

Land Trust Alliance Federal Policy Updates

March 2025

PRESIDENT TRUMP AND THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH

The New Federal Landscape

Since his inauguration, President Donald Trump has issued an unprecedented number of executive orders and actions that, coupled with efforts to reduce the federal workforce, has created uncertainty for our community.

As the situation is evolving daily, the Land Trust Alliance is closely monitoring these orders and actions so that we can keep our members updated about their impact.

We have created a new webpage on our Resource Center, [“The new federal landscape”](#) that will provide the latest details about the administrative directives and actions and how they may affect land trusts. On the page, you’ll find advocacy resources, tools for assessing your organization’s strengths and vulnerabilities, and tools for helping review your financial forecasting. Our [“How you can help”](#) page provides steps that land trusts can take to educate decision makers. You’ll find a link to telling us how your work and community has been affected, key messages to share with local, state and federal officials and links to register to become an [Advocacy Ambassador](#) and attend [Advocacy Days 2025](#) in order to stay on top of the latest news and information.

Call to action: We urge all Massachusetts land trusts to reach out to your local, state and federal officials and share stories about the impacts of recent federal action – the funding freeze and staffing cuts – to families and your communities. It’s also important to share the positive stories about the work of land trusts. In addition, visit our new Resource Center website. Please also take the time to tell us how your land trust has been impacted by filling out our “share your story” form. Please join us in May for Advocacy Days 2025 – this year it is more important than ever that we show Congress the strength of the land trust community and highlight the many ways it helps communities thrive. Any questions, please email policy@lta.org.

119th CONGRESS

Republicans Advance Reconciliation Process

Republicans are focused on using the reconciliation process to pass the president’s top legislative priorities. Reconciliation is a tool for fast-tracking high-priority fiscal legislation. The first step in the reconciliation process is to pass a budget resolution that sets funding targets.

Last month, the House passed its version of a budget resolution on a 217-215 partisan vote. The resolution directs House committees to identify spending cuts totaling \$2 trillion to help pay for a legislative package. The Senate also passed its own budget resolution last month but differs from the House in that it has a lower price tag as it would not address the expiring provisions in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

The Alliance will continue to monitor reconciliation negotiations and keep Massachusetts land trusts updated on any proposed cuts that would undermine the work of land trusts.

Funding the Federal Government and the next Farm Bill

Late last year, Congress passed a year-end continuing resolution that extended government funding through March 14. The resolution also contained a one-year extension of the Farm Bill. Unfortunately, that extension did not include the remaining Inflation Reduction Act funding for Farm Bill conservation programs that was previously discussed in our last update. It is uncertain at this time whether or not

Congress will be able to pass another CR to fund the federal government through the end of the fiscal year, September 30, 2025.

At this time, we do not expect to see considerable movement on the Farm Bill until Republicans pass a reconciliation bill and fund the federal government through the end of the fiscal year.

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Confirmed

On Feb. 13, the Senate confirmed Brooke Rollins to serve as U.S. Secretary of Agriculture on a 72-28 bipartisan vote. Rollins formerly served as president and CEO of the America First Policy Institute and served during the first Trump administration in the Office of American Innovation. Rollins has stated her commitment to “serve the people of this country” and to “fight for American farmers, ranchers and the agriculture community.”

OTHER POLICY UPDATES

Agriculture Secretary Releases First Tranche of Federal Funding

On February 20, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins announced that the agency will release the first tranche of funding that was paused under President Trump’s executive order, “Unleashing American Energy.” According to a press release from the agency, \$20 million in contracts for the Environmental Quality Incentive Program, Conservation Stewardship Program and Agricultural Conservation Easement Program will be honored and made available to farmers. It is expected that additional funding may be released once the agency has had an opportunity to review additional Inflation Reduction Act funding.

U.S. Forest Service Chief Named

On February 27, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins named Tom Schulz as the 21st chief of the U.S. Forest Service. Schultz, who was appointed chief of staff for Natural Resources and Environment at USDA in January, has previously served as the director of the Idaho Department of Lands and most recently served as vice president of resources and government affairs at the Idaho Forest Group. He replaces Chief Randy Moore, who announced his retirement from the service, after 45 years, in a message to staff late last month.

Land Trust Alliance Advocacy Days Registration Now Open

Registration for [2025 Land Trust Alliance Advocacy Days](#) is now open! This year, perhaps more than ever, our federal lawmakers need to hear from Massachusetts’ land trusts about the importance of voluntary private land conservation and the federal programs that support it. We’ll be hosting our annual virtual issue briefing and first-timers training on April 22, with in-person activities set to kick off two weeks later, on May 5.

As of March 3, two land trusts are signed up to attend but we need a much stronger presence from the state this year with 6 legislative targets. For additional questions, please email policy@lta.org.