



UNITED STATES SENATE COMMITTEE ON
**AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION,
& FORESTRY**

U.S. SENATOR DEBBIE STABENOW, CHAIRWOMAN

The Rural Prosperity and Food Security Act Summary

The *Rural Prosperity and Food Security Act* keeps farmers farming, families fed, and rural communities strong. It includes over 100 bipartisan bills and holds the successful Farm Bill coalition together. Chairwoman Stabenow invested \$39 billion in new resources to provide certainty to farmers, strengthen the safety net for American families, and grow rural prosperity. This investment builds on her proposal from May by:

- **Strengthening the farm safety net** with \$20 billion in new resources to increase reference prices; make crop insurance more affordable; support beginning, underserved, and small farmers and ranchers; lay the groundwork for a moonshot in agriculture research; and provide immediate assistance to producers impacted by severe weather and declining revenue. The *Rural Prosperity and Food Security Act* focuses assistance on the farmers and ranchers with dirt under their fingernails and not billionaire and foreign investors.
- **Helping families make ends meet** by investing \$8.5 billion in new resources that put food on the table. It increases access to fruits and vegetables; improves the ability of military families, seniors, and college students to access SNAP; and supports people on their path to self-sufficiency while cracking down on bad actors.
- **Improving the quality of life in rural communities** by investing \$4.3 billion in new resources in the small towns that farmers and more than 66 million Americans call home. It improves rural health care, childcare, and education; creates good-paying jobs; expands access to high-speed internet; and lowers costs for families and businesses.

- **Tackling the climate crisis** by using the resources in the *Inflation Reduction Act* to increase funding for popular, voluntary conservation programs that farmers and ranchers want, use, and need. These programs pull carbon out of the air and place it in the soil for healthier farms and a more resilient future.

The *Rural Prosperity and Food Security Act* will support millions of good-paying jobs on and off the farm, protect our land and water, invest in small towns and rural communities, and support families working hard to make ends meet across the country.

Keeping Farmers Farming:

- **Establishes a permanent structure for disaster assistance** so that future ad hoc assistance can get out the door to farmers sooner.
- **Gets money back in the hands of farmers immediately** by providing a partial reimbursement of crop insurance premiums and Noninsured Crop Disaster Program (NAP) fees paid for the 2024 crop.
- **Builds on a successful, market-based approach** that provides support to farmers when disasters outside of their control strike and focuses assistance on the farmers with dirt under their fingernails and not billionaire and foreign investors.
- **Makes crop insurance more affordable** by increasing premium subsidies on the most common, area-based, crop insurance policies and on individual coverage for all farmers.
- **Ensures access to crop insurance** by incentivizing insurance companies and agents to serve all producers and all commodities, ensuring premium rates reflect risk, and strengthening USDA's ability to oversee industry compliance with the requirement to serve all producers.
- **Improves access to Whole Farm and Micro Farm insurance policies** providing new insurance options for specialty crop producers who lacked or had limited options available to them. The improvements help small and diversified producers by increasing financial incentives for insurance companies and agents

to sell these policies, facilitating data access, and streamlining underwriting processes.

- **Provides certainty to farmers** by making payments under the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) and the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) programs more likely to trigger and improves emergency disaster assistance. All covered commodities will see a 5% statutory reference price increase, a more market-oriented escalator formula, and a higher ARC guarantee.
- **Addresses a key shortcoming of ARC/PLC** by enabling partial, early payments, ensuring that farmers receive the assistance they need faster.
- **Provides immediate assistance** by making program enhancements starting with the 2024 crop year, and making assistance available to farmers for the 2023 and 2024 crop years on whichever of ARC or PLC results in higher payments.
- **Strengthens support for specialty crops** by including the first ever specialty crops crop insurance subtitle, ensuring that specialty crop farmers have a voice in policy decisions, accelerating the development of new technology through dedicated funding, and doubling investments in successful programs like the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program and the Specialty Crop Research Initiative.
- **Supports beginning farmers** by providing premium discounts on crop insurance and new opportunities to access commodity programs, supporting education and training for the next generation of agriculture professionals, and creating a new program to support agriculture programs at community colleges around the country.
- **Builds the groundwork for an agriculture research moonshot through a historic investment**, fostering public-private partnerships through the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research (FFAR), strengthening USDA's research programs, uplifting organic research, and investing in land-grant universities, including a significant investment of \$2.5 billion to improve research facilities around the country.

