014-4.2022

- 1 - 1
- 1 - 2
- 2 - 4
- 4 - 9
- 9 - 95

TIP PAYMENTS



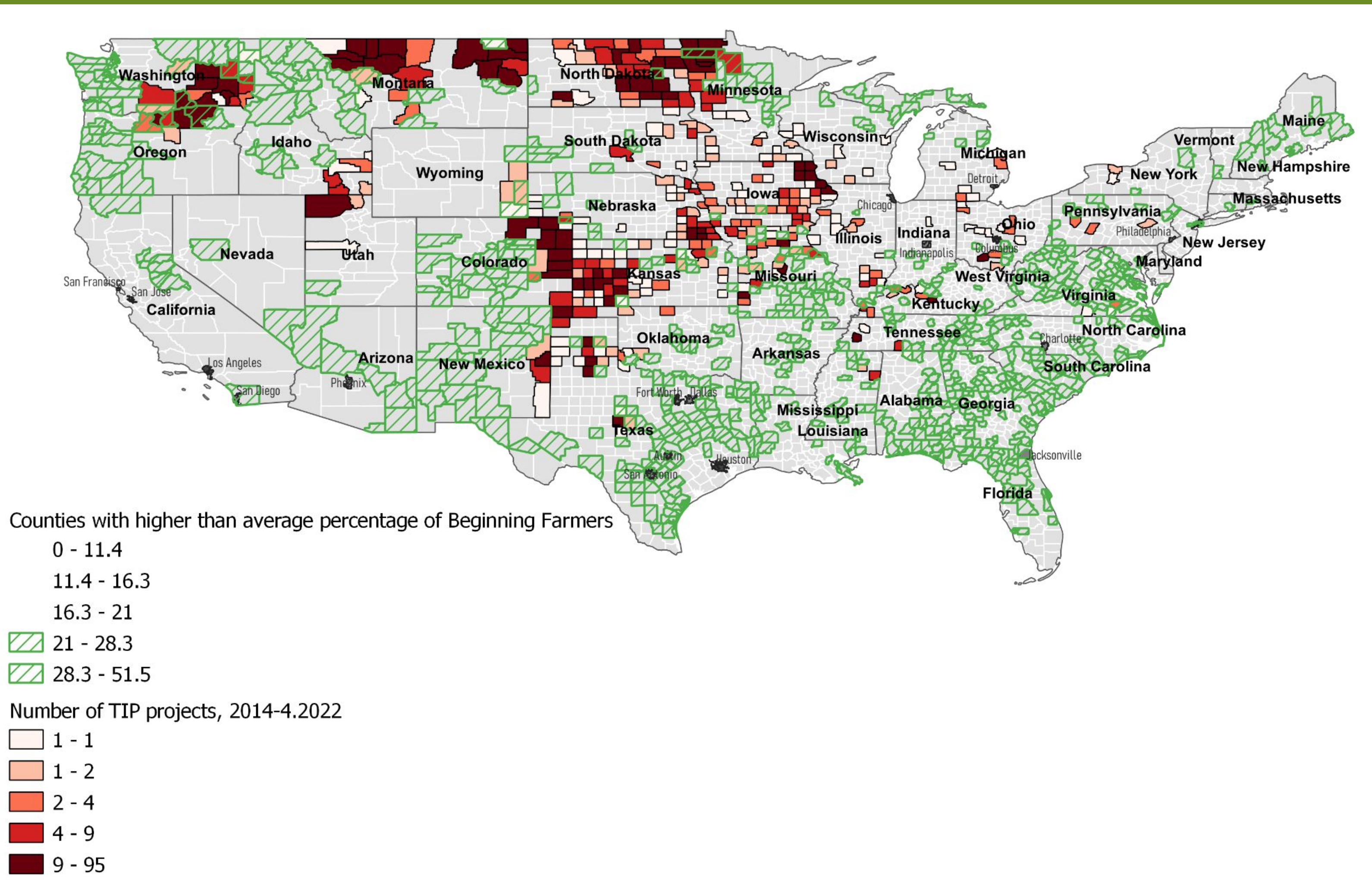
ONLY ANECDOTAL INFORMATION ON WHO

“Often ends up just being the neighbor kid. -it often is somebody in the community, who does not have children that want to farm- sells to a neighbor kid.”

