WASHINGTON, D.C. -- U.S. Sen. Bill Armstrong (R-Colo.) today won final Senate approval of his sodbuster bill and vowed to "work for prompt action by the House and support from President Reagan so that the bill will take effect early next year."

The proposal, which prohibits federal payments of any kind for crops grown on newly plowed fragile grasslands, has been endorsed by almost every major agriculture and conservation organization in the country, Armstrong said.

"We need swift action by the House and support from the President to ensure that literally millions of acres of fragile grasslands will not be put to the plow next year," he said.

"This problem was first brought to my attention by a rancher at a meeting two years ago in Limon, Colo., who was convinced that the federal government is encouraging farmers to plow up these grasslands like there's no tomorrow," Armstrong said. "He was right. In Colorado alone, we have seen more than half a million acres of such land put to the plow since 1979. But it's not just a Colorado problem. Huge acreages of fragile lands are being plowed in Montana, Wyoming, South Dakota, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Texas, California, New Mexico, and Arizona. The same problem exists on a smaller scale in Kansas, Oregon,
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Washington, Georgia and Alabama."

"This is a nationwide problem of critical proportions and the sodbuster bill is the solution," Armstrong said. "We lose more than five billion tons of the best topsoil every year through erosion -- more than at any time during the dust bowl days of the 1930s. This proposal will end the financial incentives by the federal government to plow up fragile grasslands."

"Federal programs, including crop insurance, price supports, farmers' home loans, disaster payments and farm storage facility loans, are powerful economic incentives for farmers to risk planting crops on acreage which should be left alone."

Under the bill, fragile lands would be determined by Soil Conservation Service land classification system.

During the past two years, Armstrong has testified before the Senate and House Agriculture Committees and has sought out and won support from the Reagan Administration.