



Special Report

**Highlights of the
House Agriculture
Committee's 2018
Farm Bill Proposal**

April 25, 2018

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Introduction

The Farm Bill is a multi-year law that governs a wide-array of agricultural and food programs. The Farm Bill is typically renewed every five years to give lawmakers an opportunity to periodically address new agriculture and food issues. The most recent Farm Bill was approved in 2014; therefore, many of the authorities in the 2014 Farm Bill expire in 2018.

The House and Senate Agriculture Committees have been working on their respective 2018 Farm Bills since early 2017. The Senate has yet to release the text of its bill, and reports suggest that the committee is still working to draft several titles of the bill. The House Agriculture Committee, on the other hand, has already approved its 2018 Farm Bill. The House Agriculture Committee approved its bill on April 18, 2018, without Democratic support due to numerous changes made to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), conservation programs, and environmental review requirements, among other things. The bill is currently slated for floor consideration in early May.

The bill would increase federal mandatory spending—spending required by law and not at the discretion of appropriators—by \$3.2 billion from Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 through FY 2023 and a \$2.7 billion decrease in mandatory spending from FYs 2024 through 2028. Overall, the House's 2018 Farm Bill is estimated to decrease the deficit by a total of net \$7 billion over 10 years. Changes that are responsible for a large part of this net decrease include new work provisions to the SNAP program, which would reduce spending by a net \$1.54 billion over 10 years. The bill would also eliminate broad-based categorical eligibility for SNAP, which would reduce spending by \$5.04 billion over 10 years.

Many conservation programs would see changes under the bill, including ones that would reduce spending by a net \$795 million over 10 years. Changes include consolidating the Conservation Stewardship Program into the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and reducing federal payments to farmers under the Conservation Reserve Program.

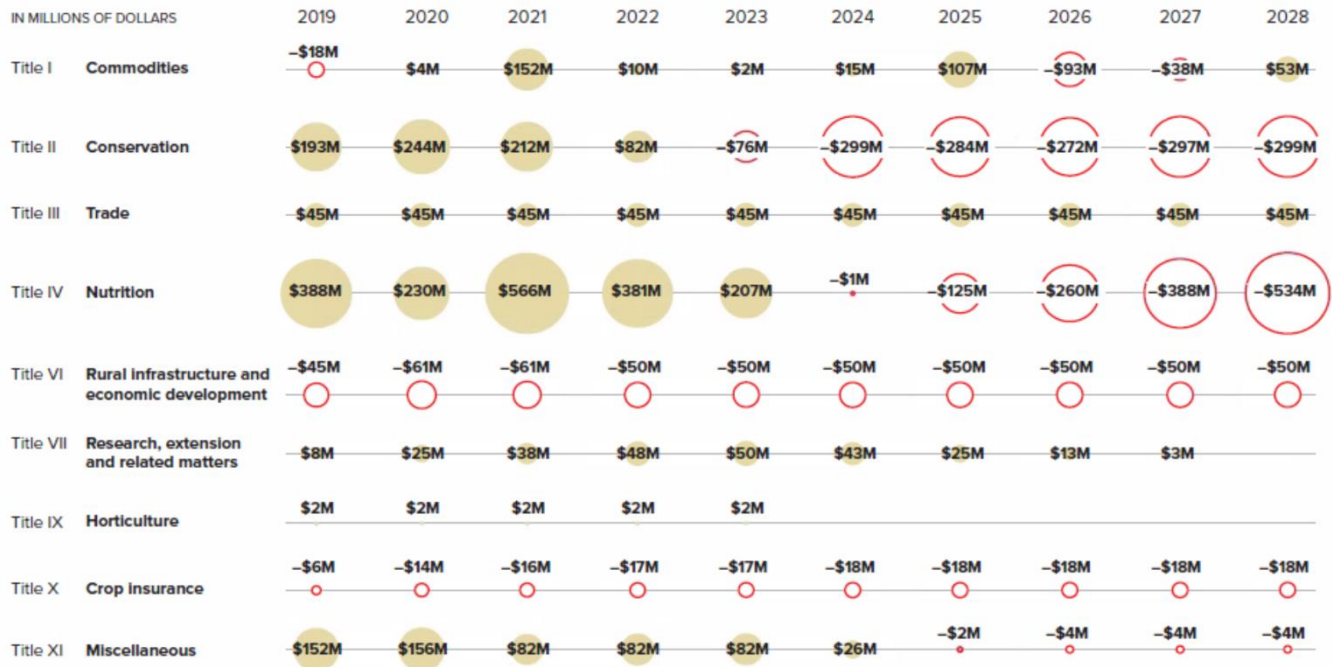
More detailed information on major changes made in the House's 2018 Farm Bill are provided in this memo.

