



# IDAHO AGRICULTURAL PROTECTION AREAS

Saving America's Working Lands National Conference

Dallas, Texas | April 24, 2025



**On recent trends,  
from 2016 to 2040:**

Idahoans will pave over,  
fragment, or compromise

**113,100 acres**

of farmland and ranchland.

That's the equivalent of losing

**700 farms/ranches**

**\$72 million**

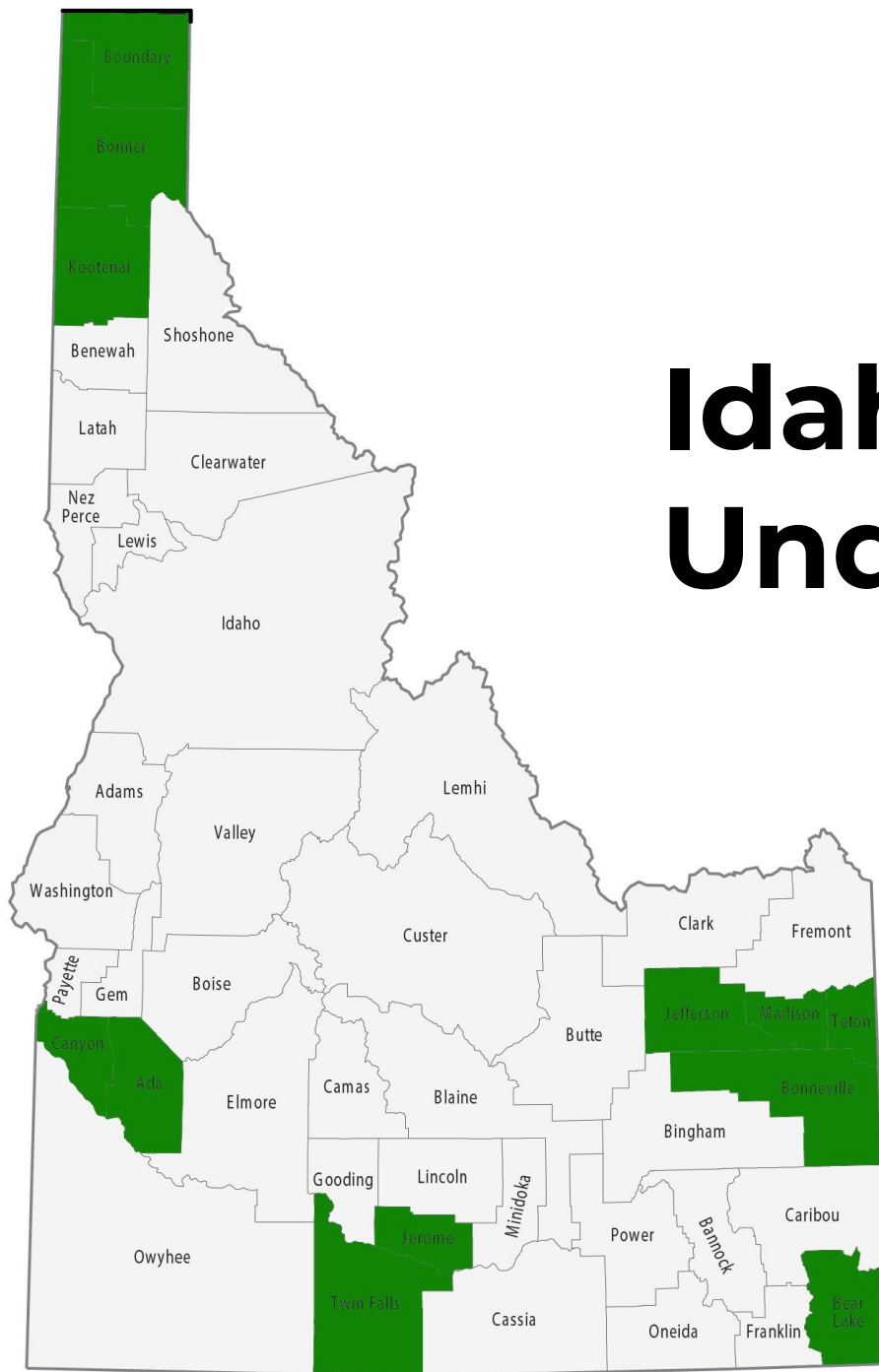
in farm output, and

**1500 jobs**

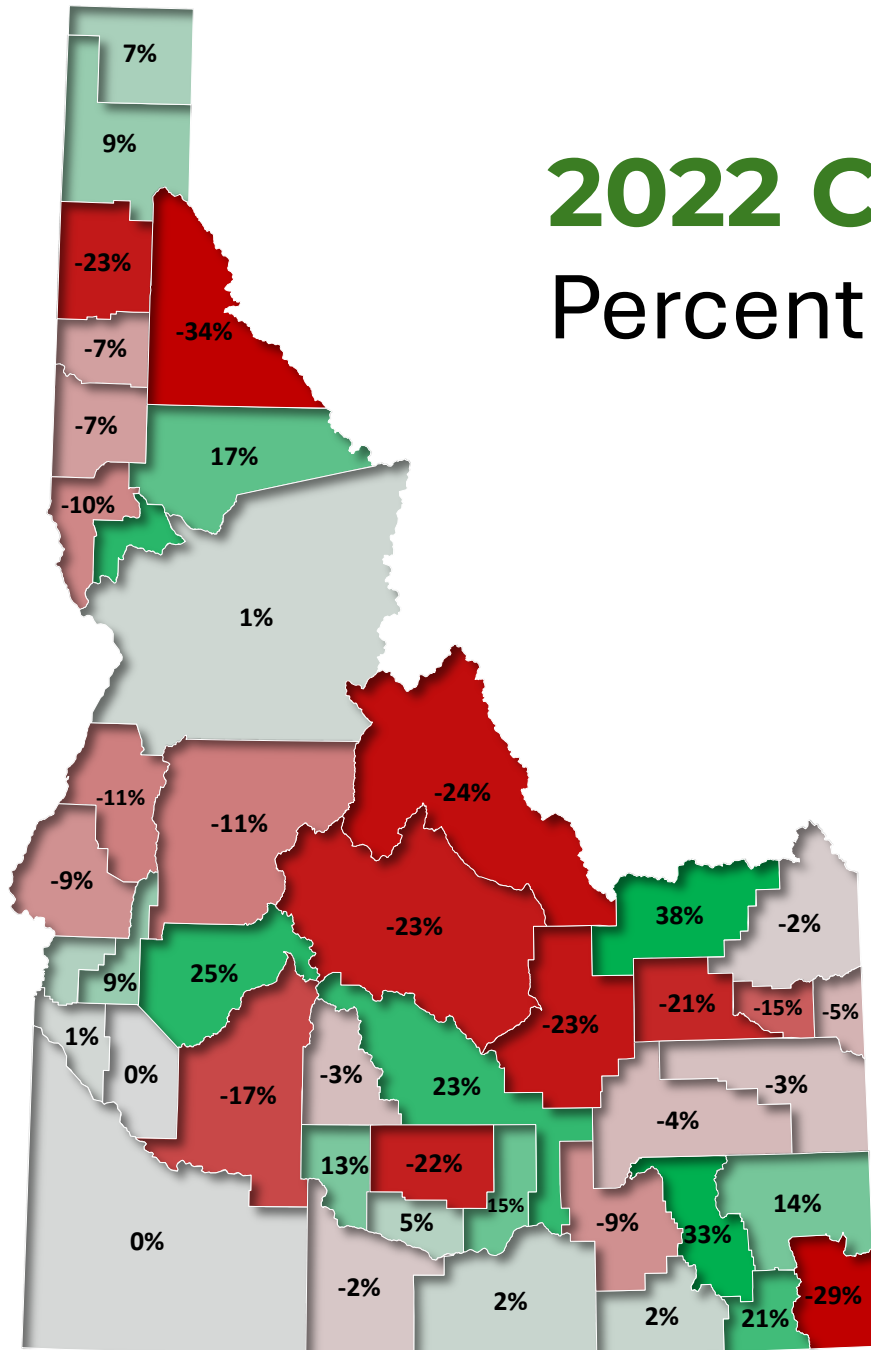
based on county averages.

