

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4428

To require the Secretary of Agriculture to provide additional payments for producers that, in participating in the conservation stewardship program, agree to adopt or improve, manage, and maintain perennial production systems, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 16, 2025

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

A BILL

To require the Secretary of Agriculture to provide additional payments for producers that, in participating in the conservation stewardship program, agree to adopt or improve, manage, and maintain perennial production systems, 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 “Strong Farms, Strong
5 Future Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

2 Section 1240I(2) of the Food Security Act of 1985
3 (16 U.S.C. 3839aa–21(2)) is amended—

4 (1) in subparagraph (A), by inserting “enhance-
5 ments,” after “practices,”; and

6 (2) in subparagraph (B)(v), by inserting “cli-
7 mate change and” after “mitigate against,”.

8 **SEC. 3. STEWARDSHIP CONTRACTS.**

9 (a) **EVALUATION OF CONTRACT OFFERS.**—Section
10 1240K(b)(1)(A) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16
11 U.S.C. 3839aa–23(b)(1)(A)) is amended—

12 (1) in clause (ii), by striking “; and” and in-
13 serting a semicolon;

14 (2) by redesignating clause (iii) as clause (iv);
15 and

16 (3) by inserting after clause (ii) the following:

17 “(iii) other criteria consistent with an
18 equal weighting of the factors described in
19 clauses (i) and (ii), as determined by the
20 Secretary, including criteria the Secretary
21 determines are necessary to ensure that—

22 “(I) the program effectively tar-
23 gets improvements to soil health, in-
24 creases in carbon sequestration, and
25 reductions in greenhouse gas emis-
26 sions; and

1 “(II) other national, State, and
2 local priority resource concerns are ef-
3 fectively addressed; and”.

4 (b) CONTRACT RENEWAL.—Section 1240K(e) of the
5 Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3839aa–23(e)) is
6 amended to read as follows:

7 “(e) CONTRACT RENEWAL.—

8 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may provide
9 the producer an opportunity to renew an existing
10 contract in the first half of the fifth year of the con-
11 tract period if the producer—

12 “(A) demonstrates compliance with the
13 terms of the existing contract;

14 “(B) agrees to adopt and continue to inte-
15 grate new or improved conservation activities
16 across the agricultural operation, demonstrating
17 continued improvement during the additional 5-
18 year period, as determined by the Secretary;
19 and

20 “(C) agrees, by the end of the contract pe-
21 riod, to meet the stewardship threshold of at
22 least 1 additional priority resource concern on
23 the agricultural operation, if applicable.

24 “(2) RANKING AND PAYMENTS.—In deter-
25 mining whether to renew an existing contract under

1 paragraph (1), and in calculating payments for such
2 existing contract, the Secretary shall consider the
3 full conservation benefits across the entire agricul-
4 tural operation on eligible land that is subject to
5 such existing contract, including—

6 “(A) the number of priority resource con-
7 cerns for which the producer is expected to
8 meet or exceed the stewardship threshold by the
9 end of the contract period of the existing con-
10 tract; and

11 “(B) the active management and mainte-
12 nance of ongoing conservation activities, includ-
13 ing—

14 “(i) the conservation activities adopt-
15 ed during the contract period of the exist-
16 ing contract; and

17 “(ii) the new or improved conservation
18 activities to be adopted if such existing
19 contract is renewed.

20 “(3) PERENNIAL PRODUCTION SYSTEMS.—The
21 Secretary may automatically renew an existing con-
22 tract under paragraph (1) if—

23 “(A) the conditions under paragraph (1)
24 are met; and

1 “(B) the producer installed or improved a
2 perennial production system, as such term is
3 defined in section 1240L(d)(1), during the con-
4 tract period of the existing contract.”.

5 **SEC. 4. DUTIES OF THE SECRETARY.**

6 (a) CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PAYMENTS.—Sec-
7 tion 1240L(c)(4) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16
8 U.S.C. 3839aa–24(c)(4)) is amended—

9 (1) in subparagraph (A), by striking “and” at
10 the end;

11 (2) in subparagraph (B), by striking the period
12 at the end and inserting “; and”; and

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

14 “(C) adjust planned annual payments to
15 account for inflation associated with planning,
16 design, materials, installation, labor, manage-
17 ment, maintenance, or training incurred by the
18 producer over the life of the contract.”.

19 (b) SUPPLEMENTAL PAYMENTS FOR RESOURCE-
20 CONSERVING CROP ROTATIONS, PERENNIAL PRODUC-
21 TION SYSTEMS, AND ADVANCED GRAZING MANAGE-
22 MENT.—Section 1240L(d) of the Food Security Act of
23 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3839aa–24(d)) is amended—

1 (1) in the subsection heading, by inserting “,
2 PERENNIAL PRODUCTION SYSTEMS” after “RE-
3 SOURCE-CONSERVING CROP ROTATIONS”;

4 (2) in paragraph (1), by adding at the end the
5 following:

6 “(D) PERENNIAL PRODUCTION SYSTEM.—

7 The term ‘perennial production system’ means
8 a system of agricultural production that pro-
9 duces perennial species (including agroforestry
10 products, perennial grains and oilseeds, peren-
11 nial forages, and other perennial crops, as de-
12 termined by the Secretary), including alley
13 cropping, multifunctional riparian buffers,
14 windbreaks, shelterbelts, forest farming,
15 silvopasture, and other related practices, as de-
16 termined by the Secretary.”;

17 (3) in paragraph (2)—

18 (A) in subparagraph (A), by striking “or”
19 at the end;

20 (B) in subparagraph (B), by striking the
21 period at the end and inserting “; or”; and

22 (C) by inserting after subparagraph (B)
23 the following:

24 “(C) a perennial production system.”; and

1 (4) in paragraph (3), by striking “or advanced
 2 grazing management” and inserting “, advanced
 3 grazing management, or a perennial production sys-
 4 tem”.