This memo was assembled in part with [information](#) provided by the House Agriculture Committee.

Estimated Effects on Direct Spending of H.R. 2

The Congressional Budget Office released estimates of direct spending on each title of the House farm bill, the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018, introduced April 12, 2018.

● Increases and ○ decreases in direct spending relative to CBO's baseline April 2018 estimates*



*The baseline assumes that the farm bill programs that expire at the end of 2018 will continue after their authorizations expire. CBO estimates no change in direct spending to Credit, Title V, and Forestry, Title VIII.

Source: Congressional Budget Office
By Cristina Rivero, POLITICO Pro DataPoint

Title I: Commodities

Price Loss Coverage (PLC) and Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC): The bill would strengthen PLC by allowing reference prices to adjust when markets improve and by allowing farmers affected by long-term drought during the previous opportunity to update their yields. ARC would also be strengthened using actual yields collected by USDA's Risk Management Agency, by separately calculating revenues for dryland and irrigated land, and by using the physical county of the farm when determining ARC benefits to help ensure accuracy in ARC assistance and mitigate county-to-county disparities.

Sugar Policy: The bill would maintain/reauthorize U.S. sugar policy through 2023. The U.S. sugar program is the federal commodity support program that maintains a minimum price for sugar.

Dairy Policy: The bill would reauthorize the Margin Protection Program, renamed the Dairy Risk Management (DRM) Program, through 2023, and makes several changes to the program, including: (1) the first 5 million pounds of milk production on dairy would be made eligible for higher coverage levels at lower premiums; (2) milk coverage not covered under DRM would be made fully eligible for a comparable crop insurance policy; (3) feed costs would be studied to ensure accuracy in the DRM; and (4) the use of certain annual milk marketing would be allowable to determine prior dairy operation production history. In addition, class I milk calculations would be adjusted to help dairy farmers better manage risk in the futures market. The bill would also reauthorize the Dairy Forward Pricing Program, the Dairy Indemnity Program, and the Dairy Promotion and Research Program. The bill would repeal the Dairy Product Donation Program.

Supplemental Agriculture Disaster Assistance: The bill would maintain livestock disaster programs and would make several changes to strengthen these programs, including: (1) expanding the Livestock Indemnity Program to cover death or sale loss as a result of diseases that are caused or transmitted by a vector and that are not able to be controlled by vaccination or other acceptable management practices, and (2) eliminating the payment limitation of \$125,000 per crop year for Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm Raised-Fish.

Administration: Most administration provisions in the Farm Bill would be maintained. The most notable administration changes would be to farm and ranch families that structure as qualified pass-through entities. These entities would be exempt from the \$125,000 per person-per year payment limit for farm subsidies through the PLC and ARC programs. The bill would also expand the definition of family member from children, siblings and spouse of a farmer to also include cousins, nieces and nephews, making these family members eligible to receive up to \$125,000 in assistance from PLC and ARC.

Title II: Conservation

Overall, the bill would cut conservation program funding by \$800 million over the next decade, according to a Congressional Budget Office report, and would consolidate some conservation program authorities.

Conservation Stewardship Program: The bill would eliminate the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), the largest farmland conservation program, and would transfer some of its authorities into an expanded Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Current CSP contracts would be maintained; however, new contracts would be not offered.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), and the Small Watershed Rehabilitation Program (SWRP): The bill would reauthorize the RCPP, ACEP

and SWRP programs, and provide \$250 million per year for RCPP, \$500 million per year to ACEP, and \$100 million per year for SWRP.

