

119TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 4865

To require the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct research relating to measurement, monitoring, reporting, and verification of soil carbon sequestration, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AUGUST 1, 2025

Mr. SORENSEN (for himself and Mr. LAWLER) introduced the following bill;  
which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture

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## A BILL

To require the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct research relating to measurement, monitoring, reporting, and verification of soil carbon sequestration, 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 “Advancing Research  
5 on Agricultural Soil Health Act of 2025”.

6 **SEC. 2. STANDARD SOIL CARBON MEASUREMENT METHOD-**  
7 **LOGY.**

8 (a) METHODOLOGY.—

1           (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 270 days  
2           after the date of enactment of this Act, the Sec-  
3           retary of Agriculture (in this Act referred to as the  
4           “Secretary”) shall develop a standardized method-  
5           ology to directly measure soil carbon for research  
6           and conservation purposes.

7           (2) REVIEW.—In developing the methodology  
8           under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall conduct a  
9           review of widely used existing methodologies for di-  
10          rect soil carbon measurement.

11          (3) CONSULTATION.—In developing the meth-  
12          odology under paragraph (1) and conducting the re-  
13          view under paragraph (2), the Secretary shall con-  
14          sult with—

15                (A) agricultural producers, including so-  
16                cially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers (as  
17                defined in section 355(e) of the Consolidated  
18                Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C.  
19                2003(e)));

20                (B) soil carbon experts;

21                (C) nonprofit organizations;

22                (D) academic researchers; and

23                (E) other stakeholders who reflect the  
24                operational, geographic, and socioeconomic di-  
25                versity of United States agricultural operations.

1           (4) REQUIREMENTS.—The methodology devel-  
2       oped under paragraph (1) shall, to the maximum ex-  
3       tent practicable—

4           (A) be usable at any location at which soil  
5       carbon can be directly measured;

6           (B) require measurement to a standard  
7       soil depth appropriate for the sample site, de-  
8       termined using the best available science;

9           (C) measure the soil organic carbon con-  
10      centration and any other soil health variables,  
11      as determined by the Secretary in consultation  
12      with stakeholders described in paragraph (3), to  
13      produce a standard set of reporting metrics;

14          (D) produce data that is interoperable with  
15      other data collected by the Department of Agri-  
16      culture;

17          (E) account for calibration differences in  
18      soil analysis between testing facilities;

19          (F) account for differences in uncertainty  
20      between different measurement tools; and

21          (G) be usable for voluntary reporting of  
22      soil carbon data under subsection (b).

23      (b) VOLUNTARY SOIL CARBON REPORTING.—

24          (1) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—

1 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, acting  
2 through the Chief of the Natural Resources  
3 Conservation Service, shall provide to producers  
4 described in paragraph (2) technical assistance,  
5 including guidance, for voluntarily measuring,  
6 monitoring, and reporting to the Secretary soil  
7 carbon data using the methodology developed  
8 under subsection (a).

9 (B) GUIDANCE.—Guidance provided under  
10 subparagraph (A) shall be, at a minimum—

11 (i) available in multiple languages;

12 and

13 (ii) available to producers described in  
14 paragraph (2) in both digital and analog  
15 formats.

16 (2) APPLICABILITY.—The guidance developed  
17 under paragraph (1) shall be applicable to—

18 (A) producers that are recipients of grants  
19 under programs described in paragraph (3) to  
20 voluntarily measure, monitor, and report to the  
21 Secretary soil carbon outcomes under those pro-  
22 grams; and

23 (B) any other producer that elects to vol-  
24 untarily report to the Secretary direct measure-  
25 ments of soil carbon.

1           (3) PROGRAMS DESCRIBED.—The programs re-  
2       ferred to in paragraph (2)(A) include—

3           (A) conservation innovation grants under  
4       section 1240H of the Food Security Act of  
5       1985 (16 U.S.C. 3839aa–8);

6           (B) the sustainable agriculture research  
7       and education program under subtitle B of title  
8       XVI of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation,  
9       and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 5801 et seq.);

10          (C) the organic agriculture research and  
11       extension initiative established under section  
12       1672B of that Act (7 U.S.C. 5925b);

13          (D) grants under the Agriculture and Food  
14       Research Initiative under section 2(b) of the  
15       Competitive, Special, and Facilities Research  
16       Grant Act (7 U.S.C. 3157(b)); and

17          (E) such other programs as the Secretary  
18       determines to be appropriate.