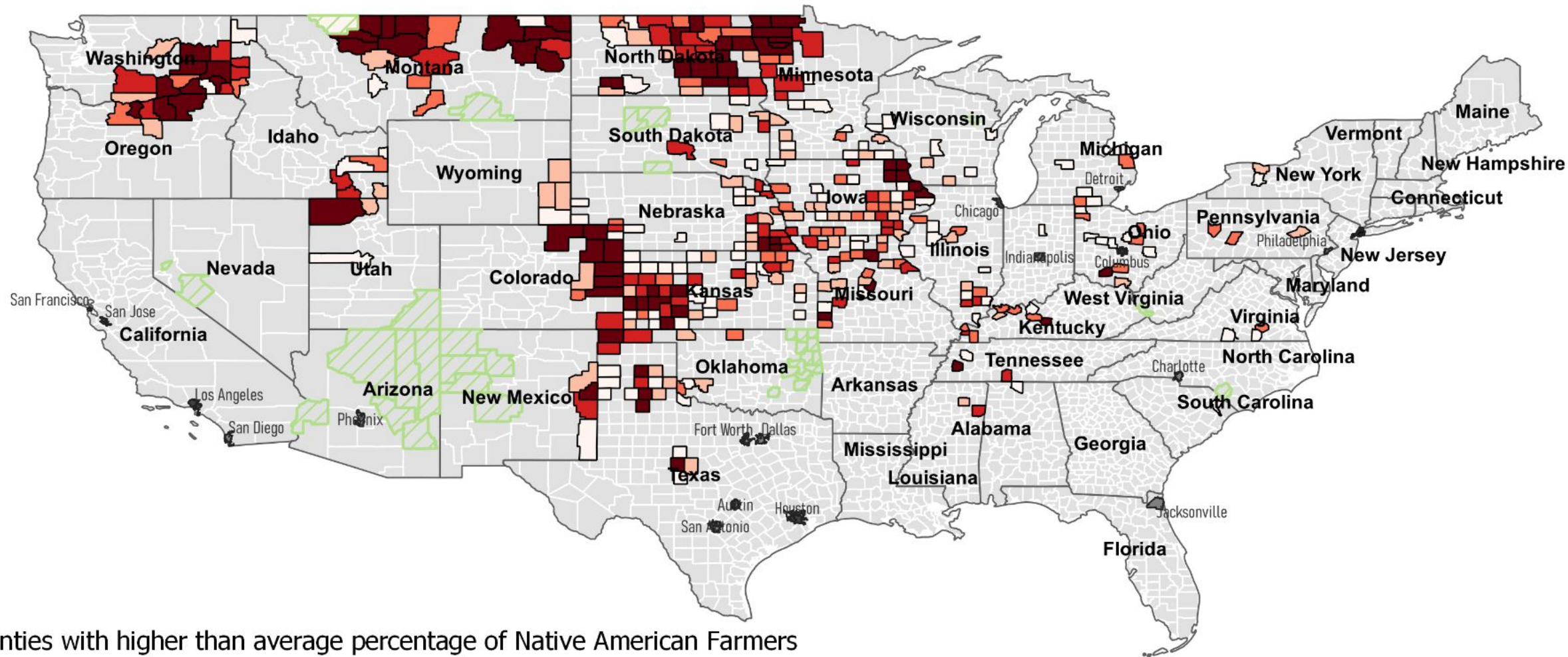
“Thus, we see participation among neighbors, folks who know one another already.”

