

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8138

To direct the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a disaster response training program to train certain Farm Service Agency employees to provide outreach and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers affected by a natural disaster, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 26, 2024

Mr. SOTO (for himself and Mr. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a disaster response training program to train certain Farm Service Agency employees to provide outreach and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers affected by a natural disaster, 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,*

1 **SECTION 1. DISASTER RESPONSE TRAINING PROGRAM FOR**
2 **CERTAIN FARM SERVICE AGENCY EMPLOY-**
3 **EES.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subtitle E of title I of the Agricul-
5 tural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9081 et seq.) is amended by
6 adding at the end the following:

7 **“SEC. 1502. DISASTER RESPONSE TRAINING PROGRAM FOR**
8 **CERTAIN FARM SERVICE AGENCY EMPLOY-**
9 **EES.**

10 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Agriculture,
11 acting through the Administrator of the Farm Service
12 Agency, shall—

13 “(1) not later than 180 days after the date of
14 the enactment of this section, establish a disaster re-
15 sponse training program—

16 “(A) to train covered employees—

17 “(i) to provide outreach and technical
18 assistance to farmers and ranchers af-
19 fected by a natural disaster, including by
20 providing information on available disaster
21 relief assistance; and

22 “(ii) with respect to the appropriate
23 protocols for assisting such farmers and
24 ranchers; and

25 “(B) that, with respect to a natural dis-
26 aster, provides on-demand trainings on—

1 “(i) the conditions and effects of each
2 such natural disaster;

3 “(ii) the needs of farmers and ranch-
4 ers in responding to each such natural dis-
5 aster; and

6 “(iii) the disaster relief assistance
7 that may be available with respect to ad-
8 dressing each such natural disaster; and

9 “(2) not later than 1 year after the date of the
10 enactment of this Act and at least annually there-
11 after—

12 “(A) provide the training required by sub-
13 paragraph (A) of paragraph (1) to each covered
14 employee; and

15 “(B) make the on-demand trainings re-
16 quired by subparagraph (B) of paragraph (1)
17 available to covered employees.

18 “(b) **FORMAT OF TRAINING.**—Training sessions re-
19 quired by subsection (a)(1)(A) may be conducted in-per-
20 son or through teleconference or other virtual means.

21 “(c) **SURVEY REQUIRED.**—The Secretary shall estab-
22 lish and offer a completion survey to each covered em-
23 ployee who completes a training session or on-demand
24 training provided under the training program established

1 under subsection (a)(1) to solicit feedback with respect to
2 such session or on-demand training.

3 “(d) EXIT SURVEY FOR FARMERS AND RANCHERS.—

4 The Secretary shall offer an exit survey to each farmer
5 and rancher provided outreach and technical assistance
6 pursuant to subsection (a)(1)(A)(i) that allows the farmer
7 or rancher to—

8 “(1) evaluate the appropriateness and effective-
9 ness of such outreach and technical assistance; and

10 “(2) summarize the outcome of such farmer or
11 rancher with respect to receiving disaster relief as-
12 sistance.

13 “(e) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than 1 year
14 after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually
15 thereafter, the Secretary of Agriculture shall submit to
16 Congress a report describing—

17 “(1) the training program established under
18 subsection (a)(1);

19 “(2) with respect to the year preceding the re-
20 port—

21 “(A) the number of trainings carried out
22 pursuant to each of subparagraphs (A) and (B)
23 of subsection (a)(2);

24 “(B) the number of covered employees who
25 received each such training; and

1 “(C) the level of the General Schedule and
2 the position of each such employee;

3 “(3) the results of the completion surveys of-
4 ferred under subsection (c); and

5 “(4) the results of the exit surveys offered
6 under subsection (d).

7 “(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

8 “(1) COVERED EMPLOYEE.—The term ‘covered
9 employee’ means any employee of the Farm Service
10 Agency who could be deployed to carry out disaster
11 relief assistance with respect to farmers and ranch-
12 ers.

13 “(2) DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE.—The term
14 ‘disaster relief assistance’ means assistance under
15 any program—

16 “(A) to address natural disasters; and

17 “(B) that is administered by the Adminis-
18 trator of the Farm Service Agency.

19 “(3) NATURAL DISASTER.—The term ‘natural
20 disaster’ includes—

21 “(A) any hurricane, tornado, storm, high
22 water, wind driven water, tidal wave, tsunami,
23 earthquake, volcanic eruption, landslide,
24 mudslide, snowstorm, or drought; and

1 “(B) such other natural disaster as may be
2 determined appropriate by the Administrator.”.

3 (b) TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents
4 for the Agricultural Act of 2014 is amended by inserting
5 after the item relating to section 1501 the following:

“1502. Disaster response training program for certain Farm Service Agency employees.”.

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