19       (c) UPDATES.—

20           (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall update  
21       the methodology developed under subsection (a)(1)  
22       and the guidance issued under subsection (b)(1)(B)  
23       as needed to reflect the best-available science.

24           (2) INTEROPERABILITY.—In making any up-  
25       dates under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall en-

1       sure that information collected with the updated  
 2       methodology remains interoperable with previously  
 3       collected measurements.

4       (d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is  
 5       authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section  
 6       \$2,000,000 for each fiscal year.

7       **SEC. 3. DEVELOPMENT OF NEW MEASUREMENT TOOLS**  
 8               **UNDER AFRI.**

9       Subsection (b)(2)(D) of the Competitive, Special, and  
 10      Facilities Research Grant Act (7 U.S.C. 3157(b)(2)(D))  
 11      is amended—

12               (1) in clause (vii), by striking “and” at the end;

13               (2) in clause (viii), by striking the period at the  
 14      end and inserting “; and”; and

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

16                       “(ix) measuring, monitoring, report-  
 17                       ing, and verifying soil carbon sequestration  
 18                       and emissions.”.

19      **SEC. 4. SOIL HEALTH AND CARBON DEMONSTRATION**  
 20               **TRIALS.**

21      (a)     ON-FARM     CONSERVATION     INNOVATION  
 22      TRIALS.—Section 1240H(c) of the Food Security Act of  
 23      1985 (16 U.S.C. 3839aa–8(c)) is amended—

24               (1) in paragraph (1)(B)(i), by striking sub-  
 25      clause (III) and inserting the following:

1 “(III) soil health management  
2 systems, including—

3 “(aa) systems to maintain or  
4 increase soil carbon levels; and

5 “(bb) cost-effective tools to  
6 measure, monitor, report, and  
7 verify greenhouse gas emissions  
8 and carbon sequestration;”; and

9 (2) in paragraph (3)(D), by striking “3 years”  
10 each place it appears and inserting “5 years”.

11 (b) SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE RESEARCH AND  
12 EDUCATION PROGRAM.—Section 1621(e) of the Food, Ag-  
13 riculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C.  
14 5811(e)) is amended—

15 (1) by striking “The Secretary” and inserting  
16 the following:

17 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary”; and

18 (2) by adding at the end the following:

19 “(2) SOIL CARBON SEQUESTRATION DEM-  
20 ONSTRATION PROJECTS.—In carrying out this sec-  
21 tion, the Secretary shall conduct on-farm demonstra-  
22 tion projects for soil carbon sequestration.”.

1 **SEC. 5. SOIL CARBON INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS NET-**  
 2 **WORK.**

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. SOIL CARBON INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS NET-**  
 7 **WORK.**

8 “(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

9 “(1) CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES.—The term  
 10 ‘conservation activities’ has the meaning given the  
 11 term in section 1240I.

12 “(2) ELIGIBLE LAND.—The term ‘eligible land’  
 13 means public and private cropland, rangeland,  
 14 pastureland, and wetlands in the United States.

15 “(3) PROGRAM.—The term ‘program’ means  
 16 the program established under subsection (b)(1).

17 “(4) REGIONAL RESOURCE AREA.—The term  
 18 ‘regional resource area’ means a contiguous area of  
 19 eligible land that has similar resource characteris-  
 20 tics.

21 “(5) RESOURCE CHARACTERISTICS.—The term  
 22 ‘resource characteristics’ means—

23 “(A) geographic, long-term weather pat-  
 24 tern, natural resource, and soil type character-  
 25 istics; and

1           “(B) any other characteristics that the  
2           Secretary determines to be appropriate for the  
3           purpose of carrying out the program.

4           “(6) SECRETARY.—The term ‘Secretary’ means  
5           the Secretary, acting jointly through the Chief of the  
6           Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Ad-  
7           ministrator of the Agricultural Research Service.

8           “(b) ESTABLISHMENT.—

9           “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall estab-  
10          lish a program to inventory, monitor, and analyze  
11          soil carbon changes on eligible land in the United  
12          States.

13          “(2) PURPOSES.—The purposes of the program  
14          are—

15               “(A) to analyze soil properties, including  
16               soil organic carbon, across space, time, and  
17               depth;

18               “(B) to analyze the impacts of land man-  
19               agement strategies, including conservation ac-  
20               tivities, on soil carbon sequestration; and

21               “(C) to inform any tools of the Secretary  
22               designed to predict the impacts of different land  
23               management practices, including implementing  
24               conservation activities, on soil carbon and asso-  
25               ciated environmental outcomes, such as resil-

1           ience to extreme weather, reduced farm inputs,  
2           or other environment impacts, as determined by  
3           the Secretary, across the United States.