“It doesn’t work like someone else intended it to work, does not get new people into farming The people who use it are already farming, thought they are eligible according to the law.”

SOME OVERLAP: BEGINNING FARMERS



SPATIAL MISMATCH: SOCIALY DISADVANTAGED FARMERS

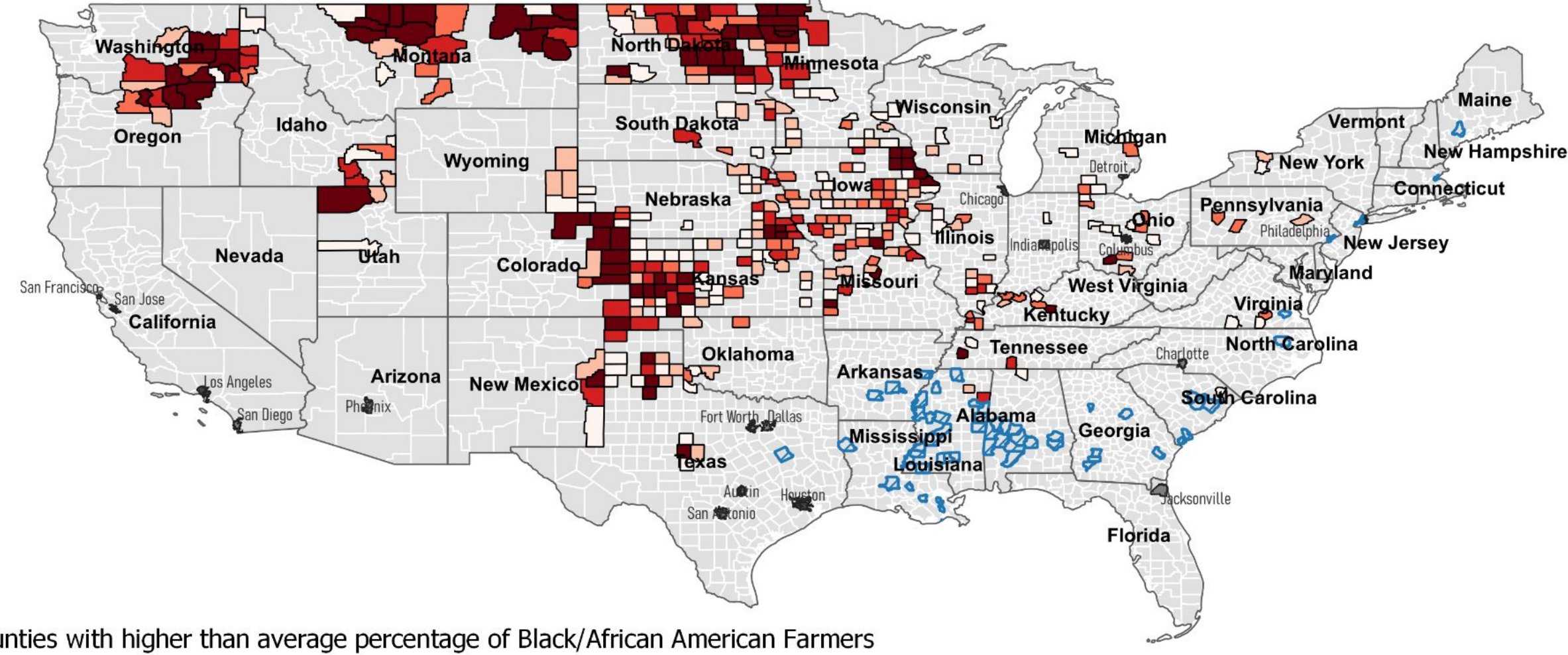


