

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2613

To amend the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 to establish a competitive grant program under which the Secretary of Agriculture provides grants to land-grant colleges and universities to support agricultural producers in adopting conservation and innovative climate practices, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 16, 2021

Mr. NEWHOUSE (for himself, Ms. SPANBERGER, and Ms. PINGREE) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture

A BILL

To amend the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 to establish a competitive grant program under which the Secretary of Agriculture provides grants to land-grant colleges and universities to support agricultural producers in adopting conservation and innovative climate practices, 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 “Conservation and Inno-
5 vative Climate Partnership Act of 2021”.

1 **SEC. 2. CONSERVATION AND INNOVATIVE CLIMATE PART-**
 2 **NERSHIP COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subtitle H of title XVI of the
 4 Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990
 5 is amended by inserting after section 1672 (7 U.S.C.
 6 5925) the following:

7 **“SEC. 1672A. CONSERVATION AND INNOVATIVE CLIMATE**
 8 **PARTNERSHIP COMPETITIVE GRANT PRO-**
 9 **GRAM.**

10 “(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

11 “(1) 1862 INSTITUTION; 1890 INSTITUTION.—
 12 The terms ‘1862 Institution’ and ‘1890 Institution’
 13 have the meanings given those terms in section 2 of
 14 the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education
 15 Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7601).

16 “(2) 1994 INSTITUTION.—The term ‘1994 In-
 17 stitution’ has the meaning given the term in section
 18 532 of the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Sta-
 19 tus Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 301 note; Public Law
 20 103–382).

21 “(3) CONSERVATION PRACTICE.—The term
 22 ‘conservation practice’ means a practice—

23 “(A) that may include any or a combina-
 24 tion of—

25 “(i) carbon retention or carbon se-
 26 questration cropping practices;

- 1 “(ii) resource conserving crop rota-
2 tion;
3 “(iii) alley cropping;
4 “(iv) integrated livestock-crop sys-
5 tems;
6 “(v) advanced grazing management;
7 “(vi) improved forestry or agro-
8 forestry management;
9 “(vii) the insertion of buffers or satu-
10 rated buffers; or
11 “(viii) any other practice that an eligi-
12 ble institution carrying out a project under
13 the program determines to be appropriate;
14 and
15 “(B) the purpose of which is to increase
16 overall sustainability on farmland or ranch land
17 through—
18 “(i) improved soil health and tilth;
19 “(ii) improved water quality, quantity,
20 and management;
21 “(iii) improved nutrient management;
22 “(iv) reduction in tillage; or
23 “(v) wildlife promotion and mainte-
24 nance.

1 “(4) ELIGIBLE INSTITUTION.—The term ‘eligi-
2 ble institution’ means—

3 “(A) an 1862 Institution;

4 “(B) an 1890 Institution; and

5 “(C) a 1994 Institution.

6 “(5) INNOVATIVE CLIMATE PRACTICE.—The
7 term ‘innovative climate practice’ means a practice,
8 including any practice that an eligible institution
9 carrying out a project under the program determines
10 to be appropriate, that results in—

11 “(A) a reduction of greenhouse gas emis-
12 sions, including carbon dioxide, methane, sulfur
13 dioxide, and nitrous oxide;

14 “(B) carbon sequestration;

15 “(C) soil health improvement; or

16 “(D) reduced exposure to climate-related
17 risk.

18 “(6) PROGRAM.—The term ‘program’ means
19 the competitive grant program established under
20 subsection (b).

21 “(7) SECRETARY.—The term ‘Secretary’ means
22 the Secretary of Agriculture.

23 “(b) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall estab-
24 lish a program to provide competitive grants pursuant to
25 section 3(d) of the Smith-Lever Act (7 U.S.C. 343(d)) to

1 eligible institutions to carry out projects to increase the
2 voluntary adoption of conservation practices and innova-
3 tive climate practices through public awareness cam-
4 paigns, workshops, and specialized technical assistance.

5 “(c) APPLICATIONS.—To be eligible to receive a grant
6 under the program, an eligible institution shall submit to
7 the Secretary an application, including a demonstration
8 that the applicant will—

9 “(1) increase interaction with local agricultural
10 producers by a rate of not less than 25 percent
11 above the outreach rate before the implementation of
12 the project under the program;

13 “(2) assist agricultural producers in imple-
14 menting new conservation practices or innovative cli-
15 mate practices on farms or edges of fields, improving
16 existing conservation practices or innovative climate
17 practices on farms or edges of fields, or any com-
18 bination thereof; and

19 “(3) assist agricultural producers in imple-
20 menting a combination of conservation practices or
21 innovative climate practices that contribute to—

22 “(A) the overall improvement of conserva-
23 tion; or

24 “(B) a decrease in, or sequestration of,
25 greenhouse gas emissions.

1 “(d) PARTNERSHIPS.—An eligible institution shall
2 carry out a project using a grant under the program in
3 partnership with not fewer than 1 other entity, which may
4 include—

5 “(1) a nonprofit organization;

6 “(2) a State entity;

7 “(3) the Natural Resources Conservation Serv-
8 ice;

9 “(4) an 1862 Institution;

10 “(5) an 1890 Institution;

11 “(6) a 1994 Institution; or

12 “(7) any combination thereof.

13 “(e) MAXIMUM AMOUNT.—The amount of a grant
14 under the program shall be not more than \$400,000.

15 “(f) USE OF FUNDS.—An eligible institution may use
16 a grant under the program—

17 “(1) to support agricultural producers in imple-
18 menting a conservation practice or an innovative cli-
19 mate practice;

20 “(2) subject to subsection (g), for additional
21 staffing at the eligible institution to assist in car-
22 rying out a project using the grant;

23 “(3) to conduct workshops for agricultural pro-
24 ducers, and develop and distribute digital and hard-
25 copy materials directly to agricultural producers,

1 that provide clear directions for accessing technical
2 assistance for adopting conservation practices and
3 innovative climate practices; and

4 “(4) for soil testing and the measuring of other
5 indicators of the effectiveness of conservation prac-
6 tices and innovative climate practices.

7 “(g) LIMITATION ON ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.—
8 An eligible institution may use not more than 30 percent
9 of the amount of a grant under the program for adminis-
10 trative expenses.

11 “(h) DURATION.—A grant provided under the pro-
12 gram shall be for such period as the Secretary determines
13 to be appropriate, but not less than 4 years.

14 “(i) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
15 authorized to be appropriated to provide grants under the
16 program pursuant to section 3(d) of the Smith-Lever Act
17 (7 U.S.C. 343(d)) \$13,000,000 for each fiscal year.”.

18 (b) ELIGIBILITY OF 1994 INSTITUTIONS.—Section
19 3(d) of the Smith-Lever Act (7 U.S.C. 343(d)) is amend-
20 ed, in the third sentence—

21 (1) by striking “program and” and inserting
22 “program,”; and

23 (2) by inserting “, and the conservation and in-
24 novative climate partnership competitive grant pro-
25 gram established under section 1672A of the Food,

- 1 Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990”
- 2 before the period at the end.