EQIP: The bill would increase funding for EQIP from \$1.75 billion to \$3 billion. Although some of the features of the eliminated CSP program would be transferred to EQIP, many would not, which is gaining criticism from many Democrats and conservation groups. Also, additional authority is provided under EQIP so irrigation districts and associations can directly apply for EQIP funding (currently only producers can apply for funding). Since the RCPP program uses EQIP authority, irrigation districts and associations would also be eligible to apply for funding under RCPP. In addition, water conservation and irrigation efficiency practices that are eligible for funding are expanded to include irrigation-related structural practices, water conservation scheduling technology/management, and water conserving crops or crop rotations.

Conservation Innovation Trials: The bill would allow up to \$25 million of EQIP funds per year to be used for new on-farm conservation innovation trials. New or innovative conservation approaches include, but are not limited to: precision agriculture technology; enhanced nutrient management plans and fertilization systems; soil health management systems; water management systems; nutrient recovery systems; resource-conserving crop rotations; cover crops; and irrigation systems.

Conservation Reserve Program: The bill would reauthorize the program through 2023 and would raise the cap on CRP acreage from 24 million to 29 million. The bill would also cap rental rates to 80 percent of average rental rates in a county.

Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program (P.L. 566): The bill would reauthorize the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program, also known as P.L. 566, through 2023 and provide funding of \$100 million per year. This program provides funding to state and local entities to prevent erosion; floodwater and sediment damage; to further the conservation development, use and disposal of water; and to further the conservation and proper use of land in authorized watersheds.

Other programs maintained: The bill would provide \$50 million for the Voluntary Public Access Program, \$5 million for Grassroots Source Water Protection, \$10 million for the Wetland Mitigation Banking Program, while reauthorizing the Private Grazing Land Program and eliminating the SAM/DUNS number requirement for producers participating in NRCS conservation programs.

Title III: Trade

International Marketing: The bill would streamline the existing authorities for the Market Access Program (MAP), the Foreign Market Development (FMD) Program, the Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops (TASC) program, and the Emerging Markets Program (EMP) under one International Market Development Program, restoring funding for FMD and TASC, and establishing overall funding at \$255 million per year moving forward. No less than \$200 million would be available for MAP, no less than \$34.5 million for FMD, \$10 million for EMP, and \$9 million for TASC. These changes align with the responsibilities of the newly-established USDA Under Secretary for Trade and Foreign Agriculture Affairs position created as part of the USDA reorganization.

U.S. Food Aid: The bill would maintain international food programs, including Food for Peace, Food for Progress, McGovern-Dole, Farmer-to-Farmer, Local and Regional Procurement, the Cochran Fellowship Program, the Borlaug International Agricultural Science and Technology Fellowship Program, the Global Crop Diversity Trust, and the Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust. The bill would also retain in-kind food aid as the foundation of U.S. food aid.

Title IV: Nutrition

SNAP: The bill would mandate able-bodied adults — ages 18 to 59 — to work a minimum of 20 hours a week or participate in 20 hours of work training or risk losing SNAP benefits. Excluded from the work requirement would be participants over age 59, the disabled, pregnant women and people responsible for children under age 6. Other changes to SNAP include:

- Elimination of broad-based categorical eligibility for SNAP for people who receive non-cash assistance from the federal welfare program known as the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).
- Updating limits on savings, assets and car value to reflect inflation. The higher limits would allow people to have more in savings and assets and a newer and more reliable vehicle for transportation to work.
- Barring states from using a person's heating or cooling payments received from the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program in calculating a standard utility allowance deduction that helps determine the level of monthly benefits. Applicants who are not elderly would have to produce utility bills or other documentation for use in determining the standard utility allowance.
- Creating a national database on SNAP recipients to enable the Department of Agriculture to better track fraud. The national database would centralize data already collected by states.

Healthy Food Incentives: The bill would incentivize healthier diets by promoting increased purchases of fruits, vegetables, and dairy products, including through retailer-funded incentive pilot projects. The bill would increase funding to \$60 million per year for the Emergency Food Assistance Program, with \$20 million to be used for the Farm-to-Food Bank program providing inexpensive food for low-income families. The bill would also maintain the Commodity Distribution Program, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, Distribution of Surplus Commodities, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Purchase Program, Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program and the Healthy Food Financing Initiative.

