

# NACo LEGISLATIVE ANALYSIS

## FARM, FOOD, AND NATIONAL SECURITY ACT OF 2024

June 2024





# NACo LEGISLATIVE ANALYSIS: *FARM, FOOD, AND NATIONAL SECURITY ACT (H.R.8467)*

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## Overview

As the governing authority over the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Farm Bill is critical for counties who are responsible for delivering and administering vital services to many of our nation's vulnerable families. The \$1.5 trillion legislative package authorizes a suite of programs that help counties make critical investments in infrastructure, economic development, workforce training, nutrition and conservation within some of our nation's most underserved communities.

After months of negotiations, lawmakers on the House Committee on Agriculture advanced their version of the 2024 Farm Bill, dubbed the *Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2024 (H.R. 8467)*, after a committee markup on May 23. The bipartisan legislative package passed 31-22 with full support from committee Republicans and four Democratic votes.

Thanks to NACo's advocacy efforts, the *Farm, Food, and National Security Act* includes key wins for county governments, including increased funding for rural development programs, certain improvements to federal nutrition programs, more robust support for new and beginning farmers, the expansion of key land management authorities to county governments and a three-year reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program.

## Major Provisions for Counties

### Farm Safety Net

Farm safety net programs, including commodity subsidies, farm loans, disaster assistance and crop insurance, constitute a critical support network for the U.S agricultural industry and American consumers. Counties support a robust farm safety net that can also provide stronger support for small, beginning, and young farmers, who often struggle to access affordable sources of financing. *The Farm, Food, and National Security Act:*

- Provides more robust **crop insurance** offerings for farmers and ranchers
- Provides broader eligibility and more generous premium discounts on **crop insurance for new and beginning farmers and ranchers**
- Delivers critical updates to the **Price Loss Coverage (PLC)** and **Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) programs**, ensuring that these programs can provide stronger monetary support to farmers during market fluctuations and natural disasters
- Increases mandatory funding for the **Specialty Crop Block Grant Program** to \$100 million annually, a \$15 million increase from the 2018 Farm Bill

- Maintains funding for the **Local Agriculture Market Program (LAMP)**

## Conservation

Protecting our nation's most sensitive ecosystems starts with the voluntary conservation efforts of American farmers, ranchers and foresters. Conservation programs authorized in the Farm Bill provide valuable resources and expertise to support ongoing local conservation initiatives. These programs, coupled with a strong local relationship with USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), give counties the support they need to take the lead in conservation efforts. The *Farm, Food, and National Security Act*:

- Permanently incorporates **\$13 billion in funding** from the Inflation Reduction Act into the Farm Bill's baseline, ensuring that future farm bills can benefit from this boost in funding
- Updates the **Conservation Reserve Program** to incentivize the enrollment of marginal lands and encourage partnerships with state and local conservation programs
- Boosts **disaster assistance programs** for farmers and ranchers
- Reauthorizes and updates the **Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program**
- Expanded resources for the **Feral Swine Eradication and Control Program**

## Nutrition

The Farm Bill's Nutrition title authorizes the nation's most important nutrition assistance and food distribution programs targeting low-income county residents. The Farm, Food, and National Security Act includes significant changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which provides 41.2 million low-income county residents with monthly grocery benefits and connections to Employment and Training programs. SNAP, which is funded on a mandatory basis, represents the largest share of Farm Bill spending. The *Farm, Food, and National Security Act*:

- Lifts the lifetime ban currently preventing individuals with felony drug convictions from qualifying for SNAP
- Ensures that income earned through SNAP employment and training programs does not impact program eligibility
- Explores options for SNAP benefits to purchase hot foods
- Encourages SNAP participation by eligible post-secondary and secondary students
- Simplifies SNAP eligibility and application processes for elderly households
- Expands health food incentives associated with SNAP benefits

## Rural Development

Programs authorized in the Farm Bill's Rural Development title represent crucial lifelines for rural counties, providing funding and technical assistance for rural economic and community development, rural water and wastewater infrastructure, and broadband deployment. The *Farm, Food, and National Security Act*:

- Integrates the **Rural e-Connectivity (ReConnect) Loan and Grant Program** into the Farm Bill rural broadband program and raises minimum eligibility speeds for rural broadband programs
- Prioritizes investments in **rural childcare** through existing USDA-Rural Development programs
- Reauthorizes key **rural water and wastewater** infrastructure programs
- Increases funding for the **Rural Energy for America Program (REAP)** and **Rural Energy Savings Program (RESP)**
- Reauthorizes and strengthens key rural workforce development programs, including the **Rural Innovation Stronger Economy (RISE) program**

## Forestry and Public Lands

The Farm Bill contains a range of provisions that empower counties to take an active role in the management of public lands across the United States. Counties make use of provisions in the Forestry title of the Farm Bill to mitigate wildfire risks, coordinate with federal agencies and local land management partners and restore damaged landscapes. The *Farm, Food, and National Security Act*:

- Extends full eligibility to county governments under **Good Neighbor Authority**, which allows counties to retain and reinvest profits from joint land management projects on federal lands into other authorized projects on non-federal lands
- Reauthorizes the **Landscape Scale Restoration Program** through 2029, providing competitive grants for large-scale forest restoration projects that span across jurisdictions
- Authorizes Regional Foresters to appoint individuals to local **Resource Advisory Committees**, enhancing local cooperative resource management activities
- Reauthorizes the **Wood Innovation Grant Program** and prioritizes proposals that include the use or retrofitting of existing sawmill facilities in counties in which the average annual unemployment rate exceeded the national average by more than 1 percent

## Concerns



While NACo appreciates lawmakers' attention to the needs of county governments and residents, the *Farm, Food, and National Security Act* also includes several provisions that would negatively impact counties and jeopardize the passage of a bipartisan 2024 Farm Bill:

- **Disputes on Conservation Funding:** Continued disagreements over the path forward on climate-related provisions included in Inflation Reduction Act conservation funding may continue to obstruct negotiations
- **Restricts Future SNAP Benefit Updates:** Requires that future updates to the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP)—the underlying calculation informing SNAP benefit amounts—must be cost-neutral. Counties support regular TFP updates that account for the cost of food more accurately, dietary needs, purchasing patterns and regional differences in food costs, housing and medical care benefits. The imposition of cost-neutrality would significantly compromise the purchasing power of SNAP benefits and would function as a cut to the program
- **Limits Important Administrative Flexibility:** Eliminates any threshold for SNAP payment errors, meaning states could face financial penalties for marginal mistakes in benefit issuance. Counties oppose action to further erode SNAP administrative resources amidst workforce shortages and significant caseload sizes
- **Preemption of County Authority on Pesticide Regulations:** Prohibits counties and states from imposing or continuing any requirements related to the sale, distribution, labeling, application or use of any pesticide, eroding county authority to protect residents from harmful chemicals
- **Preemption of County Authority on Agricultural Product Standards:** Prohibits counties and states from passing laws and regulations that provide a condition or standard on the production of livestock products other than on livestock physically raised in that county or state. This provision preempts county authority, creating a serious threat to county sovereignty

## What's Next for the Farm Bill?

Now that the House Agriculture Committee has advanced the Farm, Food, and National Security Act through committee, the bill will await consideration on the House floor. Following the markup, House Agriculture Committee Chairman Glenn “G.T.” Thompson (R-Penn.) stated that he expects to receive floor time in September 2024. Programs and resources authorized in the 2018 Farm Bill will begin to expire on September 30, 2024, which may necessitate lawmakers to pass an extension in the months ahead to provide additional time for negotiations on the 2024 Farm Bill.

The Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry has released a competing framework for the 2024 Farm Bill, dubbed the **Rural Prosperity and Food Security Act**. However, Senate Agriculture Committee Chair Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.) has yet to announce her plans to formally introduce and mark up the bill. Senate Agriculture Committee Republicans have made clear that the framework Chair Stabenow put forward is not a bipartisan document. On June 10, Senate Agriculture Committee Republicans released their own framework for the 2024 Farm Bill, intended to kickstart negotiations over a prospective bipartisan Farm Bill package with their Democratic counterparts.

Lawmakers have a long road ahead before the Farm Bill can be passed into law. Several obstacles may continue to impede progress toward agreement on a bipartisan 2024 Farm Bill, including slim margins of control in the House and the Senate, ongoing partisan disagreement over conservation and nutrition funding,

the upcoming 2024 election cycle, which is projected to dampen legislative activity over the summer, and the impending expiration of the 2018 Farm Bill on September 30, 2024.

Counties look forward to working with our partners in Congress to pass a bipartisan Farm Bill that will help strengthen rural America and support greater opportunities for all.

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# Section-By-Section Analysis: Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2024

The following table provides a comprehensive analysis of all provisions included in the *Farm, Food, and National Security Act* of relevance to county governments. Specific changes made to provisions are included on the far-right column. For more information on how programs authorized in the Farm Bill impact county governments, please refer to NACo’s *Primer for Counties: 2024 Farm Bill Reauthorization*.

TITLE	PROVISION	DESCRIPTION	CHANGES IN HOUSE FARM BILL
<b>Title I - Commodity</b>	Reference Prices	Reference prices are predetermined price levels set by the U.S. Department of Agriculture used to trigger financial assistance when market prices for covered commodities fall below these thresholds.	Reference prices for all covered commodities will be increased by 10 percent to 20 percent, reflecting the average annual rise in per-unit production costs since the reference prices were last set in the 2014 Farm Bill.
<b>Title I - Commodity</b>	Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) Programs	The ARC and PLC programs are government initiatives designed to provide financial support to farmers. The PLC program offers financial assistance to farmers when the market price of covered commodities falls below a predetermined reference price, providing a safety net against significant price declines and stabilizing farm income by covering the gap. The ARC program supports farmers when actual crop revenues drop below a guaranteed level based on historical averages, mitigating financial impacts from adverse market conditions or poor yields. It provides coverage at both the county and individual farm levels, addressing risks related to price volatility and yield fluctuations.	Increases support for the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) and Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) programs to account for inflation and rising production costs; raises the statutory reference prices for various commodities and enhances ARC guarantees and payment rates; streamlines payment limitations, allows for the expansion of base acres included in the programs, and provides provisions for establishing base acres and payment yields for producers without base acres currently enrolled in the program.
<b>Title I - Commodity</b>	Dairy Margin Coverage Program	The Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) program is a risk management initiative by the U.S. Department of Agriculture that provides financial assistance to dairy farmers when the difference between milk prices and feed costs, known as the margin, falls below a predetermined level, offering support during periods of low profitability in the dairy industry. It aims to help dairy producers mitigate revenue volatility and maintain their financial stability.	Increases the cap on Tier I coverage to 6 million pounds, providing farmers with the opportunity to update their production history and receive a 25 percent discount on premiums if they enroll for the duration of the 2024 Farm Bill; mandates biennial cost surveys to ensure accurate manufacturing cost allowances, and the “higher-of” formula for Class I milk pricing is restored until updates to a Federal Milk Marketing Order are ratified.

TITLE	PROVISION	DESCRIPTION	CHANGES IN HOUSE FARM BILL
<b>Title I - Commodity</b>	Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)	LIP provides financial compensation to livestock producers for losses caused by adverse weather, disease outbreaks, or predator attacks, ensuring economic stability in the face of unexpected and uncontrollable events. It aims to help producers recover part of the value of their lost livestock to sustain their operations.	Increases the payment rate to 100 percent of fair market value for animals lost due to attacks by federally protected species; provides supplemental indemnity payments for the loss of unborn livestock.
<b>Title I - Commodity</b>	Limitation on Commodity Credit Corporation Authority	The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) is an entity within USDA that serves as an "internal bank," providing lines of credit and financial support to stabilize and support farm income and prices, manage agricultural commodity supplies, and facilitate the distribution of commodities. Recent Secretaries of Agriculture have used CCC funds to advance policy priorities not authorized by Congress	Stipulates that from 2025 to 2034, the Commodity Credit Corporation can only use its general powers for activities directly authorized by Congress.
<b>Title II - Conservation</b>	Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)	CRP is a land conservation program that pays farmers to remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and plant species that will improve environmental health and quality. It aims to reduce soil erosion, improve water quality, and enhance wildlife habitat by converting marginal agricultural land into conservation areas.	Incentivizes the enrollment of marginal lands and emphasize state partnerships through CRP –updated CRP statute now bases rental rates on land capability classification rather than the Environmental Benefits Index (EBI), offering higher rates for land capability classes III through VII; encourages local leadership by merging the State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) Initiative with the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to form a new State Partnership Initiative. Additionally, it maintains an acreage cap, clarifies eligible activities for cost-share payments, and raises the payment limitation from \$50,000 to \$125,000 per year.
<b>Title II - Conservation</b>	Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)	EQIP provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers to implement conservation practices that address specific natural resource concerns on their land, such as soil erosion, water quality, and wildlife habitat improvement. It targets individual producers and offers incentives for adopting conservation measures.	Incorporates precision agriculture into EQIP by adding precision agriculture technologies to the 90 percent payment, water conservation and irrigation efficiency practices, incentive contracts, and conservation innovation grants; restores the EQIP minimum livestock allocation at 50 percent and maintains the wildlife habitat minimum allocation at 10 percent.



