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SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE APPROVES FY2019 AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATIONS BILL

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies today approved a \$145.1 billion appropriations bill to support federal agriculture and nutrition programs in FY2019.

The [FY2019 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill](#) is scheduled to be [considered](#) Thursday by the Senate Committee on Appropriations. The Senate legislation recommends \$145.1 billion in discretionary and mandatory funding, \$6.2 billion above the President’s budget request and \$710 million below the FY2018 enacted level. The discretionary funding in the bill totals \$23.235 billion, \$225 million above the FY2018 enacted level. Mandatory funding in the bill totals \$121.8 billion.

This appropriations bill supports U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) agriculture, rural development, conservation programs, and food and drug safety. It also provides essential nutrition assistance for children, families and seniors. The measure also creates incentives for military veterans to enter careers in agriculture.

“Our farmers and ranchers provide our nation with the food, fuel, and fiber necessary to meet our needs, and they do so in spite of challenges from low commodity prices to unpredictable weather,” said **U.S Senator John Hoeven (R-N.D.), chairman of the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee.**

“We worked hard to ensure that this funding legislation supports the priorities of our producers and rural America. The investments made in this bill reaffirm our commitment to being at the forefront of production agriculture and to providing our rural communities the ability to compete – both here and abroad,” **Hoeven** said.

Bill Highlights:

Agricultural Research – \$2.73 billion to support agricultural research conducted by the Agricultural Research Service and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture. This amount

includes \$405 million for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative, a \$5 million increase over FY2018. Formula research funding for land-grant universities is maintained at FY2018 enacted levels. The bill also rejects proposed extramural research project terminations and laboratory closures included in the budget request.

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) – \$1.004 billion for APHIS, \$262 million above the budget request and \$18.4 million above the FY2018 enacted level. Overall funding will continue programs to control or eradicate plant and animal pests and diseases that threaten U.S. agriculture production. The bill provides investments in the science program for the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility and also provides increases to address pre-departure inspections of agriculture imports and tree pests.

Natural Resources Conservation Service – \$879.1 million, \$5 million above the FY2018 enacted level and \$210 million over the budget request, for conservation operations to help farmers, ranchers, and private forest landowners conserve and protect their land. The bill also includes \$150 million for the Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations program to support needed investments in rural communities.

Farm Service Agency (FSA) – \$1.625 billion for FSA for various farm, conservation, and emergency loan programs important to the nation’s farmers and ranchers. It prohibits the closure of FSA county offices and provides resources for information technology (IT) improvements and personnel across county offices.

Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) – \$1.049 billion, a \$7.5 million reduction from the FY2018 enacted level. The bill fully funds the food safety and inspection programs that ensure safe and healthy food for American families. The bill promotes the safety and productivity of the nation’s \$186 billion meat and poultry industry by supporting more than 8,000 frontline inspection personnel for meat, poultry, and egg products at more than 6,400 facilities in the United States. The bill provides full funding for FSIS to implement Siluriformes fish and fish product inspection.

Rural Development – \$3.8 billion for Rural Development, including additional \$825 million in funding dedicated for infrastructure investments in Rural America.

- **Water & Electric Infrastructure** – \$1.25 billion for rural water and waste program loans, the same as the FY2018 enacted level; \$800 million for water and waste grants and \$19 million for the Circuit Rider program. The bill also provides \$6.94 billion for rural electric and telephone infrastructure loans and \$30 million for broadband grants.
- **Rural Broadband** – \$425 million for the rural broadband loan and grant pilot program and \$53 million in Distance Learning and Telemedicine grants, of which \$20 million is dedicated to assist rural communities combat the opioid epidemic.
- **Rural Housing Loans and Rental Assistance** – \$24 billion in loan authority for the Single Family Housing guaranteed loan program, equal to the FY2018 enacted level and the President’s request. It includes \$1.1 billion for the direct loan program, which provides low-income rural families with home loan assistance. In addition, \$1.331 billion is provided for rental assistance for affordable rental housing for low-income families and the elderly in rural communities for renewal of all existing rental assistance contracts.

- **Business and Industry Loans** – The legislation supports \$1 billion in grants and loans for rural business and industry programs that promote small business growth in rural areas. The bill includes funding for the Healthy Food Financing Initiative to improve access to affordable, healthy foods in underserved areas.

Food and Drug Administration (FDA) – \$2.97 billion in discretionary funding for the FDA, \$159 million over the FY2018 enacted level. Overall, total FDA funding, including user fee revenues, is \$5.4 billion, which is \$292 million above FY2018. The bill provides \$88.5 million for medical product initiatives, including full funding for the Oncology Center of Excellence; \$15 million for food safety initiatives; and \$59 million for opioid prevention efforts. The bill also provides \$70 million as authorized in the 21st Century Cures Act.

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)** – \$6.15 billion in discretionary funding for WIC, which is \$25 million below the FY2018 enacted level. This amount is based on USDA estimates of WIC enrollments and will not prevent any eligible participants from receiving benefits.
- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** – \$73.219 billion in required mandatory spending, which is outside the discretionary funding jurisdiction of the Senate Appropriations Committee, for SNAP. Due to declining enrollment, this is \$794 million below last year's level.
- **Child Nutrition Programs** – \$23.184 billion in required mandatory funding, which is outside the discretionary funding jurisdiction of the Senate Appropriations Committee, for child nutrition programs. This funding will provide meals for an estimated 30.7 million participants, 74% of whom qualify for free or reduced-priced meals. In addition, \$58 million in discretionary program funds are also included for equipment grants and Summer EBT Demonstration.

International Programs – \$1.716 billion for 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 funded at \$210.255 million and includes \$15 million for the Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement at the Foreign Agriculture Service.

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