4           “(3) CONSULTATION.—In carrying out the pro-  
5           gram, the Secretary shall consult with the Director  
6           of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture,  
7           the Chief of the Forest Service, the Chief Data Offi-  
8           cer, the Administrator of the Environmental Protec-  
9           tion Agency, the Secretary of Energy, and the head  
10          of any other department or agency that the Sec-  
11          retary determines to be appropriate.

12          “(c) SAMPLING.—

13               “(1) SAMPLE SITES.—The Secretary shall select  
14               sample sites under the program by taking into con-  
15               sideration—

16                       “(A) the accessibility of sites;

17                       “(B) the ease of collecting repeated meas-  
18                       urements over time; and

19                       “(C) such other factors as the Secretary  
20                       determines to be appropriate.

21               “(2) PREFERENCE.—In selecting sample sites  
22               under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall give pref-  
23               erence to sites that have been used for soil testing  
24               previously.

1           “(3) NUMBER OF SAMPLE SITES.—The Sec-  
2       retary shall select sufficient sample sites under para-  
3       graph (1) to analyze changes in soil carbon across  
4       regional resource areas, as determined by the Sec-  
5       retary, over time, taking into account the geo-  
6       graphical size and heterogeneity of each regional re-  
7       source area.

8       “(d) SOIL CARBON INVENTORY.—

9           “(1) IN GENERAL.—Every 5 years, the Sec-  
10      retary shall prepare an inventory of soil carbon  
11      stocks on eligible land, under which the Secretary  
12      shall collect measurements at each sample site se-  
13      lected under subsection (c).

14          “(2) METHODOLOGY.—The Secretary shall en-  
15      sure that the methodology developed under section  
16      3(a) of the Advancing Research on Agricultural Soil  
17      Health Act of 2025 is used for purposes of con-  
18      ducting measurements at each sample site under the  
19      program.

20          “(3) MINIMUM NUMBER OF SAMPLES.—The  
21      Secretary shall measure a sufficient number of sam-  
22      ples to analyze changes in soil carbon at each sample  
23      site selected under subsection (c) for each inventory  
24      under paragraph (1).

1           “(4) CHARACTERISTICS.—In preparing the in-  
2       ventory under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall  
3       document the following characteristics for each sam-  
4       ple site selected under subsection (c):

5           “(A) Soil type and texture.

6           “(B) Land use history, including conserva-  
7       tion activities.

8           “(C) Environmental characteristics, such  
9       as temperature and precipitation.

10          “(D) Other characteristics, as determined  
11       by the Secretary.

12       “(e) INDIVIDUAL PROTECTIONS.—

13          “(1) PROTECTION OF PRIVATE PROPERTY  
14       RIGHTS.—Before selecting a sample site under sub-  
15       section (c) or conducting any measurement under  
16       subsection (d)(1), the Secretary shall obtain author-  
17       ization from the owner of the eligible land.

18          “(2) VOLUNTARINESS REQUIREMENT.—The  
19       Secretary may not require authorization under para-  
20       graph (1) or any other participation in any activity  
21       under this section as a condition on receipt of any  
22       benefit under a program administered by the Sec-  
23       retary.

24          “(3) DATA PRIVACY PROTECTION.—In carrying  
25       out the program, the Secretary shall ensure that

1 data is collected and analyzed while respecting rel-  
2 evant privacy safeguards and does not include any  
3 identifiable, proprietary, or personal information of  
4 individual land owners or operators.

5 “(f) SOIL CHARACTERISTICS INVENTORY.—

6 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Survey and analysis infor-  
7 mation collected under the program shall be main-  
8 tained in a soil characteristics inventory operated by  
9 the Secretary.

10 “(2) PARTNERSHIPS.—The inventory described  
11 in paragraph (1) may be operated in partnership  
12 with 1 or more of the following entities, if the entity  
13 complies with paragraph (4):

14 “(A) An 1862 Institution (as defined in  
15 section 2 of the Agricultural Research, Exten-  
16 sion, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7  
17 U.S.C. 7601)).

18 “(B) An 1890 Institution (as defined in  
19 that section).

20 “(C) A 1994 Institution (as defined in sec-  
21 tion 532 of the Equity in Educational Land-  
22 Grant Status Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 301 note;  
23 Public Law 103–382)).

24 “(D) Institutions of higher education with  
25 expertise in predictive modeling, large-scale

1 data collection, soil carbon research, or agricul-  
2 tural conservation management practices.

