



# U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

*PRESS RELEASE*

For immediate release: Thursday, July 17, 2008

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## **Senate Appropriations Committee Clears Fiscal Year 2009 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Funding Legislation**

Washington, D.C. . The U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee today approved the Fiscal Year 2009 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations legislation aimed at strengthening the nation's top food and drug regulation agency, increasing rural development, providing global food assistance, and providing rental assistance for the nation's neediest households. The legislation invests **\$20.435 billion** in these critical programs to meet the nation's health, housing, food and drug safety needs.

"I am pleased that the Agriculture bill restores the President's ill-considered cuts in rural housing and rural development. At a time when food costs are dramatically on the rise, we provide significant increases above the President's request for the Women, Infants and Children, and Commodity Supplemental Food programs," said Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Robert C. Byrd, D-W.Va. "The funding levels contained in the bill will provide critical nutrition services to 894,000 people who have received such services under the President's request. Although this bill is in excess of the President's request, I once again call on the President to reconsider his unwise veto threats. Now is not the time to cut or eliminate programs that invest in the growth of our Nation and support nutritional assistance to Americans who are suffering from a shrinking economy."

"With many worthwhile programs in need of and federal funding scarce, we worked to strike a balance in making investments in our farms and rural economies, the safety of our food and drug supply, and the nutrition needs of our most helpless citizens and those who are suffering from hunger abroad," said Senate Appropriations Agriculture Subcommittee Chairman Herb Kohl, D-Wis.

Fiscal Year 2009 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill highlights:

### **Title I – Agriculture Programs**

**Agriculture Research Service (ARS):** The bill provides more than **\$1.134 billion** for the Agricultural Research Service. This is an increase of \$13.043 million FY 2008 and \$97.068 million above the request. In addition to pay costs, the Committee provides an increase of \$3 million for food security costs (colony collapse disorder and wheat stem rust, which are two current threats to food production, and for research specifically to fight world hunger).

The Committee rejected nearly every proposal to terminate ongoing research projects and directs the agency not to close laboratories.

**Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES):** The Committee provides **\$629.601 million** for Research and Education, which is \$94.324 million above the budget request. The bill provides an increase for the formula-based programs that direct funding to land grant and historically black colleges and universities. In addition, the report contains language explaining how the combination of new research funding available in the Farm Bill plus the FY 2009 bill, provides a net increase of nearly \$30 million in funding above FY 2008.

### **Regulatory Programs**

**Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS):** The bill provides **\$973.566 million** for FSIS, which is an increase of \$43.446 million above FY 2008 and \$21.620 million above the budget request. In addition, the bill provides \$3 million for the Humane Animal Tracking System and increases the number of Full Time Employees (FTEs) from 83 in FY 2008 to 120 for humane slaughter enforcement activities.

**Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS):** The bill provides **\$861.026 million** for APHIS Salaries and Expenses.

### **Credit Programs**

**Credit Programs:** For farm credit, rural housing, and rural development loans in general, the bill provides the FY 2008 equivalent funding level.

### **Title II – Conservation**

**Conservation Operations:** The bill provides **\$866.899 million** for Conservation Operations, which serves as the salaries and expenses account of NRCS. This amount is \$32.455 million above FY 2008 level and \$72.126 million above the budget request.

**Watershed Rehabilitation Program:** The bill provides **\$20 million** for the Watershed Rehabilitation Program and allows the obligation of \$30 million in mandatory Farm Bill funds. The recent floods have placed increased risk on failing or near-failure dams and watershed structures.

**Other Conservation Activities:** The bill provides **\$29.790 million** for Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations; \$50.730 million for the Resource Conservation and Development program; and \$1.986 million for the Healthy Forests Reserve program. The President proposed to terminate all of these conservation programs.

### **Title III – Rural Development**

**Rental Assistance:** The bill provides **\$1.005 billion** for rental assistance, which is \$526.285 million above the fiscal year 2008 level and similar to the budget request. The funding increase is the result of nearly all the rental assistance contracts for the 515 multi-family rental assistance program expiring in the same year. Failure to renew these contracts would result in large-scale evictions of tenants, which are largely comprised of elderly, disabled, and single head-of-household families.

## **Title IV – Food Assistance**

**Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC):** The bill provides **\$6.750 billion** for WIC, which is an increase of \$1.13 billion above FY 2008 and \$650 million above the budget request. Once again this year, the nation is faced with rising food and participation costs. The Committee rejected several budget request program modifications including changes to the amount allocated for Nutrition Services Administration (NSA) and certain eligibility criteria.

The increase above the President's request will result in 400,000 people per month receiving nutritional assistance who otherwise have lost such assistance.

**Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP):** The bill provides **\$155 million** for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program. The amount is \$15.285 million above the FY 2008 level, and the budget request proposed to terminate CSFP. This funding level is intended to protect the current participation levels of 464,000 low income seniors, and 30,000 low income women, infants and children.

## **Title V – International**

**Public Law 480 Food Program (PL-480):** The bill provides more than **\$1.225 billion** for title II grants. This is \$15.036 million FY 2008 non-emergency level and the same as the budget request. The funding is necessary to meet rising the world food crisis in Africa and other parts of the world. This is in addition to the \$1.245 billion in food aid made available in the recently-passed supplemental.

**McGovern-Dole:** The bill provides **\$100 million** for the McGovern-Dole Food for Education program, which is in addition to \$84 million for 2009 that was provided in the recently enacted Farm Bill. The funds will help provide what is often the only daily meal children in some of the most distressed parts of the world will receive. This program also ensures that children are more likely to receive an education, which is one of the first steps out of the cycle of chronic hunger.

## **Title VI – Related Agencies**

**Food and Drug Administration (FDA):** The bill provides more than **\$2.038 billion** for the FDA, an increase of \$324.627 million above the FY 2008 level and \$5.194 million above the budget request. The bill also provides \$12.433 million for FDA Buildings & Facilities, which is \$10 million above the FY 2008 level and equal to the budget request.

### **Workplace Safety/Agency Integrity (Pay Costs, USDA and FDA facilities repair)**

The Committee recommendation provides funds necessary to protect employees of USDA and FDA in order to improve program delivery to Americans. The bill provides **\$154.648 million** to cover rising pay costs and to protect FTE levels. Additional funds are provided to bring FDA laboratories and USDA facilities into compliance with workplace safety standards.

**Farm Service Agency and Rural Development –** The bill provides **\$67.650 million** for the Farm Service Agency and Rural Development to upgrade failing information systems. The funding will help the USDA implement provisions included in the recently-passed Farm Bill.