

119TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 971

To provide for the conservation of the Chesapeake Bay, and for other purposes.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 11, 2025

Mr. VAN HOLLEN (for himself, Ms. ALSOBROOKS, Mr. FETTERMAN, Mr. KAINE, and Mr. WARNER) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

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## A BILL

To provide for the conservation of the Chesapeake Bay,  
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 “Chesapeake Bay Con-  
5 servation Acceleration Act of 2025”.

1 **SEC. 2. CHESAPEAKE BAY STATES PARTNERSHIP INITIA-**  
 2 **TIVE.**

3 Chapter 5 of subtitle D of title XII of the Food Secu-  
 4 rity Act of 1985 is amended by inserting after section  
 5 1240M (16 U.S.C. 3839bb) the following:

6 **“SEC. 1240N. CHESAPEAKE BAY STATES PARTNERSHIP INI-**  
 7 **TIATIVE.**

8 “(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

9 “(1) CHESAPEAKE BAY WATERSHED.—The  
 10 term ‘Chesapeake Bay watershed’ means—

11 “(A) the Chesapeake Bay;

12 “(B) the portions of the States of Dela-  
 13 ware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Vir-  
 14 ginia, and West Virginia that contain the tribu-  
 15 taries, backwaters, and side channels (including  
 16 their watersheds) that drain into the Ches-  
 17 peake Bay; and

18 “(C) the District of Columbia.

19 “(2) INITIATIVE.—The term ‘Initiative’ means  
 20 the Chesapeake Bay States Partnership Initiative es-  
 21 tablished under subsection (b).

22 “(b) ESTABLISHMENT AND PURPOSE.—The Sec-  
 23 retary shall establish and carry out an initiative, to be  
 24 known as the ‘Chesapeake Bay States Partnership Initia-  
 25 tive’, to assist producers in implementing conservation ac-

1 tivities on agricultural land in the Chesapeake Bay water-  
2 shed for the purposes of—

3 “(1) improving water quality and quantity;

4 “(2) restoring, enhancing, and preserving soil,  
5 air, and related resources; and

6 “(3) increasing the resilience of agricultural  
7 production to withstand the impacts of climate  
8 change.

9 “(c) CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES.—The Secretary  
10 shall provide funds made available to carry out the Initia-  
11 tive through applicable programs under this subtitle, in-  
12 cluding by providing enrollment opportunities that are tar-  
13 geted to the Chesapeake Bay watershed, to assist pro-  
14 ducers in the Chesapeake Bay watershed in enhancing  
15 land and water resources by—

16 “(1) controlling erosion and reducing sediment  
17 and nutrient levels in groundwater and surface  
18 water; and

19 “(2) planning, designing, implementing, and  
20 evaluating habitat conservation, restoration, and en-  
21 hancement measures in cases in which there is sig-  
22 nificant ecological value if the applicable land is—

23 “(A) retained in the current use of the  
24 land; or

1                   “(B) restored to the natural condition of  
2                   the land.

3           “(d) CONSIDERATIONS.—In providing funds under  
4 the Initiative, the Secretary shall give special consider-  
5 ation to applications—

6                   “(1) submitted by producers in the Chesapeake  
7 Bay watershed river basins in which nutrient reduc-  
8 tion efforts would be most effective; or

9                   “(2) to carry out conservation activities that re-  
10 duce nitrogen and sediment, improve management of  
11 livestock and waste, or conserve wetlands in the  
12 Chesapeake Bay watershed.

13          “(e) DUTIES OF SECRETARY.—In carrying out the  
14 Initiative, the Secretary shall—

15                   “(1) as available, use existing plans, models,  
16 and assessments to assist producers in implementing  
17 conservation activities; and

18                   “(2) proceed expeditiously to provide funding to  
19 producers to implement conservation activities that  
20 are consistent with State strategies for the restora-  
21 tion of the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

22          “(f) CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION.—The Sec-  
23 retary shall—

24                   “(1) in consultation with appropriate Federal  
25 agencies, ensure that conservation activities carried

1 out under the Initiative complement Federal, State,  
 2 and local programs, including programs that address  
 3 water quality, in the Chesapeake Bay watershed;  
 4 and

5 “(2) in carrying out this section, coordinate  
 6 with the Farm Service Agency to identify needs and  
 7 opportunities for buffer management on land subject  
 8 to a contract under the conservation reserve pro-  
 9 gram under subchapter B of chapter 1 that may be  
 10 expiring soon.

