

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8613

To direct the Secretary of Agriculture and the Director of the National Science Foundation to carry out cross-cutting and collaborative research and development activities focused on the joint advancement of Department of Agriculture and National Science Foundation mission requirements and priorities, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 4, 2024

Mr. LUCAS (for himself and Ms. SALINAS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, and in addition to the Committee on Agriculture, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Agriculture and the Director of the National Science Foundation to carry out cross-cutting and collaborative research and development activities focused on the joint advancement of Department of Agriculture and National Science Foundation mission requirements and priorities, 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. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “NSF and USDA Inter-
3 agency Research Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND NATIONAL**
5 **SCIENCE FOUNDATION RESEARCH AND DE-**
6 **VELOPMENT COORDINATION.**

7 (a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of Agriculture (in
8 this section referred to as the “Secretary”) and the Direc-
9 tor of the National Science Foundation (in this section
10 referred to as the “Director”) shall carry out cross-cutting
11 and collaborative research and development activities fo-
12 cused on the joint advancement of Department of Agri-
13 culture and National Science Foundation mission require-
14 ments and priorities.

15 (b) **MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING.**—The Sec-
16 retary and the Director shall coordinate the activities
17 under subsection (a) through the establishment of memo-
18 randa of understanding or other appropriate interagency
19 agreements. Such memoranda or agreements, as the case
20 may be, shall require the use of a competitive, merit review
21 process, as appropriate. Such activities may include com-
22 ponents proposed by Federal agencies, institutions of
23 higher education, non-profit institutions, and other appro-
24 priate entities, as determined appropriate under the
25 memoranda or agreements.

1 (c) COORDINATION.—In carrying out the activities
2 under subsection (a), the Secretary and the Director
3 may—

4 (1) conduct collaborative research in a variety
5 of focus areas, such as—

6 (A) plant, animal, and microbial biology
7 relevant to agricultural challenges;

8 (B) food and nutrition security;

9 (C) rural economic revitalization;

10 (D) cyber-physical systems;

11 (E) smart and connected communities;

12 (F) advanced sensors and models of soil
13 and plant processes;

14 (G) nano-biosensing and analytical tech-
15 nologies to improve food safety, water quality,
16 biosecurity, plant and animal diseases, and soil
17 health;

18 (H) monitoring of food- or water-borne
19 pathogens, allergens, and accidental, natural, or
20 intentional bio- or chemical contaminants;

21 (I) key emerging technology areas such as
22 artificial intelligence, machine learning, automa-
23 tion, robotics, digital agriculture, and informa-
24 tion and communication technology for agricul-
25 tural uses;

1 (J) development and testing of new preci-
2 sion agriculture tools; and

3 (K) workforce needs, education, and devel-
4 opment;

5 (2) promote collaboration, open community-
6 based development, and data and information shar-
7 ing between Federal agencies, institutions of higher
8 education, community colleges, area career and tech-
9 nical education schools, nonprofit institutions, and
10 other appropriate entities by providing the necessary
11 access and secure data and information transfer ca-
12 pabilities;

13 (3) support research infrastructure, including
14 new facilities, equipment and broadband deployment,
15 as the Secretary and Director determine necessary;

16 (4) develop translational technologies for com-
17 mercial utilization;

18 (5) organize education, training, and research
19 initiatives relating to STEM education and work-
20 force development, which may include—

21 (A) activities supported by the Cooperative
22 Extension System;

23 (B) industrial partnership programs;

1 (C) workshops for educating preschool
2 through grade 12 teachers on how to increase
3 agricultural literacy;

4 (D) development of agricultural-based
5 science curricula for kindergarten through
6 grade 12 students; and

7 (E) distribution of resources for educators
8 to implement curricula, such as the workshops
9 developed under subparagraph (C);

10 (6) award grants to institutions of higher edu-
11 cation, community colleges, area career and tech-
12 nical education schools, or eligible nonprofit institu-
13 tions (or consortia thereof), to establish a Center for
14 Agricultural Research, Education, and Workforce
15 Development; and

16 (7) facilitate relationships between public and
17 private entities to carry out the activities specified in
18 paragraphs (1) through (6) upon the termination of
19 any agreement entered into under subsection (b).

20 (d) AGREEMENTS.—In carrying out the activities
21 under subsection (a), the Secretary and the Director are
22 authorized to—

23 (1) carry out reimbursable agreements between
24 the Department of Agriculture, the National Science

1 Foundation, and other entities in order to maximize
2 the effectiveness of research and development; and

3 (2) collaborate with other Federal agencies, as
4 appropriate.

5 (e) REPORT.—Not later than two years after the date
6 of the enactment of this Act, the appropriate committees
7 of Congress, a report detailing the following:

8 (1) Interagency coordination between each Fed-
9 eral agency involved in the research and development
10 activities carried out under this section.

11 (2) Potential opportunities to expand the tech-
12 nical capabilities of the Department of Agriculture
13 and the National Science Foundation.

14 (3) Collaborative research achievements.

15 (4) Areas of future mutually beneficial suc-
16 cesses.

17 (5) Continuation of coordination activities be-
18 tween the Department of Agriculture and the Na-
19 tional Science Foundation.

20 (f) RESEARCH SECURITY.—The activities authorized
21 under this section shall be applied in a manner consistent
22 with subtitle D of title VI of the Research and Develop-
23 ment, Competition, and Innovation Act (enacted as divi-
24 sion B of the CHIPS Act of 2022 (Public Law 117–167;
25 42 U.S.C. 19231 et seq.)).

1 (g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

2 (1) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CON-
3 GRESS.—The term “appropriate committees of Con-
4 gress” means each of the following committees:

5 (A) The Committee on Agriculture of the
6 House of Representatives.

7 (B) The Committee on Science, Space, and
8 Technology of the House of Representatives.

9 (C) The Committee on Commerce, Science,
10 and Transportation of the Senate.

11 (D) The Committee on Agriculture, Nutri-
12 tion, and Forestry of the Senate.

13 (2) AREA CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION
14 SCHOOL.—The term “area career and technical edu-
15 cation school” has the meaning given such term in
16 section 3 of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Tech-
17 nical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2302).

18 (3) COMMUNITY COLLEGE.—The term “commu-
19 nity college” has the meaning given such term in
20 section 3167B of the Energy Science Education En-
21 hancement Act (42 U.S.C. 7381c-3).

22 (4) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The
23 term “institution of higher education” has the

1 meaning given such term in section 101 of the High-
2 er Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001).

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