



For immediate release
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Benefits Outweigh Costs of National ALUS Program: Study

Winnipeg & Ottawa – If farmers were paid for their environmental stewardship, what's the real bottom line? According to a recent review commissioned by the Delta Waterfowl Foundation, the costs of a national Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) program are significantly outweighed by the benefits to Canadians. The review, conducted by Tyrchniewicz Consulting, focused on available data on the anticipated national costs and benefits of implementing ALUS as a conservation program on privately-owned farmland across Canada.

If farmers were offered an incentive to maintain or enhance lands that offered an environmental service (wetlands, riparian areas, natural areas, or fragile lands), the national program would have an estimated annual price tag of \$738 million. Over 36 million acres would be enrolled in ALUS – a landscape the size of the entire state of Michigan.

“The report documents what many of us have believed for some time. Canada’s agricultural producers are uniquely suited to provide for the country’s environment,” says Delta Waterfowl President Rob Olson. “It also spells out the environmental and conservation dividend Canadians can realize as ALUS moves ahead. ALUS is our vision to provide food and fiber and a diversity of environmental values in a cost-effective manner from our agricultural landscapes.”

The report estimates annual cost reductions within government of over \$61 million and a total benefit to society of over \$820 million through the program’s positive results in greenhouse gas sequestration, increased value of outdoor recreational activities, and other services.

Farmers are only searching for a market signal that shows their contributions to the environment are valued by Canadians. The Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA) continues to support the ALUS model as a method of empowering farmers and local communities to take the lead of the environmental agenda.

“Voluntary initiatives like ALUS empower farmers so they can provide these invaluable environmental benefits while they continue to provide consumers with high quality, safe food,” said Bob Friesen, CFA President. “And in addition to the solid environmental public benefits ALUS provides it also benefits the public purse, lowering the burden on business risk management programs and creating income stability for farmers.”

A complete copy of the report, authored by Allen Tyrchniewicz and Edward Tyrchniewicz, is attached to this release. By releasing this document, Delta Waterfowl and the CFA hope to further the national discussion about ALUS and farmers’ leadership role in conservation.

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