11 “(g) TASK FORCE ON CREDITING CHESAPEAKE BAY  
 12 CONSERVATION INVESTMENTS.—

13 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary and the Ad-  
 14 ministrator of the Environmental Protection Agency  
 15 shall jointly establish a Federal task force, to be  
 16 known as the ‘Task Force on Crediting Chesapeake  
 17 Bay Conservation Investments’ (referred to in this  
 18 subsection as the ‘Task Force’).

19 “(2) ACTION PLAN.—The Task Force shall de-  
 20 velop an action plan that—

21 “(A) identifies improvements to the proc-  
 22 esses of analyzing, reporting, and quantifying  
 23 nutrient reductions from conservation activities  
 24 in the Chesapeake Bay watershed;

1 “(B) is responsive to the needs of States in  
 2 the Chesapeake Bay watershed (including the  
 3 District of Columbia) and the agricultural com-  
 4 munity;

5 “(C) maintains the scientific integrity of  
 6 the decisionmaking process and accounting  
 7 tools under the Chesapeake Bay Program (as  
 8 defined in section 117(a) of the Federal Water  
 9 Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1267(a)));  
 10 and

11 “(D) ensures producer privacy is protected.

12 “(3) IDENTIFICATION OF OPPORTUNITIES.—  
 13 The Task Force shall leverage findings from suc-  
 14 cessful data-sharing pilot projects to identify oppor-  
 15 tunities to integrate time-saving technologies for the  
 16 implementation of conservation activities in the  
 17 Chesapeake Bay watershed.”.

18 **SEC. 3. CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PRO-**  
 19 **GRAM PARTICIPATION.**

20 (a) CONSERVATION RESERVE.—

21 (1) REAUTHORIZATION.—Section 1231(a) of  
 22 the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3831(a))  
 23 is amended by striking “the 2023 fiscal year” and  
 24 inserting “fiscal year 2028”.

1           (2) ELIGIBLE LAND.—Section 1231(b) of the  
 2       Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3831(b)) is  
 3       amended—

4           (A) in paragraph (6)(B)(ii), by striking  
 5       “or” at the end;

6           (B) in paragraph (7)(C), by striking the  
 7       period at the end and inserting “; or”; and

8           (C) by adding at the end the following:

9           “(8) cropland, marginal pastureland, grass-  
 10      lands, and other rural land that will—

11           “(A) have a positive impact on water qual-  
 12      ity in furtherance of the goals of the conserva-  
 13      tion reserve enhancement program under sec-  
 14      tion 1231A; and

15           “(B) be devoted to a riparian buffer.”.

16           (3) CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT  
 17      PROGRAM.—Section 1231A(b) of the Food Security  
 18      Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3831a(b)) is amended—

19           (A) in paragraph (3), by adding at the end  
 20      the following:

21           “(C) UPDATES.—

22           “(i) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary  
 23      shall provide to each signatory to an agree-  
 24      ment under this subsection an option to  
 25      update the agreement, without renegoti-

1           ating other provisions of the agreement, to  
 2           include new incentives made available  
 3           under this subchapter beginning on Janu-  
 4           ary 1, 2018, such as riparian forest buffer  
 5           management payments.

6           “(ii) MATCHING FUNDS.—Require-  
 7           ments for matching funds described in  
 8           paragraph (2)(B) shall not apply to an up-  
 9           date to an agreement under clause (i).”;  
 10          and

11          (B) by adding at the end the following:

12          “(4) AMENDMENTS.—

13               “(A) IN GENERAL.—In the case of an  
 14               amendment to an agreement under this sub-  
 15               section, including an addendum to such an  
 16               agreement, the Secretary shall—

17                       “(i) streamline the amendment proc-  
 18                       ess relating to time-sensitive national pri-  
 19                       orities, including the Chesapeake Bay total  
 20                       maximum daily load; and

21                       “(ii) give priority to simple amend-  
 22                       ments to update existing agreements in ac-  
 23                       cordance with paragraph (3)(C).