- **Permanently funds student scholarships at 1890 Institutions** and upholds our commitment to students in 1994 Tribal colleges and minority-serving institutions.
- **Supports trade programs** by investing \$1.4 billion to develop markets for American agriculture by doubling funding for the Market Access Program (MAP) and Foreign Market Development program (FMD) beginning in 2028. This builds on a \$1.2 billion investment outside the bill secured by Chairwoman Stabenow and Ranking Member Boozman that has effectively doubled USDA trade promotion funding through 2027. It also increases the cap on shipping costs to allow more American grown commodities to be shipped through the Food for Progress Program, which helps to reduce hunger and grow our trade markets.
- **Supports small farms** by creating an Office of Small Farms to advance small farm policy and sets aside dedicated funding for popular, voluntary conservation practices, while also improving support for underserved and veteran farmers.
- **Recognizes the importance and growth of urban agriculture** by providing technical assistance, new funding opportunities, and better access to USDA programs.
- **Invests in the connection between farmers and the community** by cultivating regional food systems through public-private partnerships, promoting local agriculture, and supporting value-added production.
- **Protects producers, consumers, and the economy** from devastating animal disease by doubling funding for early detection, rapid response, and recovery from animal disease outbreaks like Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) or African Swine Fever.
- **Builds on the successful Dairy Margin Coverage** safety net to help dairy farmers protect against milk price drops or high feed costs.
- **Promotes competition for American livestock producers** by expanding options for processing and ensuring fair competition practices in the marketplace.

- **Supports growth in the organic agriculture industry**, protects the integrity of the organic seal, boosts support for certification cost-share, and expands technical assistance and market opportunities for existing organic farmers and those just getting into the business.
- **Strengthens the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network** to support farmer mental health and manage stress as they navigate one of the riskiest businesses in the world.
- **Backs American farmers’ ability to use common names** like “parmesan” and “bologna” for marketing products sold around the world.
- **Supports American farmers** by continuing to provide American grown food to address growing rates of global hunger. The bill modernizes the Food for Peace program, maintaining the role of commodities, and providing flexibilities so that non-emergency programs can operate more effectively. International food aid serves as a critical national security tool, reduces hunger around the world, and supports our farmers.
- **Supports farmers and rural communities affected by PFAS contamination** by authorizing support for states to monitor, respond to, provide financial assistance, and conduct research on farms and agricultural land contaminated by PFAS and providing \$250 million for initial response efforts.

Keeping Families Fed:

- Helps millions of Americans make ends meet **by continuing the 5-year update to the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP)** included in the bipartisan 2018 Farm Bill, which ensures that nutrition assistance reflects the realities of how Americans buy and prepare food.
- **Cracks down on bad actors** to strengthen the integrity of nutrition assistance without jeopardizing food access.
- **Removes the lifetime ban on nutrition assistance for individuals convicted of a drug related felony**, ensuring that people who have paid their debt to

society can access the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and build pathways to self-sufficiency.

- **Establishes a path for residents of Puerto Rico** – who are American citizens – to participate in SNAP after more than 40 years of being excluded from the program.
- **Improves access to nutrition assistance** for college students who are former foster youth and increases access to information about nutrition programs for college students.
- **Expands self-determination for Tribes** by making the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) pilot program permanent, expanding Tribal authority to administer FDPIR and the Emergency Food Assistance Program, and providing procurement flexibilities.
- **Increases access to fruits and vegetables** by expanding the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (Double-Up Bucks), Produce Prescriptions, and access to fruits and vegetables at food banks.
- **Improves EBT card security to prevent fraudulent activity** and ensures that households who had their SNAP benefits stolen through no fault of their own will have their benefits replaced.
- **Increases funding for food banks**, makes the Farm to Food Bank program permanent, improves access to Kosher, Halal, and culturally relevant food, increases procurement of fruits and vegetables, and provides food procurement flexibility for geographically isolated states and territories.
- **Supports people on their path to finding long-term, sustainable jobs** by improving the SNAP Employment and Training Program.
- **Increases funding for nutrition education**, providing the tools and information people need to eat healthier meals, and improving SNAP training for health care professionals.
- **Explores allowing hot foods** like rotisserie chicken to be purchased with SNAP benefits.

