

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2589

To amend the Research Facilities Act and the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 to address deferred maintenance at agricultural research facilities, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 27, 2023

Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. KING, Ms. SMITH, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. FETTERMAN, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WELCH, and Mr. LUJÁN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

A BILL

To amend the Research Facilities Act and the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 to address deferred maintenance at agricultural research facilities, 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 “Augmenting Research
5 and Educational Sites to Ensure Agriculture Remains
6 Cutting-Edge and Helpful Act” or the “AG RESEARCH
7 Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH FACILITIES.**

2 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

3 (1) in 2019, agriculture and related indus-
4 tries—

5 (A) contributed \$1,109,000,000,000 to the
6 gross domestic product of the United States
7 (5.2 percent of the total gross domestic product
8 of the United States); and

9 (B) provided 22,200,000 jobs domestically
10 (10.9 percent of total employment in the United
11 States);

12 (2) the National Institute of Food and Agri-
13 culture provides more than \$1,700,000,000 in re-
14 search funding each year to schools of agriculture;

15 (3) a study published in 2015 found that de-
16 ferred maintenance needs at 91 schools of agri-
17 culture across the United States totaled
18 \$8,400,000,000, with a total replacement cost of
19 \$29,000,000,000;

20 (4) a study published in 2021 found that de-
21 ferred maintenance needs at schools of agriculture
22 across the United States had increased to
23 \$11,500,000,000, with a total replacement cost of
24 \$38,100,000,000; and

1 (5) infrastructure investments must be made at
2 schools of agriculture to ensure that United States
3 agricultural research remains globally competitive.

4 (b) **EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS.**—Section 3(d) of
5 the Research Facilities Act (7 U.S.C. 390a(d)) is amend-
6 ed—

7 (1) by redesignating paragraphs (1) and (2) as
8 paragraphs (2) and (3), respectively; and

9 (2) by inserting before paragraph (2) (as so re-
10 designated) the following:

11 “(1) review the proposal in consultation with
12 representatives of National Institute of Food and
13 Agriculture peer review panels;”.

14 (c) **GRANTS FOR AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH FACILI-**
15 **TIES.**—Section 4 of the Research Facilities Act (7 U.S.C.
16 390b) is amended to read as follows:

17 **“SEC. 4. GRANTS FOR AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH FACILI-**
18 **TIES.**

19 “(a) **PURPOSE.**—The purpose of this section is to as-
20 sist agricultural research facilities in efforts to alter or re-
21 pair those facilities or equipment of the facilities necessary
22 for conducting agricultural research.

23 “(b) **GRANT PROGRAM.**—

24 “(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary shall estab-
25 lish in the National Institute of Food and Agri-

1 culture a competitive grant program to provide to
2 agricultural research facilities the Federal share of
3 the cost of the construction, alteration, acquisition,
4 modernization, renovation, or remodeling of—

5 “(A) the agricultural research facilities; or

6 “(B) equipment of the agricultural re-
7 search facilities necessary for conducting agri-
8 cultural research.

9 “(2) SECRETARIAL WAIVER.—Notwithstanding
10 section 3(c)(2)(A), the Secretary may provide that
11 the Federal share described in paragraph (1) is up
12 to 100 percent of the costs described in that para-
13 graph on a case-by-case basis, as the Secretary de-
14 termines to be appropriate.

15 “(c) REQUIREMENTS.—

16 “(1) AMOUNT; TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—
17 Grants awarded under this section shall be in such
18 amounts and under such terms and conditions as
19 the Secretary determines are necessary to carry out
20 the purpose of this section.

21 “(2) EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION.—To the max-
22 imum extent practicable, grants shall be awarded
23 under this section to ensure—

24 “(A) an equitable geographic distribution
25 of funds;

1 “(B) an equitable distribution of funds to
2 diverse institutions;

3 “(C) an equitable distribution of funds to
4 institutions with diverse areas of study within
5 agricultural science; and

6 “(D) an equitable distribution of funds to
7 agricultural research facilities of various sizes.