24               “(B) SIMPLE AMENDMENTS.—A simple  
 25               amendment to an agreement described in sub-

1 paragraph (A)(ii) shall not constitute a renego-  
 2 tiation of the agreement.”.

3 (4) PAYMENTS.—Section 1234 of the Food Se-  
 4 curity Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3834) is amended—

5 (A) in subsection (b)(4)—

6 (i) by striking “In addition” and in-  
 7 serting the following:

8 “(A) IN GENERAL.—In addition”; and

9 (ii) by adding at the end the fol-  
 10 lowing:

11 “(B) MINIMUM PAYMENT FOR CERTAIN  
 12 CONTRACTS.—In the case of a contract updated  
 13 under section 1231A(b)(3)(C), the incentive  
 14 payment under subparagraph (A) shall be in an  
 15 amount that is not less than 40 percent of the  
 16 actual costs described in that subparagraph.”;  
 17 and

18 (B) in subsection (g)(1), by striking  
 19 “\$50,000” and inserting “\$100,000”.

20 (b) ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PRO-  
 21 GRAM.—

22 (1) CONSERVATION INCENTIVE CONTRACTS.—  
 23 Section 1240B(j)(2)(C) of the Food Security Act of  
 24 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3839aa–2(j)(2)(C)) is amended—

1 (A) in clause (i), by striking “and” at the  
2 end;

3 (B) in clause (ii), by striking the period at  
4 the end and inserting “; and”; and

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

6 “(iii) consider participation in the  
7 conservation reserve program and the con-  
8 servation reserve enhancement program  
9 under subchapter B of chapter 1, and  
10 practices under those programs (such as  
11 riparian buffers), in prioritizing grazing  
12 practices under the program established by  
13 this subchapter with respect to the effi-  
14 cient implementation of grazing systems to  
15 holistically address resource concerns.”.

16 (2) EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS.—Section  
17 1240C(b) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16  
18 U.S.C. 3839aa–3(b)) is amended—

19 (A) in paragraph (3), by striking “and” at  
20 the end;

21 (B) in paragraph (4), by striking the pe-  
22 riod at the end and inserting “; and”; and

23 (C) by adding at the end the following:

24 “(5) that would include grazing practices under  
25 the program established by this subchapter, in con-

1       sideration of participation in the conservation re-  
 2       serve program and the conservation reserve enhance-  
 3       ment program under subchapter B of chapter 1, and  
 4       practices under those programs (such as riparian  
 5       buffers), with respect to the efficient implementation  
 6       of grazing systems to holistically address resource  
 7       concerns.”.

8       **SEC. 4. CHESAPEAKE BAY WATERSHED TURNKEY PILOT**  
 9                               **PROGRAM.**

10       Section 1231C of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16  
 11       U.S.C. 3831c) is amended by adding at the end the fol-  
 12       lowing:

13       “(c) CHESAPEAKE BAY WATERSHED TURNKEY  
 14       PILOT PROGRAM.—

15               “(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

16                       “(A) CHESAPEAKE BAY WATERSHED.—

17               The term ‘Chesapeake Bay watershed’ has the  
 18               meaning given the term in section 1240N(a).

19                       “(B) CREP DEFINITIONS.—The terms

20               ‘CREP’, ‘eligible land’, and ‘management’ have

21               the meanings given those terms in section

22               1231A(a).

23                       “(C) ELIGIBLE PRACTICE.—The term ‘eli-

24               gible practice’ means a forested riparian buffer

1 practice under a CREP and any associated ac-  
 2 tivities, including—

3 “(i) a stream crossing;

4 “(ii) fencing and alternate water sys-  
 5 tems;

6 “(iii) herbicide applications; and

7 “(iv) any other activity that is appro-  
 8 priate to establish the practice.

9 “(D) PILOT PROGRAM.—The term ‘pilot  
 10 program’ means the pilot program established  
 11 under paragraph (2).

12 “(E) TECHNICAL SERVICE PROVIDER.—  
 13 The term ‘technical service provider’ means a  
 14 third-party provider with which the Secretary  
 15 enters into an agreement under paragraph  
 16 (5)(A).

17 “(2) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall es-  
 18 tablish a pilot program under which the Secretary  
 19 shall provide, for voluntary owners and operators,  
 20 establishment and management of eligible practices  
 21 on eligible land located in the Chesapeake Bay wa-  
 22 tershed that is enrolled through a CREP.