Counties with higher than average percentage of Native American Farmers

- 0 - 1.7
- 1.7 - 8.5
- 8.5 - 21.2
- 21.2 - 45.8
- 45.8 - 100

Number of TIP projects, 2014-4.2022

- 1 - 1
- 1 - 2
- 2 - 4
- 4 - 9
- 9 - 95



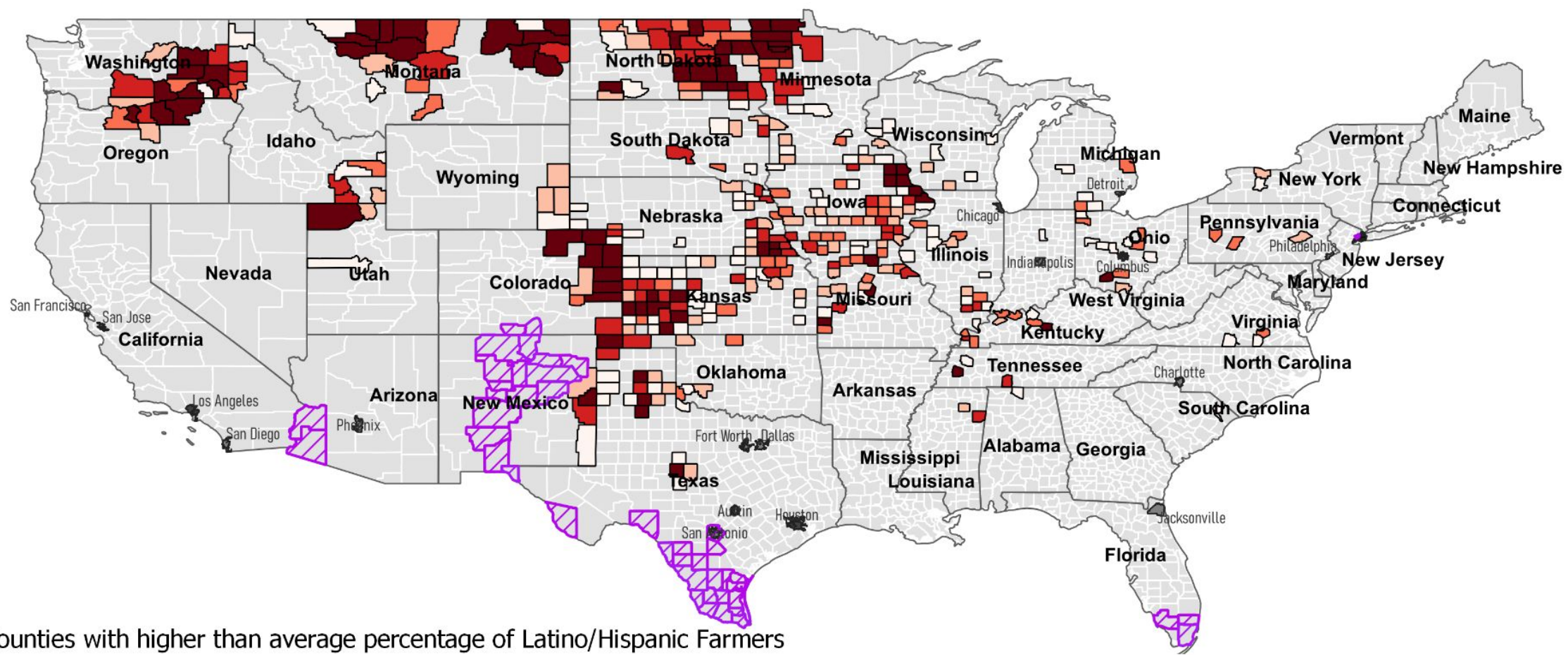
Counties with higher than average percentage of Black/African American Farmers