TITLE	PROVISION	DESCRIPTION	CHANGES IN HOUSE FARM BILL
<b>Title II - Conservation</b>	Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)	CSP is designed to support agricultural producers in maintaining and enhancing existing conservation activities while adopting additional conservation practices that promote resource stewardship and sustainability. It rewards producers for actively managing and improving their entire operation's conservation performance.	Provides additional soil health tools by adding precision agriculture practices and technologies as eligible for CSP payments. Authorizes a matching grant program for States and eligible tribes to improve soil health. Increases the CSP minimum payment to \$2,500.
<b>Title II - Conservation</b>	Feral Swine Eradication and Control Pilot Program (FCSP)	FCSP is a joint initiative by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) aimed at reducing the population of feral swine, which cause significant agricultural and environmental damage. The program provides resources for monitoring, trapping, and removing these invasive animals, as well as restoring affected lands.	Provides \$150 million for FCSP; strikes "Pilot" from program title; requires APHIS and NRCS to continue monitoring targeted areas for 1 year after feral swine are eradicated.
<b>Title II - Conservation</b>	Grassroots Source Water Protection Program (SWPP)	SWPP supports local efforts to protect and improve drinking water sources from pollution and other threats. The program provides technical and financial assistance to develop and implement voluntary conservation practices that safeguard water quality.	Reauthorizes program through 2029.
<b>Title II - Conservation</b>	Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program (VPA-HIP)	VPA-HIP encourages private landowners to open their lands for public recreational activities, such as hunting, fishing, and wildlife observation, by providing financial incentives and technical assistance. The program aims to enhance wildlife habitat and increase outdoor recreational opportunities on private lands.	Reauthorizes program through 2029 at \$150 million in mandatory funding; provides \$3,000,000 to encourage public access on wetland reserve easements.
<b>Title II - Conservation</b>	Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program (WPFPP)	WPFPP provides financial and technical assistance to communities for planning and implementing watershed projects aimed at reducing flood damage, conserving water, and improving soil health. The program emphasizes collaboration between federal, state, and local stakeholders to enhance watershed resilience and promote sustainable land use practices.	Boosts funding from \$50,000,000 to \$150,000,000 through 2029; amends program to provide technical and financial assistance to local organizations for remedial actions to improvements funded by WPFPP; raises federal cost-share from 65 percent to 90 percent for rehabilitation projects

TITLE	PROVISION	DESCRIPTION	CHANGES IN HOUSE FARM BILL
<b>Title II - Conservation</b>	Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)	ECP provides financial assistance to agricultural producers to rehabilitate farmland damaged by natural disasters such as hurricanes, floods, and wildfires. It helps farmers restore conservation practices and structures essential for preventing erosion and preserving soil productivity.	Authorizes advance payments to program participants of up to 75 percent of the cost of the emergency measures; expands eligible uses to include wildfire damage remediation
<b>Title II - Conservation</b>	Emergency Watershed Program (EWP)	EWP provides financial and technical assistance to communities affected by natural disasters to prevent erosion, stabilize streambanks, and mitigate flood damage. It aims to protect lives and property while promoting long-term watershed health and resilience.	Authorizes financial and technical assistance for restoring and maintaining vegetative cover and hydrological restoration measures.
<b>Title II - Conservation</b>	National Agriculture Flood Vulnerability Study	<i>New Provision</i>	Establishes a National Agriculture Flood Vulnerability Study to conduct analysis of economic impacts from crop and livestock losses due to floods, assessments of mitigation efforts' downstream effects, evaluations of federal and state flood risk data for agricultural lands, and recommendations for enhancing conservation practices and government initiatives to manage flood impacts across watersheds.
<b>Title II - Conservation</b>	Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)	ACEP provides financial assistance to landowners and eligible entities to protect agricultural lands through the establishment of conservation easements or by restoring wetlands that have been converted to agricultural use. It helps to conserve agricultural lands and preserve the long-term viability of farming operations while also protecting important natural resources.	Increases the federal cost-share from 50 percent to 65 percent and clarifies the certification process for experienced entities, reducing administrative burdens and encouraging participation in ACEP; allows eligible entities to set easement deed terms with a lower cost-share option and provides a 90 percent cost-share for socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers; Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE) are updated to elevate stewardship responsibilities and clarify that contracts can be used for necessary restoration and maintenance; improves ACEP program administration by including better easement modification authorities, separate application ranking for socially disadvantaged farmers, and the removal of the Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) limitation.

TITLE	PROVISION	DESCRIPTION	CHANGES IN HOUSE FARM BILL
<b>Title II - Conservation</b>	Forest Conservation Easement Program (FCEP)	<i>New Provision</i>	Repeals the Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP) and introduces the Forest Conservation and Easement Program (FCEP); FCEP offers cost-share assistance to states, counties, tribes, and certain organizations to purchase easements that protect private working forests from development; Easements allow private forest owners to maintain forestry operations; program authorized at \$240 million through 2029.
<b>Title II - Conservation</b>	Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)	RCPP is a partnership-based program that leverages public and private sector resources to implement conservation projects and promote sustainable land management practices in targeted regions. It brings together agricultural producers, landowners, conservation organizations, local governments and other stakeholders to address specific natural resource challenges and priorities at a regional scale.	Streamlines administration and implementation for RCPP; requires USDA to expedite RCPP partnership agreements, setting specific timelines for approvals and payments—180 days for agreement approvals and 30 days for partner payments; changes include provisions to enhance flood resilience and mitigate the impacts of flooding and drought and allowance of up to 10 percent of partnership funds to reimburse partners for administrative expenses; ensures certified entities receive the same benefits as in ACEP and designates wildlife habitat connectivity and wildlife mitigation corridors as critical conservation areas.
<b>Title III - Trade</b>	Agricultural Trade Promotion Programs	The Market Access Program (MAP) and the Foreign Market Development (FMD) Program furnish funds to agricultural trade associations, cooperatives, and small businesses to promote and expand the export of U.S. agricultural products. Both programs help fund activities such as advertising, market research, and trade shows to enhance the competitiveness of American agriculture in international markets.	Doubles funding for MAP from \$200 million/year to \$400 million per year; Doubles funding for FMD program from \$34.5 million/year to \$69 million/year.
<b>Title IV - Nutrition</b>	Seniors Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP)	SFMNP provides grants to states and tribal governments to provide low-income seniors with coupons that can be exchanged for eligible foods (fruits, vegetables, honey, and fresh-cut herbs) at farmers' markets, roadside stands and community supported agriculture programs.	Expands SFMNP eligible foods to include maple syrup and increases annual funding from \$20.6 million to \$22.6 million through 2029.

