



## News Release

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### **New Tax Incentives for Donating Conservation Easements**

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Landowners are now eligible to receive increased tax benefits for permanently protecting their land through the donation of a conservation easement. The increased benefits were part of the Pension Protection Act signed into law by President George W. Bush on August 17, 2006.

Rep. Dave Camp of Midland said, "When the President signed into law the Pension Protection Act, which I was proud to have helped write, he did more than shore up the nation's beleaguered pension plans. This law also contains a number of charitable incentives and reforms that will make it easier for Americans to donate their land to a good cause."

For donations made from January 1, 2006 through December 31, 2007, the new law raises the maximum deduction a donor can take for donating a conservation easement from 30% of adjusted gross income in any year to 50 %; allows qualified farmers and ranchers to deduct up to 100% of their adjusted gross income; and increases the number of years over which a donor can take deductions from six years to 16 years.

The amount of the donation is the difference between the land's value with and without the conservation easement, which is determined through an appraisal. To promote legitimate conservation, the legislation also includes the adoption of stronger land appraisal standards and penalties for appraisers who fail to follow those standards.

"For the landowner who has been thinking about how they will leave their land to the next generation, or who wish to guarantee that the natural resources on their land will be conserved forever, now is the time to act," states Douglas Koop, executive director of The Little Forks Conservancy. "There are significant new incentives that can help landowners with modest income take advantage of charitable provisions in the tax while achieving their goal of protecting their land."

Camp added, "The philanthropic spirit is alive and well in America, and our laws should do everything possible to encourage these gifts."

A conservation easement is a voluntary, legal agreement between a private landowner and a qualified organization, such as The Little Forks Conservancy, that permanently protects the conservation values of the property. Conservation easements do not require the landowner to provide public access. In order to receive the federal tax benefits, the agreement must be permanent and donated in 2006 or 2007.

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For more information on conservation easements and the new tax incentives, contact The Little Forks Conservancy at (989) 835-4886 or visit our website at [www.littleforks.org](http://www.littleforks.org).

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