Title V: Credit

Beginning Farmer and Rancher Individual Development Accounts Pilot Program: The bill would maintain the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Individual Development Accounts Pilot Program, with matching funds for savings accounts, and reserves a portion of ownership and operating loans for beginning farmers and ranchers. The bill would allow military and related experience to count toward 3-years of experience required prior to an application for an ownership loan. The bill would also reauthorize appropriations of \$5 million for the program for each fiscal year through FY 2023.

Conservation Loan and Loan Guarantee Program: The bill would maintain the Conservation Loan and Loan Guarantee program to help farmers and ranchers implement conservation measures on their land. The bill would also reauthorize appropriations of \$75 million for the program for each fiscal year through FY 2023.

Loan Limits: The bill would update loan limits for individual farmers and ranchers for the first time in 16 years, enabling producers to access the credit they need to produce a crop under today's costs of production. Specifically, the bill would increase the maximum allowable indebtedness for guaranteed loans, from \$700,000 to \$1,750,000 adjusted for inflation beginning in FY 2019.

Title VI: Rural Infrastructure and Economic Development

Subtitle A—Improving Health Outcomes in Rural Communities: The bill would include new statutory language that provide the Secretary of Agriculture with the authority to announce a renewable, one-year, temporary reprioritization for certain rural development loan and grant applications to assist rural communities in responding to a specific rural health emergency. At least 10 percent of Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program funds would be reserved for projects that address the rural health emergency; Community Facilities Program funds may be prioritized for projects that address the rural health emergency, including facilities that provide prevention, treatment, and recovery services; and Rural Health and Safety Education Program funds may be prioritized for projects that address the rural health emergency.

The Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grants program would receive an increased authorization of appropriations to \$82 million per fiscal year and reauthorize the program through FY 2023. The Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network program would be reauthorized through FY 2023, with several new reporting requirements and technical changes required. Additionally, a new loan and grant program to assist in the establishment of agricultural health plans would be created, with an authorization of \$65 million to be available until expended from 2019 through 2022.

Subtitle B—Connecting Rural Americans to High Speed Broadband: The bill would amend the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 and the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act. The legislation would empower the Secretary of Agriculture to implement a mandatory standard of broadband service for projects funded by the Farm Bill program. It would also authorize substantial annual appropriations for rural broadband—\$150 million in broadband lending, which equates to about \$1 billion in loans, and \$350 million for new grant programs -- that would finance broadband deployment projects in rural areas.

Key points and highlights include:

Establishing Forward-Looking Broadband Standards:

- The bill would authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to establish broadband service standards for rural areas which provide for: a minimum acceptable standard of service; and projections of minimum acceptable standards of service for 5, 10, 15, 20, and 30 years into the future.
- At least once every two years, the Secretary shall review, and may adjust the broadband service standards to encourage the delivery of high-quality, cost-effective broadband service in rural areas. In establishing and adjusting those standards, the Secretary shall consider: the broadband service needs of rural families and businesses; broadband service available to urban and suburban areas; future technology needs of rural residents; advances in broadband technology; and other relevant factors as determined by the Secretary.
- A loan or loan guarantee shall not be provided if the project does not meet the minimum acceptable standard of service. If an applicant shows that it would be cost prohibitive to meet the minimum acceptable level of broadband service for the entirety of a proposed service territory due to unique characteristics of the proposed service territory, the Secretary and the applicant may agree to utilize substitute standards that reflect the best technology available for any unserved portion of the project.

- The bill would require the Secretary of Agriculture to require, for the lifetime of the loan, that the project is capable of meeting either the minimum standard currently in effect or the projected standard in place at the time the loan was agreed to.
- An amendment by Rep. Vicky Hartzler (R-MO) approved by the House Agriculture Committee, would set a minimum broadband speed for USDA broadband programs to be at least 25 megabits per second downstream and 3 megabits per second upstream transmission capacity, the same as FCC guidelines. It would also require a report to Congress on the effectiveness of the Rural Utilities Services loan and loan guarantee programs.
- An amendment by Rep. Austin Scott (R-GA) approved by the House Agriculture Committee, would authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to deem projects that have received RUS grants as unserved if they do not meet the minimum broadband speed of 10 megabits per second downstream and 1 megabit per second upload, unless they have begun or already constructed broadband facilities in that area which would meet the minimum standard.