TITLE	PROVISION	DESCRIPTION	CHANGES IN HOUSE FARM BILL
<b>Title IV - Nutrition</b>	Thrifty Food Plan (TFP)	Benefit amounts and funding for programs such SNAP, the Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) program and the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) rely on formula that considers household size and income level in relationship to what USDA deems to be a minimal-cost, nutritious diet prepared at home for a family of four—also known as the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP). The average monthly SNAP benefit for a family of four in FY 2024 is estimated to be roughly \$178 per person.	Directs USDA to update the TFP at five-year intervals but prohibits any future updates from increasing the cost of the TFP. This provision would limit benefit increases within SNAP and Summer EBT as well as funding increases in TEFAP.
<b>Title IV - Nutrition</b>	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Funding	SNAP, formerly known as food stamps, is the largest federal nutrition program, providing 41.2 million low-income individuals with monthly grocery benefits. SNAP is funded as an entitlement, with states responsible for 50 percent of the administrative costs associated with administering the program.	Due to the TFP provisions included in the House bill, SNAP benefits would be cut by an estimated \$30 billion over 10 years. SNAP is funded at \$122.4 billion in FY 2024.
<b>Title IV - Nutrition</b>	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Eligibility	Households are automatically eligible for SNAP if they are already participating in certain public benefit programs. Otherwise, households must meet gross income, net income and asset requirements to qualify. States have some discretion in determining the sources of income and types of assets that are counted towards these eligibility determinations and may also choose to forego verification of these asset requirements and/or expand income eligibility for certain populations.	Lifts lifetime ban currently preventing individuals with felony drug convictions from qualifying for SNAP; excludes from SNAP income determinations earnings from various federal employment and training programs and earnings from youth ages 17 to 21 if they are in secondary school; provides states with the option to create a simplified application and certification process for elderly or disabled individuals who have no earned income and directs USDA to identify and notify eligible postsecondary students of their likely eligibility for SNAP.
<b>Title IV - Nutrition</b>	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Work Requirements	Though states have broad discretion to determine eligibility for SNAP benefits and services, federal laws require participants to meet certain general work requirements to receive SNAP benefits, with additional work requirements for individuals considered to be Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents.	Does not include provisions of significance related to SNAP Work Requirements.



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<b>Title IV - Nutrition</b>	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Administration	USDA administers SNAP in partnership with states, 10 of which delegate that responsibility to counties: California, Colorado, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Virginia and Wisconsin. State agencies determine the eligibility of individuals and households to receive SNAP benefits, and issue monthly allotments of benefits, and are held accountable for program integrity by SNAP Quality Control, which measures the accuracy of eligibility and benefit determinations.	Eliminates any threshold for SNAP payment errors, meaning states could face financial penalties for marginal mistakes in benefit issuance (currently, states must only account for over or under payments of \$56 in their payment error rate calculations). Creates an office of program integrity within FNS to focus on SNAP and other federal feeding programs. Provides states the option to employ contractors to perform SNAP administrative functions typically reserved for public sector merit staff.
<b>Title IV - Nutrition</b>	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training (E&T)	SNAP E&T programs help individuals gain the skills, training or experience needed to obtain and maintain regular employment. States are required to operate SNAP E&T programs but have considerable flexibility to determine funding structure, which SNAP participants to serve, which specific services to offer, and who will provide the services.	Excludes specific SNAP Employment and Training allowances, earnings, and payments when determining eligibility for SNAP
<b>Title IV - Nutrition</b>	The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)	TEFAP is a partnership between the federal government, states and non-profit agencies to provide emergency food assistance at no cost to low-income Americans through community partners such as food banks and community action agencies. Through TEFAP, USDA directly purchases and distributes a variety of nutritious, high-quality foods.	Allows an eligible state agency to elect to receive funding from TEFAP to directly purchase the commodities for distribution through the program via the private commercial marketplace. Increases TEFAP funding from \$100 million to \$200 million and extends the authorization of TEFAP infrastructure grants through 2029.
<b>Title IV - Nutrition</b>	Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP)	GusNIP provides funding for implementation, technical assistance and evaluation of programs intended to increase fresh fruits and vegetable intake by low-income consumers, including produce prescription programs and point-of-purchase incentives.	Increases funding for GusNIP from \$56,000,000 to \$75,000,000; waives match requirement in persistent poverty counties; requires creation of plan to transition administration of GusNIP grants from USDA to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
<b>Title V - Credit</b>	Authority of Farm Credit System Institutions to Provide Financial Support for Rural Community Facilities Projects	<i>New Provision</i>	Provides Farm Credit institutions with the ability to partner with community banks and other lenders in financing essential community facilities such as those providing healthcare, childcare, and emergency services.

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<b>Title V - Credit</b>	Farm Ownership Loans	Farm Ownership Loans provide affordable financing to farmers and ranchers for purchasing, improving, or expanding farmland, buildings, and other agricultural resources. These loans aim to help new and established farmers secure the necessary capital to maintain and grow their farming operations.	Increases loan limits for guaranteed ownership loans to \$3.5 million, indexed to land values; increases loan limits for direct ownership loans to \$850,000; Allows for refinancing distressed guaranteed loans into direct loans.
<b>Title V - Credit</b>	Farm Operating Loans	Farm Operating Loans provide financial assistance to farmers and ranchers for day-to-day operational expenses, such as purchasing equipment, livestock, seed, and other inputs necessary for running a farm. Unlike Farm Ownership Loans, which are intended for acquiring or improving farm property and infrastructure, Farm Operating Loans focus on covering the costs of maintaining and managing ongoing agricultural activities.	Increases loan limits for guaranteed operating loans to \$3,000,000, indexed to the Consumer Price Index (CPI); increases loan limits for direct operating loans to \$750,000; allows for refinancing distressed guaranteed loans into direct loans.
<b>Title V - Credit</b>	Beginning Farmer and Rancher Individual Development Accounts (BFRIDA) Pilot Program	The BFRIDA Pilot Program helps new farmers and ranchers save money for business-related expenses by matching their savings contributions. The program provides financial education and training to enhance participants' ability to manage their agricultural operations effectively.	Reduces and streamlines experience requirements to make it easier for beginning farmers to gain access to credit; Simplifies regulations for generational farm transitions and reauthorizes the Heirs Property Relending Program to assist with ownership issues and land transition; Establishes a pre-approval pilot program for USDA ownership loans and reauthorizes Cooperative Lending Pilot Projects and Individual Development Accounts, maintaining a 50 percent direct loan fund set-aside for beginning farmers and ranchers.