3 “(E) Federal research centers.

4 “(3) APPLICATIONS.—An entity described in  
5 any of subparagraphs (A) through (E) of paragraph  
6 (2) seeking to enter into a partnership to manage  
7 the inventory described in paragraph (1) shall sub-  
8 mit to the Secretary an application at such time, in  
9 such manner, and containing such information as  
10 the Secretary may require.

11 “(4) REQUIREMENTS.—The inventory described  
12 in paragraph (1) shall—

13 “(A) use the industry standard protocols  
14 to protect identifiable, proprietary, or personal  
15 information of individual land owners or opera-  
16 tors;

17 “(B) ensure that individual producer infor-  
18 mation is not sold through the inventory; and

19 “(C) comply with all applicable privacy re-  
20 quirements, including—

21 “(i) section 1770 of the Food Security  
22 Act of 1985 (7 U.S.C. 2276);

23 “(ii) section 1619 of the Food, Con-  
24 servation, and Energy Act of 2008 (7  
25 U.S.C. 8791);

1 “(iii) section 502(c) of the Federal  
2 Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1502(c));  
3 and

4 “(iv) section 552 of title 5, United  
5 States Code.

6 “(5) LIMITED RELEASE OF INFORMATION.—

7 The Secretary may release or disclose information  
8 maintained in the inventory described in paragraph  
9 (1) pursuant to section 1619(b)(3)(A)(i) of the  
10 Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (7  
11 U.S.C. 8791(b)(3)(A)(i)) to researchers for the pur-  
12 poses of statistically analyzing the information.

13 “(g) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—On completion of each  
14 inventory under subsection (d)(1), the Secretary shall  
15 make publicly available—

16 “(1) the statistical or aggregated form of data  
17 collected from measurements under that subsection;

18 “(2) information regarding the methodology  
19 used to collect that data; and

20 “(3) any analysis made of the measurements  
21 described in paragraph (1).

22 “(h) REPORTS.—On completion of each inventory  
23 under subsection (d)(1), the Secretary shall prepare, pub-  
24 lish, and make available to the public a report that—

1           “(1) contains a description of soil carbon  
2 trends, including by incorporating measurements  
3 conducted under subsection (d) during the 5 years  
4 covered by the report;

5           “(2) contains an analysis of the impact of dif-  
6 ferent land management practices, including imple-  
7 menting 1 or more conservation activities, on soil  
8 carbon levels;

9           “(3) contains an analysis of the effect of short-  
10 and long-term weather variability on the observed  
11 trends;

12           “(4) contains an analysis of how land manage-  
13 ment practices, including conservation activities,  
14 that influence soil carbon sequestration may affect  
15 the rate of increase in atmospheric carbon and other  
16 gases in the agricultural sector, including methane  
17 and nitrous oxide; and

18           “(5) establishes a benchmark for the baseline  
19 soil carbon absent additional conservation activities.

20           “(i) STRATEGIC PLAN.—Not later than 1 year after  
21 the date of enactment of the Advancing Research on Agri-  
22 cultural Soil Health Act of 2025, the Secretary shall pre-  
23 pare and submit to Congress a strategic plan to implement  
24 and carry out this section, which shall describe in detail—

1 “(1) the organization and procedures necessary  
2 to implement and carry out this section; and

3 “(2) the plan for measurements in each re-  
4 gional resource area under subsection (d)(1) for the  
5 first 5-year interval, including the schedule and the  
6 number of samples collected from each sample site  
7 selected under subsection (c).

8 “(j) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There  
9 is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section  
10 \$17,500,000 for each fiscal year.”.

11 **SEC. 6. PREDICTIVE MODELS.**

12 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall develop and  
13 maintain a modeling tool (or combination of tools) that  
14 shall predict the impacts of different land management  
15 practices, including implementing conservation activities,  
16 on atmospheric carbon, methane, and nitrous oxide and  
17 soil carbon sequestration across the United States.

18 (b) CONSULTATION.—In developing the modeling tool  
19 or tools under subsection (a), the Secretary shall consult  
20 with—

21 (1) the Secretary of Energy;

22 (2) the Administrator of the Environmental  
23 Protection Agency;

24 (3) agricultural producers, including socially  
25 disadvantaged farmers and ranchers (as defined in

1 section 355(e) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural  
2 Development Act (7 U.S.C. 2003(e));

3 (4) soil carbon experts;

4 (5) nonprofit organizations;

5 (6) academic researchers;

6 (7) private companies with expertise in soil car-  
7 bon sequestration or in atmospheric carbon, meth-  
8 ane, and nitrous oxide monitoring for agricultural  
9 operations; and

10 (8) other stakeholders, including the heads of  
11 other appropriate Federal agencies or non-Federal  
12 entities, who reflect the operational, geographic, and  
13 socioeconomic diversity of United States agricultural  
14 operations.