Competitive Grants Program:

- The Secretary of Agriculture shall establish a competitive grants program to provide applicants funds to carry out eligible projects for the purposes of construction, improvement, or acquisition of facilities for the provision of broadband service in rural areas.
- \$350 million would be authorized to be appropriated for each of fiscal years 2019 to 2023 for the competitive grant program.
- Applicants would be permitted to file a single application for the grant and the associated loan during the annual application window. Applications will be prioritized based on: the highest quality of service (as measured by network speed, network latency, and data allowances); the greatest number of service points served; the greatest proportion of non-Federal dollars
- Grant amounts would be based on density: not greater than 75 percent of the total project cost with respect to an area with a density less than four; not greater than 50 percent of the total project cost with respect to an area with a density of four or more and not more than 9; and not greater than 25 percent of the total project cost with respect to an area with a density of more than 9 and not more than 12.
- Applicants and the Secretary of Agriculture shall agree to milestones and objectives of the project.
- The bill would also authorize the Innovative Broadband Advancement Program, in place of the Rural Gigabit Network Pilot Program, from 2019 through 2023. It provides grants, loans, or both to eligible entities for the purpose of demonstrating innovative broadband technologies or methods of broadband deployment that significantly reduce the cost of broadband deployment.

Telecommunications Loans and Loan Guarantees:

- The bill would increase the authorization of appropriations to \$150 million for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023 and reauthorize the program through fiscal year 2023.

Other Requirements:

- **Unified broadband reporting requirements:** The bill would require the Secretary of Agriculture to submit a single report to Congress describing all the broadband financing activities administered by the Secretary.
- **Modification of buildout requirement:** The bill would require applicants to buildout broadband service described in the loan application by not later than five years (previously three years) after the initial date on which proceeds from the loan made or guaranteed under this section are made available.
- **Guaranteed broadband lending requirement:** The bill would require the Secretary of Agriculture to provide both a direct lending program and a guaranteed lending program to finance rural broadband projects.

Subtitle C—Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act: The bill would maintain and strengthen multiple initiatives under the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act and the Rural Electrification Act that provide for rural water and waste, essential community facilities, and rural business and economic development programs. The bill, specifically regarding water-related programs, would do the following:

- Increase the maximum amount for revolving funds for financing water, waste disposal, and wastewater projects to \$200,000, while decreasing the authorization of appropriations to \$15 million for each fiscal year and reauthorizing the program until FY 2023;
- Permit the Secretary of Agriculture to provide grants to entities which assist eligible rural water systems with long term sustainability planning and increase the set-aside of funds to 3 to 5 percent of funds appropriated;
- Increase the authorization of appropriations for the rural water and wastewater circuit rider program to \$25 million;
- Permit the Secretary of Agriculture to extend the reservation of funds for the emergency and imminent community water assistance grant program for an additional 120 days in order to protect public health, reduce the authorization of appropriations to \$27 million for each fiscal year, and reauthorize the program until 2023; and
- Reauthorize the water systems for rural and native villages in Alaska and the household water well systems program through 2023.

Subtitle D—Rural Electrification Act of 1936: The bill would reauthorize, through 2023, the Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program, which guarantees bonds and notes issued for electrification or telephone purposes program and the expansion of 911 access program. The bill would strike the requirement that loans be made solely for the purpose of electrification or telephone purposes and requires, instead, that utility infrastructure loans be made to eligible borrowers (electric cooperatives); in addition, statutory language would be amended to include terms that provide flexibility for the borrower.

Subtitle E—Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002: The bill would maintain and improve the energy initiatives that enhance energy independence and efficiency while providing economic opportunities in rural America. The bill would reauthorize, through 2023, the Biobased Markets Program (at \$2 million/year); the Biorefinery, Renewable, Chemical, and Biobased Product Manufacturing Assistance Program (at \$75 million/year); the Repowering Assistance Program (at \$10 million/year); the Bioenergy Program for Advanced Biofuels (at \$50 million/year); the Biodiesel Fuel Education Program (at \$2 million/year); the Feedstock

Flexibility Program; and the Biomass Crop Assistance Program (at \$25 million/year). The bill would also repeal the Rural Energy Self-Sufficiency Initiative.

The Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) would be reauthorized through 2023 and funded at \$45 million per year. The REAP program, which is eligible to public power utilities and rural electric cooperatives, provides grants and loan for renewable energy systems, energy efficiency improvements, feasibility studies, energy audits, and renewable energy development assistance. The REAP program also partners with agricultural producers and rural small businesses to facilitate access to renewable energy systems (such as solar panels or anaerobic digesters), make energy efficiency improvements (such as installing irrigation pumps or replacing ventilation systems), and conduct energy audits and feasibility studies. The bill would also direct the Secretary of Agriculture not to include any other debt incurred in the calculation of a borrower's debt equity ratio for eligibility purposes, increase the interest rate cap, and it would direct the Secretary to submit a study to authorizing committees on program administration.

Subtitle F—Miscellaneous: The bill would increase the authorization of appropriations for the Value-added Agricultural Product Market Development Grants Program to \$50 million per fiscal year and reauthorize the program through 2023. The bill would also reauthorize, through 2023, the Agriculture Innovation Center Demonstration Program; and the Regional Economic and Infrastructure Development Commissions Program.

Title VII: Research, Extension, and Related Matters

Under this bill, the Secretary would be directed, under the Research Facilities Act, to establish a competitive grant program to assist in construction and maintenance of agricultural research facilities. The bill would also amend the Competitive, Special and Facilities Research Grant Act to update priority areas to include soil health, automation and mechanization for labor intensive tasks in the production and distribution of crops, bridges to farm entry for young, beginning, socially disadvantaged, veteran and immigrant farmers and ranchers. The bill would amend the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 to authorize the Secretary to enter into cooperative agreements, make structural changes to the authorization, add various priority areas, reauthorize mandatory funding of \$20 million for each fiscal year through 2023, and reauthorize appropriations through fiscal year 2023.

National Agricultural Research, Extension and Teaching Policy Act of 1977: The Act would be amended to add scientific collaboration that leverages resources and advances the food and agricultural interests of the United States to the list of purposes of federally supported agricultural research. The National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education and Economics Advisory Board members would be decreased to a total of 15. The Farm Bill would also discontinue the renewable energy committee of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education and Economic Advisory Board.

The bill would repeal the National Agricultural Research, Extension and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 nutrition education program. It would amend the Act to reauthorize appropriations for grants to upgrade agriculture and food sciences facilities and equipment as insular area land-grant institutions through fiscal year 2023.

National Agricultural Research, Extension and Teaching Policy Act of 1977: The Act would be amended to clarify the purpose of the program and to reauthorize appropriations for farm business management through fiscal year 2023.

Title VIII: Forestry

Categorical Exclusions: The bill would expand categorical exclusions (CEs) to: address insect infestation and disease; reduce hazardous fuel loads; protect municipal water sources; improve or enhance critical habitat; increase water yield; expedite salvage operations; modify, improve, enhance, or create early successional forests for wildlife habitat improvement; remove hazard trees; salvage timber to protect public safety, water supply, or public infrastructure; improve, restore, or reduce the risk of wildfire on Forest System or public lands; and for certain forest management activities on National Forest System lands, existing recreation sites, and administrative sites, including activities related to roads, bridges, dams, and other facilities (activities include timber harvest, hazardous fuel reduction, and prescribed burning). The bill would double the size of CEs from 3,000 acres to 6,000 acres for such wildfire threat reduction activities.

Endangered Species Act: The bill would remove the requirement for consultation under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act for a project carried out by the Forest Service if the project is found not likely to adversely affect a listed species. The bill would also allow for an expedited consultation where the projects conducted under a CE for which a section 7 consultation is required, the action is deemed to have complied with the requirements of Section 7 after 90 days.

Landscape Scale Restoration Program: The bill would establish a Landscape Scale Restoration Program to support landscape-scale restoration and management that results in measurable improvements to public benefits derived from state and private forest land. The program will provide financial and technical assistance to states for projects that meet one or more of the following objectives: (1) protect or improve water quality of quantity; (2) reduce wildfire risk, including through hazardous fuels treatment; (3) protect or enhance wildlife habitat consistent with wildlife objectives established by applicable state fish and wildlife agencies; (4) improve forest health and forest ecosystems, including activities to address native, non-native and invasive pests; or (5) enhance opportunities for new and existing markets in which production of wood products strengthens local and regional economies.