TITLE	PROVISION	DESCRIPTION	CHANGES IN HOUSE FARM BILL
<b>Title VI - Rural Development</b>	Rural e-Connectivity (ReConnect) Program	The ReConnect Program provides loans and grants to improve broadband infrastructure and expand high-speed internet access in rural areas.	The ReConnect Program is integrated into the Farm Bill Broadband Program and renamed the ReConnect Rural Broadband Program, which is authorized at \$350 million/year through 2029. The minimum eligibility speeds are raised from 25/3 Mbps to 50/25 Mbps, with specific criteria for loans, loan guarantees, and grants based on the service area's existing speeds. The Secretary has the authority to adjust these speeds after a 30-day notice and comment period, and projects in areas with less than 25/3 Mbps connectivity are given the highest priority. The program also sets higher speed requirements for project buildout agreements depending on their length, clarifies eligible entities, allows financial assistance to affiliates, prioritizes experienced providers and those upgrading infrastructure, and sunsets the original ReConnect program, reallocating its funds to the new program.
<b>Title VI - Rural Development</b>	Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program	The Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program provides grants to eligible entities for the construction of broadband facilities and equipment related to tele-presence activities. Eligible applicants include most entities that provide education or health care through telecommunications, including counties and federally-recognized tribes.	Reauthorizes the Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program at \$82 million/year through 2029.
<b>Title VI - Rural Development</b>	Middle Mile Program	The Middle Mile Program provides grants, loans, and loan guarantees to build out broadband infrastructure that connects local networks in rural areas to the larger internet backbone.	Reauthorizes program through 2029.
<b>Title VI - Rural Development</b>	Healthy Food Financing Initiative	HFFI helps bring grocery stores and other healthy food retailers to underserved urban and rural communities across America.	Increases the program's discretionary funding authority from \$125 million to \$135 million.

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<b>Title VI - Rural Development</b>	Innovative Broadband Advancement Program (IBAP)	IBAP provides USDA with flexibility to finance novel and unique demonstration projects that hold promise to be replicable in other rural communities.	Reauthorizes the Innovative Broadband Advancement Program (IBAP) at \$10 million per year for 5 years; modifies IBAP to include both terrestrial broadband demonstration projects and satellite broadband demonstration projects; provides the Secretary the authority to make grants to entities to cover the cost for purchasing, installing, or both, of satellite broadband equipment to facilitate access to satellite broadband services in remote areas.
<b>Title VI - Rural Development</b>	Community Connect Program	This Community Connect Program provides grants for the construction of retail broadband networks for “community-oriented” connectivity by providing free service at all participating community facilities and free access points for at least two-years, in addition to retail service.	Reauthorizes the Community Connect Program at \$50 million/year through 2029; raises the minimum eligibility speeds from 10/1 Mbps to 25/3 Mbps; establishes a project buildout agreement speed of 250/125 Mbps.
<b>Title VI - Rural Development</b>	Broadband Technical Assistance Program	<i>New Provision</i>	Creates the Broadband Technical Assistance Program, which allows entities to receive technical assistance for all USDA broadband programs.
<b>Title VI - Rural Development</b>	Rural Energy Savings Program (RESP)	RESP provides low-interest loans to rural families and businesses to implement energy efficiency improvements, reducing energy costs and promoting energy conservation.	Reauthorizes RESP through 2029 and updates program to provide more flexible funding opportunities and prioritization for projects serving highly rural areas.
<b>Title VI - Rural Development</b>	Promoting Precision Agriculture	<i>New Provision</i>	Establishes a partnership between the federal government and the private sector to create voluntary interconnectivity standards and prioritize cybersecurity needs for precision agriculture technologies; supports rural entities in adopting precision agriculture practices by providing financial assistance for acquiring the necessary technology; Extends the Federal Communications Commission’s Task Force for another year to evaluate international standards for precision agriculture, ensuring they fit within U.S. regulations, and to examine the competitive and security impacts of foreign deployment of these technologies.



TITLE	PROVISION	DESCRIPTION	CHANGES IN HOUSE FARM BILL
<b>Title VI - Rural Development</b>	New, mobile, and expanded meat processing and rendering grants	<i>New Provision</i>	Establishes a meat and poultry processing and rendering grant program at USDA Rural Development to support both new and expanding meat and poultry processors and renderers, while also facilitating producer investments to foster competition within the packing sector.
<b>Title VI - Rural Development</b>	Expanding Childcare in Rural America Initiative	<i>New Provision</i>	Establishes a 3-year rural childcare initiative at USDA, which directs USDA to prioritize projects that address the availability, quality, and cost of childcare in agricultural and rural communities through the Community Facilities Program, the Business & Industry Loan Guarantee Program, the Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program, and the Intermediary Relending Program.
<b>Title VI - Rural Development</b>	Technical assistance for geographically underserved and distressed areas	<i>New Provision</i>	Creates a new technical assistance program to build rural capacity in underserved and distressed rural areas to improve access to USDA Rural Development programs.
<b>Title VI - Rural Development</b>	Water and Waste Disposal Loan & Grant Program	The Water and Waste Disposal Program helps counties fund and finance critical water and waste infrastructure and provide rural communities access to clean, affordable water.	Reauthorizes program through 2029.
<b>Title VI - Rural Development</b>	Rural Water and Wastewater Circuit Rider Program	The Rural Water and Wastewater Circuit Rider Program provides technical assistance to rural water systems experiencing day-to-day operational, financial or managerial issues. Rural water system officials may request assistance from the Rural Utilities Service, or Rural Utilities Service staff may request assistance on behalf of the system.	Codifies the Circuit Rider Program and allows funds to be used to address cybersecurity and emergency disaster response related needs.
<b>Title VI - Rural Development</b>	Zero and Low Interest Loans for Distressed Water Systems	<i>New Provision</i>	Allows USDA to issue zero and low-interest loans, modify existing loans, and forgive principal for distressed water systems, while requiring recipients of assistance develop long-term financial plans and receive financial planning assistance.

