

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8277

To direct the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct a study on the effects of solar panel installations on covered farmland, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 7, 2024

Mrs. MILLER of Illinois introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct a study on the effects of solar panel installations on covered farmland, 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 “Preserving America’s
5 Farmland Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. STUDY ON EFFECTS OF SOLAR PANEL INSTALLA-**
7 **TIONS ON COVERED FARMLAND.**

8 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in consultation
9 with the Secretary of Energy, shall conduct a study on

1 the effects of solar panel installations on the conversion
2 of covered farmland out of agricultural production.

3 (b) ELEMENTS.—The study required under sub-
4 section (a) shall include the following:

5 (1) An analysis of the economic effects of solar
6 panel installations on—

7 (A) converted and adjacent covered farm-
8 land, including on—

9 (i) crop yields;

10 (ii) land values, including adjacent
11 properties; and

12 (iii) land access and tenure;

13 (B) local economies; and

14 (C) food security.

15 (2) The impacts of solar panel installation, op-
16 eration, and decommissioning on—

17 (A) covered farmland;

18 (B) soil health;

19 (C) water resources;

20 (D) wildlife;

21 (E) water drainage; and

22 (F) vegetation.

23 (3) An evaluation of existing Federal, State, or
24 local tax incentives that encourage solar panel instal-
25 lations on covered farmland.

1 (4) An evaluation of existing Federal, State, or
2 local incentives to install solar panel installations on
3 previously disturbed non-agricultural lands, such as
4 the built environment, contaminated land, or land-
5 fills.

6 (5) An evaluation of the effectiveness of pro-
7 grams administered by the Secretary and the Sec-
8 retary of Energy that—

9 (A) incentivize the use of solar energy to
10 shift development towards the non-agricultural
11 lands described in paragraph (4); and

12 (B) discourage solar panel installations
13 that would transition covered farmland out of
14 agricultural production.

15 (6) An estimate of the loss of agricultural pro-
16 duction on covered farmland due to solar panel in-
17 stallations.

18 (c) CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT STAKE-
19 HOLDERS.—In carrying out the study required under sub-
20 section (a), the Secretary shall consult with relevant farm-
21 ers, ranchers, landowners, agricultural organizations,
22 State departments of agriculture, conservation organiza-
23 tions, and land-grant colleges and universities.

24 (d) REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date
25 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall—

1 (1) submit to the Committee on Agriculture of
2 the House of Representatives and the Committee on
3 Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate a
4 written report on the findings of the study; and

5 (2) make such report publicly available.

6 (e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

7 (1) COVERED FARMLAND.—The term “covered
8 farmland” has the meaning given the term “farm-
9 land” in section 1540(c)(1) of the Farmland Protec-
10 tion Policy Act (7 U.S.C. 4201(c)(1)).

11 (2) LAND GRANT COLLEGES AND UNIVER-
12 SITIES.—The term “land grand colleges and univer-
13 sities” has the meaning give the term in section
14 1404 of the National Agricultural Research, Exten-
15 sion, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C.
16 3103)).

17 (3) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
18 the Secretary of Agriculture.

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