- 0 - 3.1
- 3.1 - 9.9
- 9.9 - 20.2
- 20.2 - 34
- 34 - 57.1

Number of TIP projects, 2014-4.2022

- 1 - 1
- 1 - 2
- 2 - 4
- 4 - 9
- 9 - 95

SPATIAL MISMATCH: SOCIOALLY DISADVANTAGED FARMERS

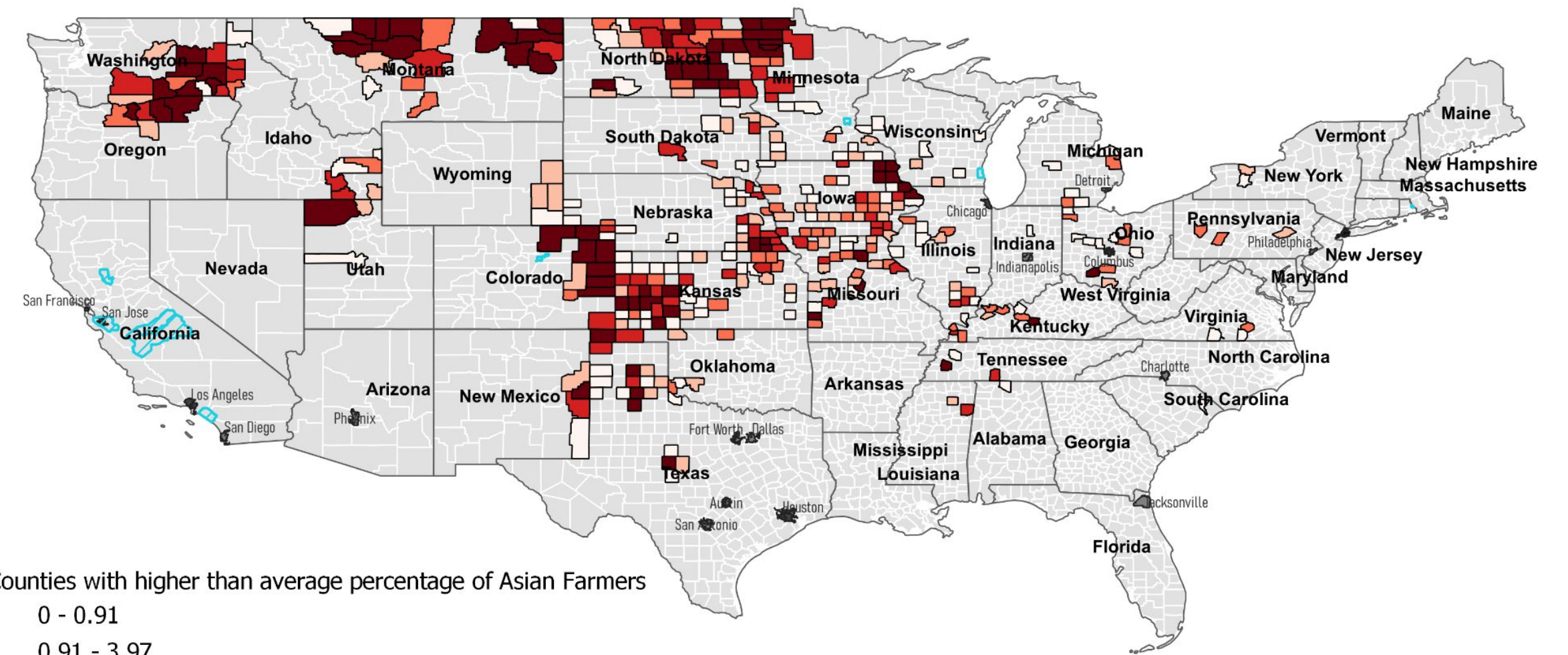


Counties with higher than average percentage of Latino/Hispanic Farmers

- 0 - 4.5
- 4.5 - 13.6
- 13.6 - 28.7
- 28.7 - 57
- 57 - 96.4

Number of TIP projects, 2014-4.2022

- 1 - 1
- 1 - 2
- 2 - 4
- 4 - 9
- 9 - 95



Counties with higher than average percentage of Asian Farmers

- 0 - 0.91
- 0.91 - 3.97
- 3.97 - 11.86
- 11.86 - 32.46
- 32.46 - 56.63

Number of TIP projects, 2014-4.2022

- 1 - 1
- 1 - 2
- 2 - 4
- 4 - 9
- 9 - 95

3

ENVIRONMENTAL
PRACTICES

CRP practice code	CRP Practice	Total Number of TIP projects	Total acres	Average acres per project
CP02	"Establishment of Permanent Native Grasses"	765	141,955	186
CP25	"Rare And Declining Habitat"	624	47,861	77
CP10	"Grass Already Established"	583	93,408	160
CP04/B/D	"Permanent Wildlife Habitat"	441	61,806	140
CP01	"Establishment of Permanent Introduced Grasses & Legumes"	372	59,409	160
CP12	"Wildlife Food Plot"	348	612	2
CP23/A	"Wetland Restoration"	262	33,206	127
CP27 & 28	"Farmable Wetlands Program"	81	1,799	22
CP38E1/2/4D/10/12/25	"State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE)"	58	6,257	108
CP21	"Filter Strip"	56	708	13
CP18B/C	"Establishment of Permanent Vegetation To Reduce Salinity"	28	2,688	96
CP33	"Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds"	21	502	24
CP03/A	"Tree Planting"	19	777	41
CP29	"Marginal Pastureland Wildlife Buffer"	13	787	61
CP37	"Duck Nesting Habitat"	11	1,392	127
CP11	"Vegetation Already Established"	10	114	11
CP42	"Pollinator Habitat"	10	206	21
CP15A	"Contour Grass Strips"	7	305	44
CP22	"Riparian Buffers"	5	151	30
CP41	"Farmable Wetlands Program Flooded Prairie Wetlands"	5	202	40
CP05A	"Field Windbreak Establishment"	2	19	10
CP08A	"Grass Waterway"	1	2	2
CP09	"Shallow Water Areas for Wildlife"	1	10	10

TOP BARRIERS

- Program design
- Spatial mismatch
- Uneven and limited program/staffing outreach and implementation
- Specific barriers by landowners