23 “(3) DUTIES OF SECRETARY.—With respect to  
 24 eligible land enrolled through the pilot program, the  
 25 Secretary—

“(A) may provide, for the owner or operator, establishment and management of an eligible practice on the eligible land using a technical service provider pursuant to an agreement under paragraph (5); and

“(B) shall not require the owner or operator—

“(i) to pay any costs of the establishment or management of an eligible practice, including any compensation provided under paragraph (5)(C); or

“(ii) to submit to the Secretary any additional paperwork with respect to the pilot program.

“(4) DUTIES OF OWNERS AND OPERATORS.—

Each owner or operator of eligible land enrolled through the pilot program—

“(A) shall provide to the Secretary and any technical service providers, as applicable, access to the eligible land for purposes of the establishment or management of an eligible practice under the pilot program; and

“(B) may not receive any cost-share payment, practice incentive payment, or management payment under this subchapter with re-

1 spect to an eligible practice under the pilot pro-  
2 gram.

3 “(5) AGREEMENTS WITH TECHNICAL SERVICE  
4 PROVIDERS.—

5 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may  
6 enter into an agreement under section 1242  
7 with 1 or more third-party providers certified  
8 under that section, including a third-party pro-  
9 vider certified through a streamlined certifi-  
10 cation process under subsection (e)(5) of that  
11 section, that provide technical assistance under  
12 this title in the Chesapeake Bay watershed to  
13 conduct the establishment and management of  
14 an eligible practice on eligible land under the  
15 pilot program.

16 “(B) ACTIVITIES.—In addition to any ac-  
17 tivity that a technical service provider may con-  
18 duct pursuant to section 1242 relating to the  
19 establishment of an eligible practice, a technical  
20 service provider may carry out such activities as  
21 are necessary to conduct the establishment and  
22 management of an eligible practice under the  
23 pilot program.

24 “(C) COMPENSATION.—Under an agree-  
25 ment entered into under subparagraph (A), the

1 Secretary shall provide to a technical service  
 2 provider reasonable compensation for services  
 3 provided under the agreement, including admin-  
 4 istrative assistance, technical assistance, design  
 5 assistance, and installation costs.

6 “(6) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 1  
 7 year after the date of enactment of this subsection,  
 8 the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Ag-  
 9 riculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate and  
 10 the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Rep-  
 11 resentatives a report describing the status of, and  
 12 any activities carried out under, the pilot program.”.

13 **SEC. 5. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.**

14 (a) GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS FOR FOOD AND AG-  
 15 RICULTURAL SCIENCES EDUCATION.—

16 (1) IN GENERAL.—Section 1417 of the Na-  
 17 tional Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teach-  
 18 ing Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3152) is amend-  
 19 ed—

20 (A) in subsection (b)—

21 (i) in the matter preceding paragraph  
 22 (1), by inserting “, junior or community  
 23 colleges, and postsecondary vocational in-  
 24 stitutions” after “other colleges and uni-  
 25 versities”; and

1 (ii) in paragraph (3), by striking  
 2 “food and agricultural sciences teaching  
 3 programs, or teaching programs empha-  
 4 sizing” and inserting “teaching programs,  
 5 including paid work-based learning, for  
 6 food and agricultural sciences or”;

7 (B) in subsection (c)—

8 (i) in paragraph (1), by striking  
 9 “and” at the end;

10 (ii) in paragraph (2), by striking the  
 11 period at the end and inserting “; and”;  
 12 and

13 (iii) by adding at the end the fol-  
 14 lowing:

15 “(3) applications for teaching enhancement  
 16 projects, including paid work-based learning, that  
 17 address a need for additional trained professionals in  
 18 food and agricultural sciences or rural economic de-  
 19 velopment, community development, or business de-  
 20 velopment.”;

21 (C) in subsection (j)—

22 (i) by striking paragraph (1); and

23 (ii) by redesignating paragraphs (2)  
 24 and (3) as paragraphs (1) and (2), respec-  
 25 tively;

1 (D) in subsection (l), by striking “sub-  
 2 section (j)” and inserting “subsection (k)”;

3 (E) in subsection (m)—

4 (i) in paragraph (1), by striking  
 5 “and” at the end;

