

AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS BILL, 2018

Omnibus Agreement Summary

Highlights of the FY2018 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill:

The agreement contains \$146.1 billion in discretionary and mandatory funding, \$9.4 billion below the budget request and \$7.6 billion below the FY2017 enacted level. The discretionary funding portion of the bill totals \$23.259 billion, \$2.382 billion above the FY2017 enacted level. Required mandatory spending in the bill, which is outside the discretionary funding jurisdiction of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, totals \$122.8 billion.

Agricultural Research – \$2.75 billion to support agricultural research conducted by the Agricultural Research Service and land grant and non-land grant universities. This amount includes \$400 million for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative, \$244 million for Hatch Act formula funding for research at state agriculture experiment stations, and \$483.6 million to support overall extension service activities. An additional \$140.6 million is provided for Agricultural Research Service Buildings and Facilities.

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) – \$985.1 million for APHIS, \$172.25 million above the budget request and \$35.7 million above the FY2017 enacted level. Overall funding will continue programs to control or eradicate plant and animal pests and diseases that threaten U.S. agriculture production. Funding increases will help address wildlife damage management issues, combat specialty crop diseases, respond to low pathogenic avian influenza, expand activities to combat cattle fever, and improve pre-departure inspections of agriculture imports.

Farm Service Agency (FSA) – \$1.618 billion for FSA for various farm, conservation, and emergency loan programs that are important to the nation's farmers and ranchers. It prohibits the closure of FSA county offices, and provides additional resources for the hiring of loan officers.

Natural Resources Conservation Service – \$1.038 billion, \$8 million above the FY2017 enacted level and \$262 million over the budget request, to help farmers, ranchers, and private forest landowners conserve and protect their land. The bill includes \$150 million for the Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations program to support needed investments in rural communities.

Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) – \$1.056 billion for food safety and inspection programs to ensure safe, healthy food for American families, while promoting the safety and productivity of the nation's \$186 billion meat and poultry industry. The bill will support more than 8,000 frontline inspection personnel for meat, poultry, and egg products at more than 6,400 facilities in the United States. In addition, the bill provides \$7.5 million in hiring incentives for veterinarians and fully funds the catfish inspection program.

Rural Development – \$680.8 million for salaries and expenses for Rural Development, a \$5 million increase from the FY2017 enacted level. U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) rural development programs are designed to help foster economic growth in rural regions by supporting basic rural infrastructure, rural business and industry loans, and rural housing.

- **Business and Industry Loans** – A \$966 million grant and loan level for rural business and industry programs that promote small business growth in rural areas.
- **Rural Broadband** – \$600 million for a new rural broadband pilot grant/loan program targeted to areas that currently lack access to broadband service. Provisions are included in the bill to prevent overbuilding or duplicate existing broadband infrastructure. The new pilot will be in addition to the current USDA broadband loan program, which provides \$29.8 million in loans annually, and the Community Connect broadband grant program, which is funded at \$30 million.
- **Rural Infrastructure** – The U.S. Department of Agriculture is given \$1.057 billion for Rural Water and Wastewater infrastructure, which includes an additional \$500 million to allow the USDA to address the \$3 billion infrastructure backlog in rural America. The funding increase will support an additional \$2.9 billion in loans and \$495 million in grants for water infrastructure in rural communities above the \$1.2 billion in loans and \$400 million in grants that are provided on an annual basis.
- **Rural Housing Loans and Rental Assistance** – A total of \$24 billion in loan authority for the Single Family Housing guaranteed loan program, which is equal to the FY2017 enacted level. It includes \$1.1 billion, \$100 million above the FY2017 enacted level, for the direct loan program that provides low-income rural families with home loan assistance. In addition, \$1.4 billion is included for the Rental Assistance program, which helps low-income families and the elderly in rural communities obtain affordable rental housing.

Food and Nutrition Programs – The bill provides discretionary funding, as well as mandatory funding required by law, for food and nutrition programs within the USDA. This includes funding for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and the Child Nutrition programs.

- **Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)** – \$6.175 billion in discretionary funding for WIC. This amount is based on USDA projections of WIC enrollments and fully funds estimated participation in the program.
- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** – \$74 billion in required mandatory spending for SNAP, which is outside the discretionary funding jurisdiction of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. Due to declining enrollment, this is \$4.5 billion below the FY2017 enacted level.

- **Child Nutrition Programs** – \$24.25 billion in required mandatory funding, which is outside the discretionary funding jurisdiction of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, for child nutrition programs. This is \$1.5 billion above the FY2017 enacted level. This funding will provide free or reduced-price school lunches and snacks for over 30 million children who qualify for the program.

International Programs – \$1.716 billion for PL 480, Title II Food for Peace grants, which support the delivery of American-grown food to foreign countries experiencing chronic hunger crises. The McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program is maintained at \$207.6 million, of which \$10 million is designated for the Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement at the Foreign Agriculture Service.

Food and Drug Administration (FDA) – More than \$2.9 billion in discretionary funding for the FDA, \$134 million above the FY2017 enacted level. Total FDA funding is \$5.138 billion, including user fee revenues. This funding level is \$483 million above FY2017. Within the discretionary increases, \$94 million is provided to combat the opioid epidemic, \$10.5 million is provided for food safety activities, and \$15 million is provided for the Oncology Center of Excellence to streamline cancer cure initiatives. The bill also funds the 21st Century Cures Act at its authorized level of \$60 million.

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