- Specific barriers by emerging farmers
- External barriers

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- **Program design**
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- External barriers

“If you’re doing CRP correctly, you are putting the worst land in protection... One reason for lower TIP participation in some areas... It’s unfortunate because a lot of Indian land should be eligible for CRP- if you’re doing the program correctly, it should be put on the worst land, with erosion index and soils, should not be farmed- we’ve had people come to the land to try to farm it, and then abandon it because not very good for farming - high erosion, etc... but then the land doesn’t get put into CRP/isn’t seen as eligible for it.”

“In terms of whole field or general CRP... a lot of that may not be too hard to turn back into farmed land.”

Beginning farmers and ranchers already are usually cash strapped... and land coming out of CRP likely not going to have really good productivity, will need a lot of investments.... So many of our Beginning Farmers and Ranchers have not seen it as possible.

TOP BARRIERS

- Program design
- **Spatial mismatch**
- Uneven and limited program/staffing outreach and implementation
- Specific barriers by landowners
- Specific barriers by emerging farmers
- External barriers

A USDA employee in Texas noted that, *Most Black farmers, meanwhile are in East Texas, and there is not much CRP land there... There are many Black farmers and other Socially Disadvantaged farmers around Austin, where all the land is waiting for urban development.*

A USDA employee in Washington state had similar observations:

There are concentrations of minority farmers on the West Coast, e.g. on the west side of the Cascades, but there is only one general CRP enrollment on west side. Instead, the West side has CREP, etc, which are intended for permanent protection.

So did another USDA employee in Wisconsin, who commented,

In Wisconsin, we have some CRP land in the North, but that is not a desirable resource for Socially Disadvantaged farmers, many of them are nearby cities like Milwaukee or Madison.

