

**(b) Components of plan**

The natural resource conservation management plan referred to in subsection (a)(1) of this section (hereafter referred to as the “plan”)—

(1) shall set forth—

(A) the conservation measures and practices to be carried out by the owner of the land subject to the easement; and

(B) the commercial use, if any, to be permitted on such land during the term of the easement; and

(2) shall provide for the permanent retirement of any existing cropland base and allotment history for such land under any program administered by the Secretary.

(Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, §1239A, as added Pub. L. 101-624, title XIV, §1440, Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3597.)

**§ 3839b. Duties of Secretary**

In return for the granting of an easement by an owner under this part, the Secretary shall—

(1) share the cost of carrying out the establishment of conservation measures and practices set forth in the plan for which the Secretary determines that cost sharing is appropriate and in the public interest;

(2) pay for a period not to exceed 10 years annual easement payments in the aggregate not to exceed the lesser of—

(A) \$250,000; or

(B) the difference in the value of the land with and without an easement;

(3) provide necessary technical assistance to assist owners in complying with the terms and conditions of the easement and the plan; and

(4) permit the land to be used for wildlife activities, including hunting and fishing, if such use is permitted by the owner.

(Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, §1239B, as added Pub. L. 101-624, title XIV, §1440, Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3598.)

**§ 3839c. Payments****(a) Time of payment**

The Secretary shall provide payment for obligations incurred by the Secretary under this part—

(1) with respect to any cost sharing obligation as soon as possible after the obligation is incurred; and

(2) with respect to any annual easement payment obligation incurred by the Secretary as soon as possible after October 1 of each calendar year.

**(b) Cost sharing payments**

In making cost sharing payments to owners under this part, the Secretary may pay up to 100 percent of the cost of establishing conservation measures and practices pursuant to this part.

**(c) Easement payments; acceptability of offers****(1) Determination of amount**

The Secretary shall determine the amount payable to owners in the form of easement payments under this part, and in making such determination may consider, among other

things, the amount necessary to encourage owners to participate in the easement program.

**(2) Acceptability of offers**

In determining the acceptability of easement offers, the Secretary may take into consideration—

(A) the extent to which the purposes of the easement program would be achieved on the land;

(B) the productivity of the land; and

(C) the on-farm and off-farm environmental threats if the land is used for the production of agricultural commodities.

**(d) Form of payment**

Except as otherwise provided in this section, payments under this part—

(1) shall be made in cash in such amount and at such time as is agreed on and specified in the easement or related agreement; and

(2) may be made in advance of a determination of performance.

**(e) Payments to others**

If an owner who is entitled to a payment under this part dies, becomes incompetent, is otherwise unable to receive such payment, or is succeeded by another person who renders or completes the required performance, the Secretary shall make such payment, in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Secretary and without regard to any other provision of law, in such manner as the Secretary determines is fair and reasonable in light of all of the circumstances.

**(f) Payment limitation****(1) In general**

The total amount of easement payments made to a person under this part for any year may not exceed \$50,000.

**(2) Regulations**

The Secretary shall issue regulations prescribing such rules as the Secretary determines necessary to ensure a fair and reasonable application of the limitation contained in this subsection.

**(3) Other payments**

Easement payments received by an owner shall be in addition to, and not affect, the total amount of payments that such owner is otherwise eligible to receive under this Act, the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990, or the Agricultural Act of 1949 (7 U.S.C. 1421 et seq.).

**(4) State environmental enhancement**

The provisions of this subsection that limit payments to any person, and section 1305(d) of the Agricultural Reconciliation Act of 1987 (7 U.S.C. 1308 note), shall not be applicable to payments received by a State, political subdivision, or agency thereof in connection with agreements entered into under an environmental easement enhancement program carried out by that entity that has been approved by the Secretary. The Secretary may enter into such agreements for payments to States, political subdivisions, or agencies thereof that