8 “(3) LIMITATION.—Not greater than 20 per-
9 cent of amounts made available to carry out this sec-
10 tion shall be awarded to projects in any 1 State.

11 “(4) ADMINISTRATION.—In carrying out this
12 section, the Secretary shall establish procedures
13 for—

14 “(A) the submission of proposals for com-
15 petitive grants; and

16 “(B) in consultation with representatives
17 of National Institute of Food and Agriculture
18 peer review panels, the review and selection of
19 proposals submitted under subparagraph (A).”.

20 (d) FUNDING.—Section 6 of the Research Facilities
21 Act (7 U.S.C. 390d) is amended—

22 (1) by striking the section designation and
23 heading and all that follows through the end of sub-
24 section (a) and inserting the following:

1 **“SEC. 6. FUNDING AND LIMITATIONS ON USE OF FUNDS.**

2 “(a) FUNDING.—

3 “(1) MANDATORY FUNDING.—

4 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subsections
5 (b) through (d), but notwithstanding any other
6 provision of law, on October 1, 2023, and on
7 each October 1 thereafter through October 1,
8 2027, out of any funds in the Treasury not oth-
9 erwise appropriated, the Secretary of the Treas-
10 ury shall transfer to the Secretary to carry out
11 section 4 \$1,000,000,000, to remain available
12 until expended.

13 “(B) RECEIPT AND ACCEPTANCE.—The
14 Secretary shall be entitled to receive, shall ac-
15 cept, and shall use to carry out section 4 the
16 funds transferred under paragraph (1), without
17 further appropriation.

18 “(2) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—In
19 addition to amounts made available under paragraph
20 (1), subject to subsections (b) through (d), there is
21 authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary not
22 more than \$3,000,000,000 for each of fiscal years
23 2024 through 2028, to remain available until ex-
24 pended, for the study, plan, design, structure, and
25 related costs of agricultural research facilities under
26 this Act.”; and

1 (2) in subsection (b), by inserting “Federal” be-
2 fore “administration”.

3 **SEC. 3. AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH CENTERS.**

4 (a) FINDING.—Congress finds that the Agricultural
5 Research Service Capital Investment Strategy dated April
6 2012 indicates that research facilities of the Agricultural
7 Research Services have more than \$1,000,000,000 in de-
8 ferred maintenance.

9 (b) DIRECT FUNDING FOR DEFERRED MAINTENANCE AT ARS RESEARCH FACILITIES.—Title IV of the
10 Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform
11 Act of 1998 is amended by inserting before section 404
12 Act of 1998 is amended by inserting before section 404
13 (7 U.S.C. 7624) the following:

14 **“SEC. 401. DIRECT FUNDING FOR DEFERRED MAINTENANCE AT ARS RESEARCH FACILITIES.**

15 **“(a) IN GENERAL.—**Using amounts made available
16 under subsection (c), the Secretary shall provide direct
17 payments to research facilities of the Agricultural Re-
18 search Service for the purpose of addressing deferred
19 maintenance.
20 **“(b) PRIORITY.—**In providing direct payments under

21 subsection (a), the Secretary shall give priority to the most
22 critical structures in accordance with the Agricultural Re-
23 search Service Capital Investment Strategy dated April
24 2012.
25 2012.

1 “(c) FUNDING.—

2 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other
3 provision of law, on October 1, 2023, and on each
4 October 1 thereafter through October 1, 2027, out
5 of any funds in the Treasury not otherwise appro-
6 priated, the Secretary of the Treasury shall transfer
7 to the Secretary to carry out this section
8 \$200,000,000, to remain available until expended.

9 “(2) RECEIPT AND ACCEPTANCE.—The Sec-
10 retary shall be entitled to receive, shall accept, and
11 shall use to carry out this section the funds trans-
12 ferred under paragraph (1), without further appro-
13 priation.”.

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