TOP BARRIERS

- Program design
- Spatial mismatch
- **Uneven and limited program/staffing outreach and implementation**
- Specific barriers by landowners
- Specific barriers by emerging farmers
- External barriers

“Networking and having ways for the beginning farmer and the retirement farmer to connect. This has been the problem throughout the TIP programs history.”

TOP BARRIERS

- Program design
- Spatial mismatch
- Uneven and limited program/staffing outreach and implementation
- **Specific barriers by landowners**
- Specific barriers by emerging farmers
- External barriers

“Landowners and potential renters may struggle to connect. If a landowner is not interested in renting their land to a person they do not know or has a limited farming history could deter them from considering TIP.”

“If a beginning farmer gets out of farming before the 5 year lease is up, it may complicate things for the landowner.”

TOP BARRIERS

- Program design
- Spatial mismatch
- Uneven and limited program/staffing outreach and implementation
- Specific barriers by landowners
- **Specific barriers by emerging farmers**
- External barriers

“It can be a challenge to get connected to existing agricultural landowners to talk about either leasing or buying land. There is no one place to find information to make a connection and when you do, there is a trust building process that has to occur. Even experienced farmers face these challenges. It’s a very competitive land market but I know as farmers begin to age, and many do want to pass along their knowledge and land (either rent or sell) to someone who will keep the land in agriculture.... but I have found that a person looking to get into farming needs capitol and connections.”

“ They also need to be very, very flexible as to where they are willing to go to make it work for them. Sometimes you have to go where you are not always comfortable and may not have as much familiarity.”

TOP BARRIERS

- Program design
- Spatial mismatch
- Uneven and limited program/staffing outreach and implementation
- Specific barriers by landowners
- Specific barriers by emerging farmers
- **External barriers**

“Agriculture is just not a productive sector- I mean you can look at the... numbers, it takes an extraordinary number of cattle, sheep to be successful. To ask a Beginning Farmers to compete seems nuts... You gotta consider the monopolies, oligopolies- let’s get down to the brass tacks. There are really only about 200,000 farmers in the US actually making a living farming. They are BIG Farms, and the inputs that go into that- fertilizer, seeds, equipment- it is NOT a buyer’s market. Also not a seller’s market. So the problem is at the top and bottom. The policy makers know this- know those are the places to act. There have been studies comparing the price a small producer gets versus contracted producer- the small one has higher quality, but gets a worse price... while the contracted producer gets higher prices for poor quality.”

“Competing land uses is a big deal also. The price of land in the last 30 years has been driven more by development for other uses rather than ag. If land was truly valued based on ag uses, it would be much more reasonable.”



CONCLUSIONS

As it is designed and with its current funding levels, TIP alone is unlikely to have a significant impact on addressing the core land transition challenges faced by retiring farmers or the land access challenges faced by Emerging Farmers and Ranchers. It seems to mostly be serving a niche set of landowners, farmers who already have some connections, certain kinds of agriculture, and not SDA farmers.

While following recommendations may make TIP a better program and enhance participation, ultimately it will likely not lead to the transfer of a lot of land or assist big numbers of successful farming operations led by Beginning, Socially Disadvantaged, and Veteran farmers. Emerging farmers, especially those from non-farming families, those from Socially Disadvantaged categories, those from low income backgrounds, and those doing nonconventional agriculture need more than a short-term lease on (potentially marginal) CRP lands.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Program design reforms, big and small
 - Expand availability to any land
 - Give incentive to farmer instead of landowners
- Support federal staff with more outreach materials
 - In various languages
 - On social media to target younger farmers
- Expand outreach and technical support
 - In areas with high amounts of eligible land
 - To org's with long connections to SDA and Beginning Farmers
 - With land linking efforts
- Transparent reporting
- Beyond TIP: Support emerging farmers holistically and rethink land **access**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What resonates with your own experience?
2. What would you modify or add?
3. What else do you want to know?
4. What stands out?
5. How can TIP and state programs work together?
6. How we really address land access need?