15 (c) REQUIREMENTS.—The modeling tool or tools de-  
16 scribed in subsection (a) shall—

17 (1) be anchored in direct measurements of land,  
18 including soil sampling, such as under the program  
19 established under section 1240N of the Food Secu-  
20 rity Act of 1985 and the programs described in sec-  
21 tion 3(b)(3);

22 (2) account for differences that could impact  
23 land management outcomes, including—

24 (A) soil type;

25 (B) type of land use;

1 (C) type of crop;

2 (D) geography and local long-term weather  
3 patterns;

4 (E) geographic size of the land-use oper-  
5 ation;

6 (F) ongoing or existing conservation activi-  
7 ties; and

8 (G) such other items as the Secretary de-  
9 termines to be appropriate;

10 (3) allow a user of the tool to estimate the  
11 changes in atmospheric carbon, methane, and ni-  
12 trous oxide or soil carbon sequestration, and the un-  
13 certainty of those estimated changes, that occur as  
14 a result of implementing 1 or more conservation ac-  
15 tivities; and

16 (4) be user-friendly and accessible—

17 (A) to producers and researchers; and

18 (B) in multiple languages.

19 (d) REVIEWS AND UPDATES.—

20 (1) REVIEWS.—Not less frequently than annu-  
21 ally, the modeling tool or tools described in sub-  
22 section (a) shall be reviewed to determine if an up-  
23 date is required to reflect the best available data and  
24 science.

1           (2) UPDATES.—If it is determined that an up-  
2       date is required under paragraph (1), the update  
3       shall be made not later than 1 year after the date  
4       of that determination.

5       (e) PARTNERS.—

6           (1) IN GENERAL.—In analyzing data, con-  
7       ducting research, and developing and maintaining  
8       the modeling tool or tools under subsection (a), the  
9       Secretary may partner with—

10           (A) an Institution described in paragraph  
11           (2);

12           (B) an institution of higher education with  
13           expertise in predictive modeling, large-scale  
14           data collection, soil carbon research, or agricul-  
15           tural conservation management; or

16           (C) a Federal research center.

17       (2) INSTITUTIONS DESCRIBED.—An Institution  
18       referred to in paragraph (1)(A) is any of the fol-  
19       lowing:

20           (A) An 1862 Institution (as defined in sec-  
21           tion 2 of the Agricultural Research, Extension,  
22           and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C.  
23           7601)).

24           (B) An 1890 Institution (as defined in  
25           that section).

1 (C) A 1994 Institution (as defined in sec-  
2 tion 532 of the Equity in Educational Land-  
3 Grant Status Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 301 note;  
4 Public Law 103–382)).

5 (f) REPORTING.—Not later than 2 years after the  
6 date of enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter,  
7 the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report that—

8 (1) describes the progress of the Secretary in  
9 developing the modeling tool or tools under sub-  
10 section (a);

11 (2) contains an assessment of the accuracy with  
12 which a user will be able to use the tool to determine  
13 the permanence and additionality of atmospheric  
14 carbon, methane, and nitrous oxide reduced or car-  
15 bon sequestered;

16 (3) describes the models and survey and anal-  
17 ysis information that the Secretary has developed or  
18 collected, or intends to develop or collect, as applica-  
19 ble, for purposes of developing or maintaining the  
20 tool;

21 (4) describes—

22 (A) whether it was determined that an up-  
23 date was required under subsection (d)(1); and

24 (B) if an update was required, the specifics  
25 of the update; and

1           (5) includes any other information that, as de-  
2       termined by the Secretary, is relevant to—

3                   (A) the efficacy of the tool;

4                   (B) the intended applications of the tool;

5                   or

6                   (C) the determination of—

7                           (i) changes in atmospheric carbon,  
8                           methane, and nitrous oxide or soil carbon  
9                           sequestration associated with producer  
10                          land-use practices; or

11                               (ii)(I) estimates of the impacts of land  
12                               use practices, including conservation activi-  
13                               ties, on atmospheric carbon, methane, and  
14                               nitrous oxide and soil carbon sequestration;  
15                               and

16                               (II) the measurement error of the  
17                          tool.

18       (g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is  
19       authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section  
20       \$500,000 for each fiscal year.

○