TITLE	PROVISION	DESCRIPTION	CHANGES IN HOUSE FARM BILL
<b>Title VI - Rural Development</b>	Rural Decentralized Water Systems	The Rural Decentralized Water Systems Program provides grants to rural homeowners for constructing, refurbishing, or servicing individual water wells and decentralized water systems to ensure safe and reliable drinking water.	Reauthorizes program through 2029; allows for testing of ground well water contamination.
<b>Title VI - Rural Development</b>	Solid Waste Management Grants	Solid Waste Management Grants offer financial assistance to rural communities for improving waste disposal systems, promoting recycling, and reducing environmental pollution.	Reauthorizes program through 2029; adds tribes as eligible entities.
<b>Title VI - Rural Development</b>	Rural Business Development Grants Program	This program supports targeted technical assistance, training and other activities leading to the development or expansion of small and emerging private businesses in rural areas which will employ 50 or fewer new employees and have fewer than \$1 million in gross revenue.	Reauthorizes program through 2029.
<b>Title VI - Rural Development</b>	Locally or Regionally Produced Agricultural Food Products	The Locally or Regionally Produced Agricultural Food Products provision, under the Business and Industry (B&I) Guaranteed Loan Program, provides loan guarantees for the purpose of establishing or facilitating enterprises that process, distribute, aggregate, store, and market locally or regionally produced agricultural food products to support community development and farm and ranch income.	Reauthorizes program through 2029.
<b>Title VI - Rural Development</b>	Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA) Program	The Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA) Program is a USDA initiative that provides free technical assistance and information to farmers, ranchers, and agricultural professionals on sustainable agriculture practices. It aims to enhance the profitability and environmental stewardship of rural agricultural operations through the dissemination of practical, research-based knowledge and innovative farming techniques. The program also maintains a large, free database of research and experiential information about sustainable agriculture.	Reauthorizes program through 2029.

TITLE	PROVISION	DESCRIPTION	CHANGES IN HOUSE FARM BILL
<b>Title VI - Rural Development</b>	Rural Economic Area Partnership Zones (REAP Zones) Program	The REAP Zones Program targets specific rural regions with economic and community development challenges, providing tailored assistance to foster economic growth and improve quality of life. The program supports local planning, development projects, and initiatives that address unique regional needs and opportunities.	Reauthorizes program through 2029.
<b>Title VI - Rural Development</b>	Intermediary Relending Program (IRP)	The Intermediary Relending Program (IRP) provides low-interest loans to intermediaries such as nonprofit organizations and public agencies, which then re-lend funds to rural businesses and communities for projects that promote economic development and job creation. This program aims to stimulate local economies by improving access to capital and fostering sustainable economic growth in rural areas.	Reauthorizes program through 2029.
<b>Title VI - Rural Development</b>	Rural Health Care Facility Assistance	<i>New Provision</i>	Enhances the Rural Hospital Technical Assistance Program, offering crucial support to rural health care facilities to prevent closures and enhance their financial and operational capabilities. It also allows certain health care facilities to refinance debt under conditions that promote long-term viability through financial and managerial planning; Expands the Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program and Community Facilities Program to prioritize projects that provide substance use disorder treatment, behavioral health, mental health, and maternal health services.
<b>Title VI - Rural Development</b>	Elimination of Prohibition on Use of Loans for Certain Purposes	<i>New Provision</i>	Repeals a duplicative provision prohibiting USDA Community Facility Loans from being used to finance projects near wetlands, despite complying with existing wetland regulations.
<b>Title VI - Rural Development</b>	Rural Business-Cooperative Service Programs Technical Assistance and Training	The Rural Business-Cooperative Service Programs Technical Assistance and Training initiative provides funding to enhance the capabilities of rural cooperatives and small businesses through specialized education, training, and advisory services.	Reauthorizes program through 2029.

TITLE	PROVISION	DESCRIPTION	CHANGES IN HOUSE FARM BILL
<b>Title VI - Rural Development</b>	National Rural Development Partnership	The National Rural Development Partnership is a cooperative initiative led by the USDA that brings together federal, state, local, tribal, and private sector stakeholders to support and implement comprehensive rural development strategies across the United States.	Reauthorizes program through 2029.
<b>Title VI - Rural Development</b>	Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program (RMAP)	RMAP provides loans, grants and technical assistance to non-profits and tribal governments assisting entrepreneurs in rural communities.	Reauthorizes program through 2029; increases loan limit from \$50,000 to \$75,000; allows for federal cost-share of up to 100 percent of project total.
<b>Title VI - Rural Development</b>	Rural Innovation Stronger Economy (RISE) Grant Program	This program helps counties strengthen the local economy through job accelerator partnerships with the private sector and institutions of higher education.	Reauthorizes program through 2029; Modifies program to provide funding for career pathway programs and industry/sector partnerships as specified by local workforce development board
<b>Title VI - Rural Development</b>	Delta Regional Authority	The regional authorities coordinate strategic investments of federal appropriations into the physical and human infrastructure of regional communities.	Reauthorizes program through 2029.
<b>Title VI - Rural Development</b>	Rural Business Investment Program (RBIP)	RBIP fosters economic development in rural areas by encouraging equity investments in small businesses and startups through licensed Rural Business Investment Companies (RBICs). These RBICs provide the necessary capital and expertise to help rural businesses grow, create jobs, and strengthen local economies.	Reauthorizes the program at \$20 million/year through 2028; increases the cap on how much a Farm Credit System institution can invest in an RBIC fund from 50 percent to 75 percent.
<b>Title VI - Rural Development</b>	Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program	The Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant program provides funding for rural projects through local utility organizations. USDA provides zero interest loans to local utilities which they, in turn, pass through to local businesses (ultimate recipients) for projects that will create and retain employment in rural areas.	Reauthorizes program through 2029 and permits awardees to provide other forms of collateral to secure loans in addition to a letter of credit.
<b>Title VII - Research and Extension</b>	USDA Extension Services	USDA's Extension Service helps counties expand the competitiveness of American agriculture and support businesses and industries that enhance economic development and quality of life in rural and urban communities.	Reauthorizes program through 2029.



TITLE	PROVISION	DESCRIPTION	CHANGES IN HOUSE FARM BILL
<b>Title VII - Research and Extension</b>	National Food Safety Training, Education, Extension, Outreach, and Technical Assistance Program	This program provides grants to promote food safety standards, guidance, and protocols. Grants awarded through this program help facilitate the integration of food safety standards and guidance with a variety of agricultural production and processing systems, including conventional, sustainable, organic and conservation and environmental practices.	Reauthorizes program through 2029.
<b>Title VII - Research and Extension</b>	Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN)	FRSAN provides mental health and stress management resources to farmers, ranchers, and agricultural workers, aiming to alleviate the pressures associated with agricultural work. It offers support through education, training, and access to stress assistance programs, fostering a resilient agricultural community.	Reauthorizes program through 2029; improves ability of FRSAN to refer participants to behavioral health care providers.
<b>Title VIII - Forestry</b>	Landscape-Scale Restoration Program (LSRP)	The Landscape Scale Restoration Program (LSRP) is a U.S. Forest Service initiative that funds cross-boundary projects focused on restoring priority forest landscapes at a large scale, addressing critical issues such as wildfire risk, watershed health, and forest resilience. It emphasizes collaboration among federal, state, local, and tribal partners, as well as private stakeholders.	Reauthorizes program through 2029.
<b>Title VIII - Forestry</b>	Definition of "At-Risk Community"	<i>New Provision</i>	The Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 is amended to define an 'at-risk community' as either a community within the Wildland-Urban Interface near federal lands susceptible to wildfire, or a group of homes or structures with basic utilities and transport routes identified in local or national wildfire risk assessments.
<b>Title VIII - Forestry</b>	Promoting Cross-Boundary Wildfire Mitigation	This authority permits USDA to make grants to State foresters to support hazardous fuel reduction projects that incorporate treatments in landscapes across ownership boundaries on Federal and non-Federal land.	Reauthorizes authority through 2029.

