

Punjab seeks 100% central funding for crop residue management

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OBSERVING THAT burning of crop residue is an "important" issue, the AAP-led Punjab government on Thursday urged the Central government to restore the funding pattern for Crop Residue Management Scheme from 60:40 (Centre:State) to 100 per cent centrally funded.

The state also asked the Centre to provide compensation to farmers for management of paddy stubble to tackle stubble burning menace and the resultant air pollution in Delhi NCR, Haryana and Punjab. It demanded that the Centre gover Rs 7,000 per acre to farmers who plant any crop other than paddy as part of the crop diversification plan (CDP).

According to sources, these demands have been raised by Punjab Agriculture Minister

Gurmeet Singh Khuddian in a letter to Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan. Khuddian also met Chouhan at Krishi Bhawan on Thursday.

In the letter, Khuddian said: "To manage the residue, Crop Residue Management Scheme has been implemented in the states since 2018-19. From 2018-19 till 2022-23 the scheme was 100% centrally sponsored but in the year 2023-24 the funding pattern was changed to 60 (Centre): 40 (State). As burning of crop residue is an important issue and also keeping in view the contribution of the state to national food security, it is proposed that the crop residue management scheme be made Centre Sector Scheme and for this 100% funds should be provided by central government."

Seeking financial support for management of paddy stubble, Khuddian said: "The state government has requested the Centre to

support and collaborate by providing incentive per acre basis as compensation to farmers in lieu of the additional cost to be incurred on management of paddy stubble... to tackle stubble burning menace and air pollution in NCR Delhi, Haryana and Punjab."

"Government of Punjab would do its bit and this endeavour could become a distinguished symbol of cooperative federalism to solve an issue that doesn't respect any borders. It is therefore again requested to consider this proposal on priority in the interest of farmers' welfare as well as common citizens," Khuddian said.

He also urged Chouhan to approve the state government's proposal regarding State Agricultural Statistics Authority (SASA), which he said is pending with the Centre for formal approval.

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