

## Appropriations Committee Unveils the Fiscal Year 2019 Agriculture Appropriations Bill

*Bill invests in rural community infrastructure, programs for U.S. food producers, medical product innovation and drug safety activities, and food programs for those in need*

**Washington, May 8, 2018**

The House Appropriations Committee today unveiled the fiscal year 2019 Agriculture Appropriations bill, which will be considered in a subcommittee markup tomorrow.

The bill funds important agricultural and food programs and services, including food and medical product safety, animal and plant health programs, rural development and farm services, agricultural trade, financial marketplace oversight, and nutrition programs.

Total discretionary funding in the legislation is \$23.27 billion, which is \$14 million above the fiscal year 2018 enacted level. In total, the bill allows for \$145.09 billion in both discretionary and mandatory funding – \$922 million below the fiscal year 2018 enacted level. The legislation prioritizes this funding for programs supporting rural communities, farmers, ranchers, food and drug safety, rural infrastructure, and nutrition for those in need. In addition, the bill contains several policy provisions to rein in unnecessary and burdensome regulations that harm U.S. food producers and that impede growth in important U.S. industries.

“This legislation supports the safety and the productivity of our nation’s food supply – providing resources that help our farmers and ranchers do their jobs, ensure healthy food is on all our tables, and promote stability and security by ensuring we can rely on U.S. food production here at home,” House Appropriations Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen said. “It will also protect families from food insecurity, support growth in rural communities, and increase the safety of the drugs and medical devices that we all may need in our lives.”

“For far too long, Washington has looked at rural America as an expanse in between the cities and their suburbs, as opposed to the backbone of America. Yet, these are the people that raise our cattle, work in the factories that dot rural landscapes, and till the land in order to provide food for our plate. This bill today continues to fulfill the commitment President Trump made to invest in rural America. The Rural Development account in the bill contains over \$620 million dollars of continued commitment to expanding rural broadband and erasing the rural digital divide. Combined with the \$685 million dollars in the recently passed Omnibus, Congress is ensuring that the days of looking past rural America are over,” Subcommittee Chairman Robert Aderholt said. “In addition, access to high-speed internet is now just as important to a high-quality of life as electricity, water, and sewer. As a country, we cannot allow large sections of our population to be cut off from the rest of the world, and therefore, be cut off from economic opportunities.”

### **Bill Highlights:**

**Rural Development and Infrastructure** – The bill provides a total of more than \$3.079 billion for rural development programs. These programs help create an environment for economic growth by providing business and housing opportunities and building sustainable rural infrastructure for the modern economy.

- **Critical Infrastructure** – The legislation includes responsible investments in infrastructure to help rural areas of the country access basic utilities. This includes more than \$1.45 billion for rural water and waste program loans, and over \$637 million in water and waste grants for clean and reliable drinking water systems and sanitary waste disposal systems. An additional \$6.9 billion in loan authority is provided for

rural electric and telephone infrastructure loans, the same level as fiscal year 2018.

- **Rural Broadband** – The legislation invests over \$620 million in the expansion of broadband service to provide economic development opportunities and improved education and healthcare services. Funding is included through loan and grants including the Broadband Loan, Community Connect, Distance Learning and Telemedicine programs and a broadband pilot program.
- **Rural Housing Loans and Rental Assistance** – The bill provides a total of \$24 billion in loan authority for the Single Family Housing guaranteed loan program, which is the same as the fiscal year 2018 enacted level. In addition, the bill includes \$1 billion in direct loans, which provide home loan assistance to low-income rural families – many of whom would have few loan options for purchasing a home because of their geographical location. In addition, \$1.33 billion is provided for rental assistance for affordable rental housing for low-income families and the elderly in rural communities for renewal of all existing rental assistance contracts.

**Food and Drug Administration (FDA)** – The FDA receives a total of \$3.1 billion in discretionary funding in the bill, \$308 million above the 2018 enacted level. Total funding for the FDA, including revenue from user fees, is \$5.57 billion. Within this total, the Committee provides a net increase of \$303 million for medical product safety activities, including an increase of \$5 million for the new Oncology Center of Excellence. The bill's focus on medical product safety covers a broad spectrum of critical public health and safety matters – from \$30 million to fight opioid abuse to \$38.5 million to advance modern drug and biological product manufacturing in the U.S. to \$27 million for the modernization of generic drug development and review. The intent of these funds is to support novel medical technology that will lower costs, provide higher quality, and deliver greater regulatory predictability.

The bill also appropriates \$70 million to accelerate medical product development as authorized in the **21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Act**.