Keeping Rural Communities Strong:

- **Establishes historic, mandatory funding for rural economic development,** water infrastructure, and critical community facilities.
- **Improves quality of life for rural families** by improving rural health care.
- **Takes a new, comprehensive approach to address rural childcare** needs by prioritizing projects that address the availability, quality, and cost of childcare in rural communities.
- **Equips rural communities to lead public-private partnerships** through a new Rural Partnership Program and builds on the success of the Biden Administration's Rural Partners Network.
- **Invests in growing the middle class and creating good-paying jobs** in rural America by supporting manufacturing, entrepreneurship, small businesses, and rural cooperatives.
- **Creates good-paying jobs in the bioeconomy** by promoting home-grown biofuels, including sustainable aviation fuel, that are critical to strengthening energy security at home and supporting biobased innovation through the development of new renewable chemicals, biobased plastics, and other products.
- **Recognizes the value of workers in our food system** and gives them a seat at the table when decisions are being made at USDA.
- **Brings investments in on-farm and rural small business renewable energy** into the Farm Bill baseline.
- **Lowers energy costs and generates new sources of income** while reducing carbon emissions that contribute to the climate crisis by supporting renewable energy and energy efficiency.
- **Expands access to high-speed internet** by investing \$1 billion in new resources to strengthen the popular and bipartisan ReConnect Program.

- **Supports and grows local and regional food systems** and increases access to local products from local farmers to keep money in the local economy.
- **Makes critical investments in public water and wastewater systems** that rural communities across the country rely on and addresses emerging contaminants like PFAS.
- **Recognizes Tribal communities** in every title of the bill with more than 40 provisions that improve tribal access to USDA programs and resources.
- **Supports timber innovation** and American wood products, markets, and energy.
- **Strengthens our regional food supply chain** by providing financing opportunities for food and agriculture businesses to invest in infrastructure for middle of supply chain operations.

Confronting the Climate Crisis and Protecting Our Land, Air, and Water:

- **Brings all the climate-smart agriculture funding from the Inflation Reduction Act into the Farm Bill and maintains its focus on addressing the climate crisis.** This funding will bolster the programs that put cash into farmers' pockets to put popular, voluntary conservation practices to work on farms and ranches, and it continues the historic investment in clean, renewable energy to tackle the climate crisis by reducing greenhouse gas emissions on and off the farm.
- **Permanently authorizes conservation programs for the first time** and increases access to climate-smart agriculture and conservation resources.
- **Makes addressing the climate crisis a specific goal** of the Regional Conservation Partnership Program for the first time.
- **Places a new focus on reducing methane**, a potent greenhouse gas, in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and sets aside funding for small farms.

- **Improves the Conservation Stewardship Program** by adding a new focus on transitioning farmers to be more resilient to the changing climate, reducing greenhouse gases, and building soil health.
- **Leverages our forests as a key tool to address the climate crisis**, expands efforts to plant trees in communities across the country, and establishes the Office of Urban and Community Forestry to expand green spaces, mitigate stormwater runoff, and improve the quality of life in urban and suburban communities.
- **Addresses wildfire risk** by expanding partnership programs to increasing the pace and scale of forest management. This includes additional investments in wood innovation programs that help build markets, strengthen domestic supply chains, and support hazardous fuel reduction.
- **Elevates Tribal forest management** by making permanent self-determination authority, incorporating Tribal land management plans and laws, and requiring consultation with Tribes and Alaska Native Corporations when the Forest Service develops land use plans.
- **Improves the health of watersheds and forests** and protects water resources for downstream communities amid wildfire, drought, and a changing climate by providing mandatory funding for the Water Source Protection Program and Watershed Condition Framework.
- **Designates more than 100,000 acres of forest as wilderness or similar protected status** – the largest acreage ever protected in a Farm Bill.
- **Establishes climate hubs** to develop local tools and resources to address the climate crisis.

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