**83%** of the conversion

Will occur on Idaho's best land.



# Idaho Farms Under Threat



# 2022 Census of Agriculture

## Percent change in land in production

*Between 2017 and 2022,  
there were 144,000 **less**  
acres in production.*

# APA concept timeline





# The Idaho APA

- Essentially a voluntary ag district
- Counties adopt an ordinance to create an APA program
- Establishes an APA Commission of 3-5 agribusiness reps for the county
- Minimum 5-acre parcel and 3 years of continuous production
- 20-year term with 10-year exit and hardship allowance
- Currently no financial incentive
- Landowner benefits



# What are the landowner benefits of an APA?

- The current ag zoning cannot be changed without landowner approval
- County comprehensive planning process must consider APAs in long-term land use decisions
- Idaho Right-to-Farm Act protections are to be prioritized in county planning decisions adjacent to APAs
- Protection from eminent domain takings for infrastructure projects
- No longer need to monitor county planning and development decisions



Incentive Concept	Method/Tool	Details
<b>County Voluntary Fund</b>	Pooled fund	A county fund with the purpose of protecting and incentivizing agricultural land use. The fund can receive both public and private dollars to be used to financially incentivize agricultural landowners to pursue an APA designation on their land.
<b>Change of Use – Conversion Fee</b>	Impact fee	A one-time fee assessed for the change in land use as compensation for the loss of agricultural land. This fee would be deposited in the local county APA fund where the land is located.
<b>County Assessment</b>	Property tax	A local assessment on all dwelling units within a county (\$10 to \$20), paid annually and deposited into the local county APA fund for use as an incentive for agricultural landowners to pursue an APA designation. This assessment could be refundable upon request.
<b>State Income Tax Credit</b>	Income tax	Allows taxpayers to make private, voluntary contributions to county APA Funds to incentivize agricultural land protection and preservation. In return, contributors receive a dollar-for-dollar credit against state income tax. The program could have established cap for the fund, and contribution limits per individual/entity.
<b>State Income Tax Refund</b>	Income tax	Allows a taxpayer to designate a portion of their tax refund (or an additional amount) to support a county APA fund. This option would be listed on the state tax return form.
<b>Property Tax Exemption</b>	Property tax	Structured like the Idaho Homeowners Exemption, the property tax exemption would lower the property tax liability on parcels of land that have an APA designation.
<b>Renewable Energy Development Fee</b>	Impact or mitigation fee	Renewable energy developers would pay a one-time fee assessed for the change in land use as compensation for the loss of agricultural land. This fee would be deposited in the local county APA fund where the land is located, as part of the permit approval.

# What's next?

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- Language cleanup bill passed in March 2025
- Tracking of APA applications, approvals, and denials
- Education and outreach with county commissioners and state legislators
- IFBF Ag Preservation Subcommittee to engage members on incentive solutions







**QUESTIONS?**



# Canyon County Agriculture Economic Impact Analysis<sup>1</sup>

2022 Value of the Canyon County Ag Economy<sup>2</sup>

**\$619,923,155**

Estimated annual impact of working land conversion

**\$15,532,656**

<sup>1</sup>American Farmland Trust, 2022

<sup>2</sup>2017 Census for Agriculture adjusted for inflation



# Growing Together...into insolvency!

Canyon County	Residential	Commercial	Agricultural
Revenues	\$316,115,670	\$158,214,025	\$17,722,575
Expenditures	\$441,787,749	\$70,077,384	\$5,074,840
2019 Ratio	1.40	0.44	0.29
1997 Ratio	1.08	0.79	0.54

- Increases in school budgets
- Changes to school funding formulas
- Changes to the homeowners' exemption
- Growing demand for services from population growth
- Low-density residential expecting city-scale services