**Agricultural Research** – The bill provides \$3.101 billion – \$72 million above fiscal year 2018 – for agriculture research programs, including the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture. This funding will support research at all ARS facilities to help mitigate and stop devastating crop diseases, improve food safety and water quality, increase production, and combat antimicrobial resistance. Continued investment in ARS buildings and facilities is included to ensure researchers have the facilities needed to maintain a safe, stable, and abundant food supply. This funding also includes important research investments in U.S. land-grant colleges and universities and for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's premier competitive research program.

**Animal and Plant Health** – The legislation includes \$998.4 million – \$16.5 million above the fiscal year 2018 enacted level – for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. This funding will support programs to help control or eradicate plant and animal pests and diseases that can be crippling to U.S. producers.

The funding level provides increases that will help address harmful pests and diseases such as citrus greening disease and spotted lantern fly while maintaining increases over the past two years for feral hogs, Roseau cane activities, low pathogenic avian influenza indemnity, and wildlife damage management.

**Conservation Programs** – The bill provides \$1.05 billion to help farmers, ranchers, and private forest landowners conserve and protect their land. This includes \$160 million for infrastructure rehabilitation to help small communities meet current safety standards for watershed projects.

**Farm Programs** – The legislation provides \$1.713 billion for farm programs, which is \$8.5 million above the fiscal year 2018 level. This includes funding for the new Farm Production and Conservation Business Center as proposed by the Secretary's reorganization for streamlining administrative and support function in the mission area. This funding will continue support for various farm, conservation, and emergency loan programs, and will help American farmers and ranchers. It will also ensure customer service through full staffing of local county Farm Service Agency

offices, including additional funding for farm loan officers, and meet estimates of demand for farm loan programs.

**Food Safety and Inspection Service** – The legislation includes \$1.05 billion for food safety and inspection programs – a decrease of \$7.5 million below the 2018 enacted level. These mandatory inspection activities help ensure the safety and productivity of the country’s \$211 billion meat and poultry industry, and keep safe, healthy food on American tables. The funding provided will maintain nearly 8,500 frontline inspection personnel for meat, poultry, and egg products at more than 6,400 facilities across the country.

**Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC)** – Included in the bill is \$255 million for the CFTC, which is \$6 million above the fiscal year 2018 enacted level. This targeted increase will support cybersecurity initiatives, financial technology, and systemic risk examinations. This funding level will ensure robust swaps, futures, and options markets while prioritizing resources and giving flexibility for enforcement and market oversight.

**International Programs** – The legislation contains \$1.92 billion for overseas food aid and to promote U.S. agricultural exports overseas. This includes \$1.500 billion for “Food for Peace” grants and \$207 million for the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition program. These programs seek to reduce chronic hunger and increase food security by providing American-grown food, transported by U.S. ships, to foreign countries in need of aid.

**Food and Nutrition Programs** – The legislation contains discretionary funding, as well as mandatory funding required by law, for food and nutrition programs within the Department of Agriculture. This includes funding for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and child nutrition programs.

- **Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)** – The bill provides \$6 billion in discretionary funding for WIC, which is \$175 million below the fiscal year 2018 enacted level. Because of robust prior-year funding and declining enrollments in the program, WIC has large carryover balances left over from previous years. Therefore, to make the best use of taxpayer dollars, the bill rescinds \$300 million in these unobligated balances, which will have no impact on participation in the program.
- **Child nutrition programs** – The bill provides for \$23.2 billion in required mandatory funding – which is outside the discretionary funding jurisdiction of the Appropriations Committee – for child nutrition programs. This is \$1.1 billion below the fiscal year 2018 enacted level due to large carryover balances in the program. This funding will provide free or reduced-price school lunches and snacks for 31 million children who qualify for the program. The bill provides approximately \$520 million for the Summer Food Service Program to ensure low-income children continue to receive nutritious meals when school is not in session. In addition, the bill continues funding for a pilot program that provides additional funds through SNAP or WIC electronic benefit transfer (EBT) cards to ensure children in underserved communities receive food during the summer months.
- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** – The bill provides for \$73.2 billion in required mandatory spending for SNAP. This is \$794 million below last year’s level and approximately the same as the President’s budget request. The total includes \$3 billion for the SNAP reserve fund, equal to the President’s request, which is used to cover any unexpected participation increases.

**For the draft bill text, please visit:** <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/AP/AP01/20180509/108287/BILLS-115HR-SC-AP-FY2019-Agriculture-SubcommitteeDraft.pdf>

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