6 (ii) in paragraph (2), by striking the  
 7 period at the end and inserting “; and”;  
 8 and

9 (iii) by adding at the end the fol-  
 10 lowing:

11 “(3) \$60,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2026  
 12 through 2031.”;

13 (F) by striking “subsection (b)” each place  
 14 it appears and inserting “subsection (c)”;

15 (G) by redesignating subsections (a)  
 16 through (m) as subsections (b) through (n), re-  
 17 spectively; and

18 (H) by inserting before subsection (b) (as  
 19 so redesignated) the following:

20 “(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

21 “(1) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—

22 The term ‘institution of higher education’ has the  
 23 meaning given the term in section 101 of the Higher  
 24 Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001).

1           “(2) JUNIOR OR COMMUNITY COLLEGE.—The  
2           term ‘junior or community college’ has the meaning  
3           given the term in section 312 of the Higher Edu-  
4           cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1058).

5           “(3) POSTSECONDARY VOCATIONAL INSTITU-  
6           TION.—The term ‘postsecondary vocational institu-  
7           tion’ has the meaning given the term in section  
8           102(c) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20  
9           U.S.C. 1002(c)).

10          “(4) SECONDARY SCHOOL.—The term ‘sec-  
11          ondary school’ has the meaning given the term in  
12          section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Edu-  
13          cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

14          “(5) WORK-BASED LEARNING.—The term  
15          ‘work-based learning’ has the meaning given the  
16          term in section 3 of the Carl D. Perkins Career and  
17          Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C.  
18          2302).”.

19          (2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

20                 (A) Section 708 of the Agriculture, Rural  
21                 Development, Food and Drug Administration,  
22                 and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1992  
23                 (7 U.S.C. 2209b), is amended by striking “sec-  
24                 tion 1417(b)(6) of the National Agricultural  
25                 Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act

1 of 1977, as amended (7 U.S.C. 3152(b)(6))”  
2 and inserting “subsection (c)(6) of section 1417  
3 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension,  
4 and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7  
5 U.S.C. 3152)”.

6 (B) Section 251(f)(1) of the Department  
7 of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7  
8 U.S.C. 6971(f)(1)) is amended—

9 (i) in subparagraph (C)(v), by striking  
10 “section 1417(b) of the National Agricultural  
11 Research, Extension, and Teaching  
12 Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3152(b))”  
13 and inserting “subsection (c) of section  
14 1417 of the National Agricultural Re-  
15 search, Extension, and Teaching Policy  
16 Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3152)”;

17 (ii) in subparagraph (D)(v), by strik-  
18 ing “section 1417(j) of the National Agri-  
19 cultural Research, Extension, and Teach-  
20 ing Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3152(j))”  
21 and inserting “subsection (k) of section  
22 1417 of the National Agricultural Re-  
23 search, Extension, and Teaching Policy  
24 Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3152)”.

1 (b) EXPERIENCED SERVICES PROGRAM.—Section  
2 1252(a)(2) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C.  
3 3851(a)(2)) is amended—

4 (1) in subparagraph (D), by striking “and” at  
5 the end;

6 (2) in subparagraph (E), by striking the period  
7 at the end and inserting “; and”; and

8 (3) by adding at the end the following:

9 “(F) assisting cooperative initiatives under  
10 subsection (c)(3) of section 1417 of the Na-  
11 tional Agricultural Research, Extension, and  
12 Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3152)  
13 to improve higher education teaching programs,  
14 including paid work-based learning, at—

15 “(i) land-grant colleges and univer-  
16 sities (including the University of the Dis-  
17 trict of Columbia);

18 “(ii) colleges and universities having  
19 significant minority enrollments and a de-  
20 monstrable capacity to carry out the teach-  
21 ing of food and agricultural sciences; and

22 “(iii) other colleges and universities,  
23 junior or community colleges (as defined in  
24 section 312 of the Higher Education Act  
25 of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1058)), and postsec-

1           ondary vocational institutions (as defined  
 2           in section 102(c) of the Higher Education  
 3           Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002(c))) having a  
 4           demonstrable capacity to carry out the  
 5           teaching of food and agricultural  
 6           sciences.”.