TITLE	PROVISION	DESCRIPTION	CHANGES IN HOUSE FARM BILL
<b>Title VIII - Forestry</b>	Water Source Protection Program	The Water Source Protection Program aims to safeguard the quality and quantity of water in a particular area by implementing various conservation measures. It involves strategies such as land management practices, reforestation efforts, and pollution control initiatives to maintain the health of rivers, lakes, and groundwater sources. Through collaboration between government agencies, local communities, and environmental organizations, the program seeks to mitigate threats to water resources and ensure their sustainable management for current and future generations.	Reauthorizes program through 2029; expands eligible projects to allow for protection activities on adjacent non-federal lands.
<b>Title VIII - Forestry</b>	Insect and Disease Infestation	The Healthy Forest Restoration Act of 2003 includes provisions for insect and disease treatment in forests, aimed at restoring and maintaining forest health. This involves strategies such as insecticide application, disease monitoring, and tree removal to mitigate the impacts of pests and diseases on forest ecosystems.	Reauthorizes authority through 2029.
<b>Title VIII - Forestry</b>	Stewardship End Result Contracting Projects	Stewardship end result contracting projects aim to promote collaborative forest management efforts between the government and private entities. These projects allow for the exchange of goods or services in return for achieving specific forest management objectives, such as reducing wildfire risk or improving wildlife habitat. By fostering partnerships and incentivizing outcomes-based approaches, the program seeks to enhance forest health and resilience while supporting local economies.	Codifies option to enter into up to 20-year Stewardship end result contracts
<b>Title VIII - Forestry</b>	Housing Leases on Forest Service Land	<i>New Provision</i>	Allows for USFS to enter into flexible housing partnerships to alleviate rural housing challenges and provide up to 100-year lease terms and renewals on administrative sites.

TITLE	PROVISION	DESCRIPTION	CHANGES IN HOUSE FARM BILL
<b>Title VIII - Forestry</b>	Reforestation, Nursery and Seed Orchard Support	<i>New Provision</i>	Authorizes USFS to partner with various entities including Federal and State agencies, counties, Indian Tribes, and private nurseries to provide training, technical assistance, and research to support nurseries and tree establishment programs; establishes a grant program to support nursery and seed orchard projects aimed at improving seed collection, production capacity, and workforce development, with an annual budget of \$5 million
<b>Title VIII - Forestry</b>	Categorical Exclusions for Land Management Projects	Categorical exclusions (CE) under the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA) refer to specific types of actions that federal land management agencies can undertake without going through the usual detailed environmental review process required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). These exclusions are intended to streamline the approval process for certain forest management activities aimed at reducing wildfire risk and improving forest health. They typically apply to projects that are deemed low-risk to environmental impacts, such as prescribed burns, thinning of small-diameter trees, and certain hazardous fuels reduction activities.	Expands the insect and disease CE to 10,000 acres; expands the wildfire resilience CE to 10,000 acres; expands the fuel break CE to 10,000 acres; provides technical corrections to the greater sage grouse and mule deer habitat CE and allows for up to 4,500 acres in forested ecosystems and 7,500 acres in rangeland ecosystems. • Establishes a CE for high priority hazard tree activities.
<b>Title VIII - Forestry</b>	Good Neighbor Authority (GNA)	GNA is a statute that allows federal agencies to partner with state, local, and tribal governments to manage and restore federal forests and rangelands to mitigate wildfire risk and enhance ecosystem health and resilience. This program facilitates joint efforts in activities such as timber harvesting, watershed restoration, and habitat improvement.	Modernizes Good Neighbor Authority to authorize counties and tribes to retain and use timber sale receipts on land covered by the GNA agreement.
<b>Title VIII - Forestry</b>	Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP)	CFLRP is a U.S. Forest Service initiative aimed at promoting collaborative ecosystem restoration projects on priority forest landscapes, with the goal of reducing wildfire risk, enhancing forest health, and benefiting local economies. It emphasizes partnerships among federal, state, local, and tribal entities, as well as non-governmental organizations and private stakeholders.	Reauthorizes program through 2029; Allows program to consider proposals using innovative implementation mechanisms, reducing the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire or increasing ecological restoration activities in specific areas, and enhancing watershed health and drinking water sources.

TITLE	PROVISION	DESCRIPTION	CHANGES IN HOUSE FARM BILL
<b>Title VIII - Forestry</b>	Public-Private Wildfire Technology Deployment and Testbed Partnership	<i>New Provision</i>	Establishes a four-year pilot program to allow private entities to test new wildfire fighting technologies at scale and allow federal land management agencies to deploy emerging technologies in wildfire response efforts.
<b>Title VIII - Forestry</b>	Timber Sales on National Forest System Land	<i>New Provision</i>	Increases the threshold valuation required to advertise timber sales on National Forest System land from \$10,000 to \$50,000 to reflect inflation.
<b>Title VIII - Forestry</b>	Permits and Agreements with Electrical Utilities	<i>New Provision</i>	Allows electric utility companies with permits or easements on National Forest System lands to cut and remove trees and vegetation near their power lines to reduce fire risk, without needing a separate timber sale, as long as it aligns with the land management plan. If the utility sells any removed material, they must give the Forest Service the proceeds, minus transportation costs. This section clarifies that selling the removed material is not mandatory under these permits or easements.
<b>Title VIII - Forestry</b>	Cooperative Agreements and Contracts for Prescribed Fire	<i>New Provision</i>	Allows USDA, the Department of the Interior and the Department of Defense to enter into agreements or contracts, lasting up to 10 years, with eligible entities, including counties, to coordinate, plan, or conduct prescribed fires on federal lands or organize prescribed fire training events. States, tribes, or counties under these agreements can subcontract to carry out prescribed fires or training events, following their respective contracting procedures. Each prescribed fire project must comply with existing federal land management laws, and the Secretaries retain final approval over projects conducted under these agreements or contracts.
<b>Title VIII - Forestry</b>	Utilizing Grazing For Wildfire Risk Reduction	<i>New Provision</i>	Directs USFS to work with holders of federal grazing permits to enhance the use of livestock grazing for reducing wildfire risks. This includes facilitating grazing on vacant allotments during droughts, wildfires, or other disruptions, conducting targeted grazing to manage fuels and invasive grasses, and utilizing temporary permits to support these efforts. Additionally, the strategy aims to



