

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3646

To amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to carry out a precision conservation pilot program, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AUGUST 4, 2017

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture

A BILL

To amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to carry out a precision conservation pilot program, 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 “Water Quality Con-
5 servation Act of 2017”.

6 **SEC. 2. PURPOSES.**

7 The purposes of this Act are as follows:

8 (1) To identify and promote the use of innova-
9 tive and effective conservation practices.

1 (2) To apply targeted soil and water conserva-
2 tion practices at the watershed, sub-watershed, and
3 field scales.

4 (3) To increase the use of conservation prac-
5 tices by producers.

6 (4) To collect data on how the implementation
7 of precision conservation practices affects soil health,
8 reduces erosion and nutrient runoff of soil, and en-
9 hances water quality.

10 **SEC. 3. PRECISION CONSERVATION PILOT PROGRAM.**

11 (a) PILOT PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—Section 1240B
12 of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3839aa–2)
13 is amended by adding at the end the following new sub-
14 section:

15 “(j) PRECISION CONSERVATION PILOT PROGRAM.—

16 “(1) PILOT PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—The Sec-
17 retary is authorized to carry out a precision con-
18 servation pilot program to provide grants to not
19 more than 10 States to assist producers with
20 projects that—

21 “(A) increase nutrient retention in soil;

22 “(B) reduce soil erosion;

23 “(C) reduce nutrient loss from soil;

24 “(D) improve soil health; and

25 “(E) improve water quality.

1 “(2) APPLICATIONS.—To be eligible to receive a
2 grant under paragraph (1), a State shall submit an
3 application at such time, in such manner, and con-
4 taining such information as the Secretary may re-
5 quire, including a description of how the State will—

6 “(A) collaborate with a partnership of enti-
7 ties, which may include State agencies, local
8 governments, institutions of higher education,
9 soil and water conservation districts, producers,
10 Indian tribes, agricultural associations, non-
11 profit entities, and other relevant entities to
12 carry out precision conservation pilot programs;
13 and

14 “(B) give priority to assisting producers
15 with projects within critical areas, including—

16 “(i) critical conservation areas des-
17 ignated under section 1271F; and

18 “(ii) critical watersheds, as defined by
19 such State.

20 “(3) MATCHING FUNDS.—A State awarded a
21 grant under this subsection shall provide non-Fed-
22 eral funds, including cash and in-kind contributions,
23 in an amount that is at least equal to the amount
24 of such grant.

1 “(4) USE OF FUNDS.—A State awarded a grant
2 under this section may use grant funds only—

3 “(A) to educate and recruit agricultural
4 producers to participate in the pilot program;

5 “(B) to provide technical and financial as-
6 sistance to producers that elect to participate in
7 a precision conservation pilot program for
8 which the State received a grant under this sec-
9 tion to create and implement precision con-
10 servation plans;

11 “(C) to monitor and analyze the effective-
12 ness of such precision conservation plans; and

13 “(D) to encourage the use of precision ag-
14 riculture technology to achieve conservation
15 benefits.

16 “(5) CONFIDENTIALITY.—

17 “(A) IN GENERAL.—In the case of infor-
18 mation furnished by a producer or State in
19 order to facilitate the creation and implementa-
20 tion of a precision conservation plan pursuant
21 to paragraph (4)(B) or comply with the report-
22 ing requirements under paragraph (6)(B), the
23 Secretary, any other officer or employee of the
24 Department of Agriculture or agency thereof, or
25 any other person may not—

1 “(i) use such information for a pur-
2 pose other than the development or report-
3 ing of aggregate data under paragraphs
4 (6) and (7) in a manner such that the
5 identity of the producer who supplied such
6 information is not discernible and is not
7 material to the intended uses of such infor-
8 mation; or

9 “(ii) disclose the information to any
10 person or any Federal, State, local, or trib-
11 al agency outside the Department of Agri-
12 culture, unless the information has been
13 converted into a statistical or aggregate
14 form that does not allow the identification
15 of the producer that supplied particular in-
16 formation.

17 “(B) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing
18 in this paragraph shall be construed to limit a
19 producer from sharing the information fur-
20 nished by such producer pursuant to subpara-
21 graph (A).

22 “(6) STATE REPORTING.—

23 “(A) REPORTS TO PRODUCERS.—Not later
24 than 1 year after the date on which a State as-
25 sists a producer with the creation of a precision

1 conservation plan pursuant to paragraph
2 (4)(B), and each year for the succeeding 4
3 years thereafter, the State shall submit to such
4 producer a report that includes an analysis of
5 the effectiveness of the precision conservation
6 plan for such producer.

7 “(B) REPORTS TO SECRETARY.—

8 “(i) ANNUAL.—Not later than one
9 year after the date on which a State re-
10 ceives grant funds under this section, and
11 each year for the succeeding 3 years there-
12 after, the State shall submit to the Sec-
13 retary a report that includes the data used
14 to create, implement, and analyze precision
15 conservation plans pursuant to this sub-
16 section.

17 “(ii) 5-YEAR REPORT.—Not later than
18 5 years after the date on which a State re-
19 ceives grant funds under this section, the
20 State shall submit to the Secretary a re-
21 port that includes an analysis of the effec-
22 tiveness the use of grant funds under this
23 subsection has had in fostering—

24 “(I) improved soil health;

1 “(II) reduced soil erosion and soil
2 runoff;

3 “(III) improved water quality;

4 “(IV) improved understanding of
5 the relationship between precision ag-
6 riculture technology and conservation
7 improvement; and

8 “(V) the effectiveness of different
9 methods used.

10 “(7) SOIL NUTRIENT RETENTION DATABASE.—

11 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall
12 use the data reported under paragraph (6) to
13 establish and maintain a publically available soil
14 nutrient retention database that provides—

15 “(i) a compilation and analysis of ef-
16 fective conservation practices for nutrient
17 management in varying soil compositions,
18 cropping systems, slopes, and landscapes;
19 and

20 “(ii) recommended new and effective
21 conservation practices for nutrient man-
22 agement.

23 “(B) FUNDING FOR DATABASE.—The Sec-
24 retary may reserve up to \$75,000 of the funds

1 made available under subsection (f)(3) to carry
2 out this paragraph.”.

3 (b) ALLOCATION OF FUNDING.—Section 1240B(f) of
4 the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3839aa–2(f))
5 is amended by adding at the end the following new para-
6 graph:

7 “(3) PRECISION CONSERVATION PILOT PRO-
8 GRAM.—For each of fiscal years 2018 through 2022,
9 at least 5 percent of the funds made available for
10 payments under the program shall be targeted for
11 the precision conservation pilot program under sub-
12 section (j).”.

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