7           (c) COMPETITIVE, SPECIAL, AND FACILITIES RE-  
 8 SEARCH GRANTS.—Subsection (b) of the Competitive,  
 9 Special, and Facilities Research Grant Act (7 U.S.C.  
 10 3157(b)) is amended—

11           (1) in paragraph (6)(A), by striking “teaching”  
 12           and inserting “teaching, including paid work-based  
 13           learning (as defined in section 3 of the Carl D. Per-  
 14           kins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006  
 15           (20 U.S.C. 2302))”; and

16           (2) in paragraph (7)(B), by inserting “, junior  
 17           or community colleges (as defined in section 312 of  
 18           the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.  
 19           1058)), and postsecondary vocational institutions (as  
 20           defined in section 102(c) of the Higher Education  
 21           Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002(c)))” after “colleges  
 22           and universities”.

1 **SEC. 6. NRCS DIRECT HIRE AUTHORITY.**

2 Section 1242 of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16  
3 U.S.C. 3842) is amended by adding at the end the fol-  
4 lowing:

5 “(j) NRCS DIRECT HIRE AUTHORITY.—

6 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may ap-  
7 point, without regard to the provisions of subchapter  
8 I of chapter 33 of title 5, United States Code (other  
9 than sections 3303 and 3328 of that title), qualified  
10 candidates, as described in paragraph (2), directly to  
11 positions within the Natural Resources Conservation  
12 Service that provide technical assistance under con-  
13 servation programs administered by the Natural Re-  
14 sources Conservation Service.

15 “(2) QUALIFICATIONS.—Paragraph (1) applies  
16 to any candidate who—

17 “(A) is qualified to provide the technical  
18 assistance described in paragraph (1), as deter-  
19 mined by the Secretary; and

20 “(B) meets qualification standards estab-  
21 lished by the Office of Personnel Manage-  
22 ment.”.

23 **SEC. 7. PRIMARY REGULATORY OVERSIGHT FOR DOMES-**  
24 **TIC, WILD-CAUGHT, INVASIVE CATFISH.**

25 (a) EXEMPTION FROM OVERSIGHT.—

1 (1) FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE.—

2 Section 1(w)(2) of the Federal Meat Inspection Act  
 3 (21 U.S.C. 601(w)(2)) is amended by inserting “,  
 4 except for domestic, wild-caught blue catfish  
 5 (*Ictalurus furcatus*) and flathead catfish (*Pylodictis*  
 6 *olivaris*) invasive to the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem”  
 7 before the semicolon.

8 (2) USDA GRADING PROGRAM.—Section  
 9 203(n)(1) of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946  
 10 (7 U.S.C. 1622(n)(1)) is amended by inserting “, ex-  
 11 cept for domestic, wild-caught blue catfish (*Ictalurus*  
 12 *furcatus*) and flathead catfish (*Pylodictis olivaris*)  
 13 invasive to the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem” before  
 14 the semicolon.

15 (b) INTERAGENCY COORDINATION.—Not later than  
 16 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Sec-  
 17 retary of Agriculture (referred to in this section as the  
 18 “Secretary”) shall execute a memorandum of under-  
 19 standing with the Commissioner of Food and Drugs (re-  
 20 ferred to in this section as the “Commissioner”) for the  
 21 purpose of transferring primary regulatory oversight of  
 22 the domestic and import inspection of domestic, wild-  
 23 caught blue catfish (*Ictalurus furcatus*) and flathead cat-  
 24 fish (*Pylodictis olivaris*) invasive to the Chesapeake Bay  
 25 ecosystem from the Secretary to the Commissioner, pursu-

1 ant to the authorities of the Commissioner under the Fed-  
2 eral Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 301 et  
3 seq.), the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act (15 U.S.C.  
4 1451 et seq.), and the Public Health Service Act (42  
5 U.S.C. 201 et seq.).

6 (c) REGULATIONS.—Not later than 180 days after  
7 the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary, in con-  
8 sultation with the Commissioner, shall issue final regula-  
9 tions to carry out this section and the amendments made  
10 by this section in a manner that ensures that there is no  
11 duplication in inspection activities relating to domestic,  
12 wild-caught blue catfish (*Ictalurus furcatus*) and flathead  
13 catfish (*Pylodictis olivaris*) invasive to the Chesapeake  
14 Bay ecosystem.

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