Forest Legacy Program: The bill would authorize funding for the Forest Legacy Program at \$35 million per year through 2023. This program works in partnership with states to protect environmentally sensitive forest lands.

Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program: The bill would authorize funding for the Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program at \$5 million per year through 2023. This program is a grant program that authorizes the Forest Service to provide financial assistance to local governments, Tribal governments, and qualified nonprofit entities to establish community forests that provide continuing and accessible community benefits.

Community Wood Energy and Wood Innovation Program: The bill would reauthorize the program through 2023 and would authorize \$25 million per year through 2023. The program provides funding to support projects that address the nationwide challenge of disposing of hazardous fuels and other wood residues from the National Forest System and other forest lands in a manner that supports wood energy and wood products markets.

Healthy Forests: The bill would make several amendments to the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 to expand the purposes of the program to include the conservation of land that provides habitat for certain species and to ensure that forests that already provide suitable habitat, but are at risk for conversion, among other things. The bill would also increase the project size limit of the categorically excluded collaborative restoration projects from 3,000 acres to 6,000 acres, and includes funding from the Forest Service's wildland

fire hazardous fuels funding to perform cross-boundary work to reduce hazardous fuels when the funding exceeds \$300,000,000 in any year. The program would be reauthorized at the current level of \$12 million per year through 2023.

Secure Rural Schools: The bill would require that 50 percent of Title II funds be spent on activities pertaining to forest management and the sale of forest products. The bill would also reduce Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) membership and add a requirement for RAC members to reside in the county or adjacent county where the RAC has jurisdiction.

California-Specific: The bill would direct USDA to issue a rulemaking to determine that unprocessed timber from dead or dying trees of certain covered species from the National Forest System lands in California is considered surplus to domestic needs and is therefore exempt from export prohibitions. The bill would also provide authority to hire additional staff to implement the regulations and requires that the regulations remain in effect for 10 years with periodic review.

Utility Infrastructure Rights-of-Way Vegetation Management Pilot Program: The bill would establish a limited, voluntary pilot program to encourage land owners and operators to perform vegetation management on a proactive basis. The pilot program permits vegetation management projects on National Forest System land that is adjacent to or near rights-of-way. The authority for the program will sunset in 2027.

Title IX: Horticulture

Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008: Appropriations would be extended for specialty crops market news allocation at the current level of \$9 million for each fiscal year through 2023.

Farmers' Marketing and Local Food Promotion Program: Through the Farmer-to-Consumer Direct Marketing Act of 1976, the Farmers' Marketing and Local Food Promotion Program authorization would be extended with an increased authorized level from \$10 million a year to \$30 million a year for FY 2019 through 2023.

Title X: Crop Insurance

The bill would restore funding for Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops (TASC) under the new International Market Development Program. It also seeks to expand and improve crop insurance policies for specialty crops. The bill would reauthorize several programs that support marketing and promotion of these crops. It also would make key improvements to the Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI) and the Specialty Crop Block Grant program, while maintaining funds. The bill would increase funding for the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (OREI) and provide resources for combatting fraudulent imports of organic products coming into the U.S.

Title XI: Miscellaneous

Livestock: The bill would establish a new National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program, which is designed to protect the health of the nation's livestock. The program would be modeled after the Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention Program within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), which protects U.S. agriculture and natural resources from foreign plant pest threats. The bill would also establish a new U.S.-only vaccine bank with priority for stockpiling Foot-and-Mouth Disease vaccine and

provide for the enhancement of the National Animal Health Laboratory Network. The bill would appropriate \$70 million for the National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program.

Beginning, Socially Disadvantaged, and Veteran Producers: The bill would enhance access to crop insurance and establish a scholarship program at 1890 Land Grant Institutions to assist students interested in careers in agriculture. It would also establish the “Commission on Farm Transition – Needs for 2050” to examine additional policy changes needed to ensure that the U.S. maintains the safest, most redundant, and most affordable food and fiber supply in the world.