TITLE	PROVISION	DESCRIPTION	CHANGES IN HOUSE FARM BILL
			integrate grazing into postfire recovery and restoration activities, where suitable.
<b>Title VIII - Forestry</b>	Community Wood Energy and Wood Innovation Program	Wood Innovations Grants funding supports traditional wood utilization projects, expands wood energy markets, and promotes using wood as a construction material in commercial buildings.	Changes title of program to "Community Wood Facilities Program;" enhances program by increasing maximum project grant award to \$5,000,000 and the federal cost-share; authorizes grants for hauling hazardous fuels to facilities that can utilize them.
<b>Title VIII - Forestry</b>	Resource Advisory Committees (RACs)	RACs advise the Forest Service on the development and implementation of projects on federal lands	Amends the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 to allow regional foresters to make appointments to Resource Advisory Committees; reauthorizes RACs through 2029
<b>Title IX - Energy</b>	Rural Energy for America Program (REAP)	REAP provides financial assistance to agricultural producers and rural small businesses for renewable energy systems and energy efficiency improvements.	Raises the maximum loan guarantee under REAP to \$50,000,000; increases federal cost-share to 50 percent for beginning, socially disadvantaged, and veteran farmers and ranchers (35 percent for all other grantees); Requires USDA to consider potential financial improvements for applicants when scoring applications.
<b>Title IX - Energy</b>	Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP)	BCAP provides financial assistance to owners and operators of agricultural and non-industrial private forest land who wish to establish, produce, and deliver biomass feedstocks.	Reauthorizes program through 2029.
<b>Title IX - Energy</b>	Study on Effects of Solar Panel Installations on Covered Farmland	<i>New Provision</i>	Requires a study on the effects of solar panel installations on farmland. The study, conducted by the Secretary of Agriculture in consultation with the Secretary of Energy, will examine economic impacts, environmental effects, and the compatibility of solar panels with various agricultural practices. The study will also assess the impact of tax incentives and recommend policies to encourage solar installations on non-agricultural sites. The Secretary of Agriculture will report the findings and recommendations to Congress within two years.

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<b>Title IX - Energy</b>	Limitation on USDA Funding for Ground Mounted Solar Systems	<i>New Provision</i>	Restricts USDA from funding projects that convert farmland to solar energy production, except in specific cases. If the project converts less than 5 acres or less than 50 acres with most energy for on-farm use, or receives local approval, it is exempt. Additionally, projects must develop a farmland conservation plan to protect and restore soil health and ensure funds for decommissioning and restoration, with compliance required for receiving and retaining financial assistance.
<b>Title X - Horticulture</b>	Hemp Production	The 2018 Farm Bill significantly impacted the legality of industrial hemp by removing it from the Controlled Substances Act, thus legalizing its cultivation, processing, and sale at the federal level. It allowed states and Native American tribes to develop their own hemp farming programs, protected interstate transport of hemp, and expanded research opportunities. However, controversies arose due to regulatory uncertainty, difficulties for law enforcement in distinguishing hemp from marijuana, market instability, and the FDA's restrictive stance on CBD, leading to a regulatory gray area and enforcement challenges.	Specifies that industrial hemp includes non-cannabinoid products from the plant's stalk, seeds, and immature plants for human consumption, as well as those used for research; requires hemp producers to designate their type of production as either industrial hemp or for other purposes, allows for reduced sampling and testing for industrial hemp under certain conditions, and includes procedures for handling violations and ensuring proper documentation and practices for industrial hemp production; Mandates the establishment of a laboratory accreditation process for hemp testing in consultation with the DEA.
<b>Title X - Horticulture</b>	Local Agriculture Market Program	The Farmers' Market Promotion Program helps counties increase access to locally and regionally produced agricultural products and develop new market opportunities for farm and ranch operations.	Continues mandatory funding for the Local Agriculture Market Program—which includes the Value-Added Producer Grant Program, Farmers' Market and Local Food Promotion Program, and the Regional Food System Partnerships Program— at \$50 million/year; Adds food hubs as eligible entities for the Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program; Directs USDA to establish simplified applications for the Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program.
<b>Title X - Horticulture</b>	Preemption of County Authority over Pesticides	<i>New Provision</i>	Prohibits counties and states from imposing or continuing any requirements related to the sale, distribution, labeling, application or use of any pesticide, eroding county authority to protect residents from harmful chemicals.

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<b>Title XI - Crop Insurance</b>	Crop Insurance Support for Beginning and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers	<i>New Provision</i>	Expands premium discounts for beginning and veteran farmers for the first 10 years of farming, consistent with the definition of beginning farmer under other USDA programs.
<b>Title XII - Miscellaneous</b>	Ensuring the Free Movement of Livestock-derived Products in Interstate Commerce	<i>New Provision</i>	Prohibits counties and states from passing laws and regulations that provide a condition or standard on the production of livestock products other than on livestock physically raised in that county or state. This provision preempts county authority, creating a serious threat to county sovereignty.
<b>Title XII - Miscellaneous</b>	Reporting on Foreign Ownership of Agriculture Land	<i>New Provision</i>	Reforms the Agriculture and Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) to enhance the accuracy and transparency of data on farmland owned by foreign entities; requires a memorandum of understanding between USDA and the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) for timely data sharing on foreign transactions, and mandates the implementation of GAO recommendations for better tracking and identification of national security risks; Imposes penalties for non-compliance with AFIDA, directs outreach for AFIDA awareness, requires a report on foreign-owned agricultural land from certain countries, and establishes the position of Chief of Operations of Investigative Actions to oversee AFIDA activities; mandates the creation of an online filing system and a public database for AFIDA reports.
<b>Title XII - Miscellaneous</b>	Extension of Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000	The Secure Rural Schools program provides federally forested counties with payments to compensate for lost timber revenues on federal lands.	Includes a 3-year reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools program - from 2024 to 2026.



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## About NACo

The National Association of Counties (NACo) unites America's 3,069 county governments. Founded in 1935, NACo brings county officials together to advocate with a collective voice on national policy, exchange ideas and build new leadership skills, pursue transformational county solutions, enrich the public's understanding of county government, and exercise exemplary leadership in public service. Each year, NACo's Board of Directors adopts the Association's federal policy priorities, which help shape NACo's advocacy efforts on behalf of America's counties.