

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 6877

To amend section 1242 of the Food Security Act of 1985 to enhance and update conservation practice standards, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 19, 2023

Ms. SPANBERGER (for herself and Mr. NUNN of Iowa) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture

A BILL

To amend section 1242 of the Food Security Act of 1985 to enhance and update conservation practice standards, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Streamlining Con-
5 servation Practice Standards Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. DELIVERY OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.**

7 Section 1242(h) of the Food Security Act of 1985
8 (16 U.S.C. 3842(h)) is amended—

(1) in the subsection heading, by striking “REVIEW” and inserting “ESTABLISHMENT AND REVIEW”;

(2) in paragraph (1)—

(A) by amending subparagraph (A) to read as follows:

“(A) not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of the Streamlining Conservation Practice Standards Act, and at least every 5 years thereafter on a rolling basis, complete a review of each conservation practice standard, including engineering design specifications;”;

(B) in subparagraph (C), by striking “and” at the end;

(C) in subparagraph (D), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(D) by adding at the end the following:

“(E) provide a process for public input on each conservation practice standard under such review, including a process for consideration of State and local input;

“(F) publicly post a summary of any input received under subparagraph (E) and any decisions made relating to such input; and

1 “(G) revise any conservation practice
2 standard based on the results of such review, as
3 determined appropriate by the Secretary, and
4 publish any such revised standard.”;

5 (3) by amending paragraph (3) to read as fol-
6 lows:

7 “(3) PROCESS FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF IN-
8 TERIM AND NEW CONSERVATION PRACTICE STAND-
9 ARDS.—

10 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year
11 after the date of enactment of the Streamlining
12 Conservation Practice Standards Act, the Sec-
13 retary shall develop a streamlined process under
14 which the Secretary shall establish interim con-
15 servation practice standards and new conserva-
16 tion practice standards.

17 “(B) DEVELOPMENT.—In developing the
18 streamlined process under subparagraph (A),
19 the Secretary shall—

20 “(i) ensure that the public can engage
21 with the Department of Agriculture, in-
22 cluding by recommending interim conserva-
23 tion practice standards; and

24 “(ii) establish—

1 “(I) the types of data, metrics,
2 and other relevant information that
3 are necessary for the establishment of
4 interim conservation practice stand-
5 ards and new conservation practice
6 standards;

7 “(II) the process by which an in-
8 terim conservation practice standard
9 may become a new conservation prac-
10 tice standard; and

11 “(III) specific requirements for
12 an expedited review of a new con-
13 servation practice for the purpose of
14 establishing a new conservation prac-
15 tice standard for such practice.

16 “(C) CONSIDERATIONS.—In establishing
17 an interim conservation practice standard or a
18 new conservation practice standard under this
19 subsection, the Secretary shall consider—

20 “(i) input from State technical com-
21 mittees on recommendations that identify
22 innovations or advancements in conserva-
23 tion practices;

“(ii) technological advancements, including advancements from projects developed under section 1240H; and

“(iii) State and local input in the form of—

“(I) recommendations for interim conservation practice standards; and

“(II) partnership-led proposals for new and innovative techniques to facilitate implementing agreements and grants under this title.

“(D) TRANSPARENCY.—The Secretary shall make available on a public website a detailed description of the process for recommending, reviewing, and establishing interim conservation practice standards and new conservation practice standards under this paragraph.”;

(4) in paragraph (4)—

(A) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A)—

(i) by striking “Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018” and inserting “Streamlining Conservation Practice Standards Act”; and

1 (ii) by striking “a report on” and in-
 2 serting “a report detailing”;

3 (B) in subparagraph (A), by striking “ad-
 4 ministrative” and inserting “streamlined”;

5 (C) in subparagraph (B), by striking
 6 “and” at the end;

7 (D) in subparagraph (C), by striking the
 8 period at the end and inserting “; and”; and

9 (E) by adding at the end the following:

10 “(D) any other information the Secretary
 11 determines useful to improve such streamlined
 12 process for reviewing and establishing conserva-
 13 tion practice standards.”; and

14 (5) by adding at the end the following:

15 “(5) FUNDING.—The Secretary shall use fund-
 16 ing from the annual appropriations for conservation
 17 operations of the Natural Resources Conservation
 18 Service to carry out this subsection.”.

19 **SEC. 3. COMMODITY CREDIT CORPORATION.**

20 Section 1241(j)(1)(A) of the Food Security Act of
 21 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3841(j)(1)(A)) is amended by inserting
 22 “, including schedules for revising existing conservation
 23 practice standards and establishing interim conservation
 24 practice standards or new conservation practice standards
 25 under section 1242(h)” before the semicolon at the end.

1 **SEC. 4. CONSERVATION INNOVATION GRANTS AND PAY-**
2 **MENTS.**

3 (a) COMPETITIVE GRANTS FOR INNOVATIVE CON-
4 SERVATION APPROACHES.—Section 1240H(a)(1) of the
5 Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3839aa–8(a)(1))
6 is amended to read as follows:

7 “(1) GRANTS.—Out of the funds made available
8 to carry out this subchapter, the Secretary may
9 award competitive grants that are intended to stimu-
10 late development and evaluation of new and innova-
11 tive approaches to leveraging the Federal investment
12 in environmental enhancement and protection, in
13 conjunction with agricultural production or forest re-
14 source management, through the program, including
15 grants for the development and evaluation of new
16 and innovative technologies that may be incor-
17 porated into conservation practice standards.”.

18 (b) REPORTING AND DATABASE.—Section
19 1240H(d)(2)(A) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16
20 U.S.C. 3839aa–8(d)(2)(A)) is amended—

21 (1) in clause (i)—

22 (A) by inserting “, including both manage-
23 ment and structural conservation practices,”
24 after “conservation practices”; and

25 (B) by striking “and” at the end;

26 (2) by redesignating clause (ii) as clause (iii);

1 (3) by inserting after clause (i) the following:

2 “(ii) data that may be used to evalu-
3 ate new and emerging technologies and
4 recommendations for State and regional
5 applications of such new and emerging
6 technologies; and”; and

7 (4) in clause (iii), as so redesignated, by insert-
8 ing “for consideration under the streamlined process
9 developed under section 1242(h)(3)” before the pe-
10 riod at the end.

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