5 (c) ESTABLISHMENT OF CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGA-
 6 TION BUNDLES.—Section 1240L of the Food Security Act
 7 of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3839aa–24) is amended by adding at
 8 the end the following:

9 “(m) ESTABLISHMENT OF CLIMATE CHANGE MITI-
 10 GATION BUNDLES.—

11 “(1) CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION BUNDLE
 12 DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term ‘climate
 13 change mitigation bundle’ means a grouping of con-
 14 servation activities, determined by the Secretary and
 15 based on the best available science, to achieve sub-
 16 stantial progress, when carried out together, to-
 17 ward—

18 “(A) providing a net reduction of green-
 19 house gas emissions; or

20 “(B) increasing carbon sequestration and
 21 improving soil health.

22 “(2) AVAILABILITY.—In entering into a con-
 23 tract with a producer under the program, the Sec-
 24 retary shall make available State- or region-specific
 25 climate change mitigation bundles to such a pro-

1 ducer, including climate change mitigation bundles
2 for cropland, pastureland, rangeland, and forest
3 land.

4 “(3) FLEXIBILITY.—The Secretary shall, to the
5 maximum extent practicable, design climate change
6 mitigation bundles that allow a producer to select
7 conservation activities that meet the requirements of
8 paragraph (1)(A) in order to tailor a climate change
9 mitigation bundle to the site-specific needs of such
10 a producer.

11 “(4) MINIMUM BUNDLES OFFERED.—The Sec-
12 retary shall make available at least 1 climate change
13 mitigation bundle for each of the following:

14 “(A) Perennial production systems, as de-
15 fined in subsection (d)(1).

16 “(B) Soil health management systems, as
17 defined in such subsection.

18 “(C) Advanced grazing management, as
19 defined in such subsection.

20 “(D) Specialty crops.

21 “(5) APPLICABILITY TO ORGANIC PRODUC-
22 TION.—Climate change mitigation bundles made
23 available under paragraph (2) shall be equally acces-
24 sible to organic and conventional producers, or sepa-

1 rate additional bundles designed for organic pro-
2 ducers shall be offered.

3 “(6) PROMOTION.—Each year, to the greatest
4 extent practicable, the Secretary shall conduct tar-
5 geted outreach and promotion regarding the avail-
6 ability of, and any changes to, climate change miti-
7 gation bundles to eligible producers.”.

8 (d) REPORT.—

9 (1) GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after
10 the date on which the Secretary of Agriculture
11 makes available to producers the climate change
12 mitigation bundles under section 1240L(m) of the
13 Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3839aa–24)
14 (as added by subsection (c)), the Secretary shall
15 submit to the Committee on Agriculture of the
16 House of Representatives and the Committee on Ag-
17 riculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate a
18 report on the activities carried out under such sec-
19 tion.

20 (2) CONTENTS.—The Secretary shall include in
21 the report under paragraph (1)—

22 (A) a summary of feedback from producers
23 that have adopted climate change mitigation
24 bundles pursuant to section 1240L(m), regard-
25 ing—

- 1 (i) barriers to adoption of such bun-
- 2 dles;
- 3 (ii) the makeup of such bundles;
- 4 (iii) payment rates for such bundles;
- 5 (iv) technical assistance relating to
- 6 such bundles; and
- 7 (v) other relevant information, as de-
- 8 termined by the Secretary;
- 9 (B) data on such producers disaggregated
- 10 by gender, race, age, and congressional district;
- 11 (C) an assessment of barriers, as identified
- 12 by the Secretary, to the adoption of climate
- 13 change mitigation bundles by producers;
- 14 (D) recommendations on steps to increase
- 15 the adoption of climate change mitigation bun-
- 16 dles by producers, including recommendations
- 17 for any statutory changes necessary to imple-
- 18 ment such steps;
- 19 (E) average per acre estimates of green-
- 20 house gases mitigated and carbon sequestered
- 21 for each climate change mitigation bundle of-
- 22 fered; and
- 23 (F) a summary of the outreach and pro-
- 24 motional activities conducted by the Secretary

1 to promote the availability of climate change
2 mitigation bundles.

3 (3) CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION BUNDLE DE-
4 FINED.—In this subsection, the term “climate
5 change mitigation bundle” has the meaning given
6 such term in section 1240L(m)(1) of the Food Secu-
7 rity Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3839aa–24) (as added
8 by subsection (c)).

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