



U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

PRESS RELEASE

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Senate, House Conferees Agree to Agriculture Spending Bill

Washington, D.C. – The Senate and House of Representatives conferees reached an agreement today on the fiscal year 2006 Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. The conference report will be sent back to both chambers for final approval. Included in the bill is \$17.1 billion in discretionary appropriations. Highlights of the bill are below.

Bill Highlights:

FY05 Funding Level: \$16.83 billion (\$68.293 billion total mandatory)

FY06 President's Request: \$16.74 billion (\$82.822 billion in total mandatory)

FY06 Conference Report: \$17.09 billion (\$83.067 billion in total mandatory)

Title I – Agricultural Programs

- The bill provides \$1.030 billion for the Farm Service Agency Salaries and Expenses, an increase of \$30 million over the fiscal year 2005 level.
- The bill provides an estimated \$3.784 billion for farm loans, \$66.8 million more than the fiscal year 2005 level. Included in this amount is \$1.61 billion for farm ownership direct and guaranteed loans and \$2.07 billion for farm operating direct and guaranteed loans.
- Funding for the Food Safety and Inspection Service is \$838 million, a \$20 million increase from the fiscal year 2005 level.
- Agricultural research and extension programs are funded at \$2.43 billion in FY 2006. Appropriations recommended for the Agricultural Research Service total \$1.266 billion. For the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, \$1.167 billion is recommended, including \$676.8 million for research and education activities, \$455.9 million for extension activities, and \$55.8 million for integrated activities.
- The Animal Plant and Health Inspection Services is funded at \$820.457 million.
- The Agricultural Marketing Service is funded at \$75.376 million; the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration is funded at \$38.443 million.

Title II – Conservation Programs

- Recommended funding for conservation operations of the Natural Resources Conservation Service is \$840 million, and increase of \$72 million over the President's request.
- Watershed and flood prevention operations is funded at \$75 million.
- Watershed surveys and planning is funded at \$6.1 million.
- The watershed rehabilitation program is at \$31.6 million.
- The resource conservation and development program is funded at \$51.2 million.

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Title III – Rural Development Programs

- The total funded rural housing loan authorization level is \$5.1 billion, including \$4.8 billion for the single-family housing direct and guaranteed loans, \$100 million for rental housing loans, \$35 million for housing repair loans, and \$100 million for multi-family housing guaranteed loans.
- Funding for rural rental assistance is \$653 million.
- Funding for the Rural Community Advancement Program (RCAP), which includes funds for water and waste disposal loans and grants, solid waste management grants, community facility loans and grants, and rural business enterprise grants, is increased \$180 million from the budget request level to \$702 million.
- The bill funds a total rural electric and telecommunications loan level of \$6.094 billion, an increase of \$3 billion above the budget request level.
- A total of \$50.175 million is appropriated for the Distance Learning, Telemedicine and Broadband program for grants and loan subsidy costs which supports a \$500 million loan level.

Title IV – Domestic Food Programs

- The bill appropriates \$12.7 billion for child nutrition programs.
- Funding for the Food Stamp Program totals \$40.7 billion. This amount includes a \$3 billion reserve, \$140 million for the emergency food assistance program, and \$1.522 billion for the nutrition assistance for Puerto Rico.
- The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is funded at \$5.3 billion, which includes a \$125 million reserve.
- The Commodity Assistance Program is funded at \$179.366 million. This includes \$20 million for the Farmers' market Nutrition Program.

Title V – Foreign Assistance Programs

- Funding for the Foreign Agriculture Service is \$147.901 million.
- Public Law 480 programs are funded at the following program levels: Title I - \$74.032 million credit level, the same as the budget request level; and Title II - \$1.150 billion, \$265 more than the budget request.
- The McGovern-Dole International Food for the Education and Child Nutrition Program is funded at \$100.0 million, an increase of \$13.2 million over the fiscal year 2005 level.

Title VI – Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies

- Funding for salaries and expenses of the Food and Drug Administration totals \$1.839 billion. This is \$64.9 million more than the fiscal year 2005 level, and includes an increase of \$20.9 million in prescription drug user fee collections, \$6.4 million in medical device user fees, \$2.9 million in animal drug user fees, \$10 million for drug safety, \$7.8 million for medical device review, and \$10 million for food safety.
- Funding for the Commodity Futures Trading Commission is \$98.386 million, \$4.814 million more than the fiscal year 2005 level.
- The bill places a \$44.250 million limitation on expenses of the Farm Credit Administration.

Title VII – General Provisions

- Total appropriations of \$2.5 million are appropriated for Bill Emerson and Mickey Leland Hunger Fellowships through the Congressional Hunger Center.
- The Committee bill also includes statutory language to exclude special pay for military personnel deployed to designated combat areas when determining food stamp eligibility.

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