

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2709

To amend the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 to establish an Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Tribal Relations, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 27, 2023

Mr. HEINRICH introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

A BILL

To amend the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 to establish an Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Tribal Relations, 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 “Strengthening the Of-
5 fice of Tribal Relations Act of 2023”.

1 **SEC. 2. ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE FOR**
 2 **TRIBAL RELATIONS.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 218 of the Department of
 4 Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6918)
 5 is amended—

6 (1) in subsection (a)—

7 (A) in paragraph (2), by striking “and” at
 8 the end;

9 (B) in paragraph (3), by striking the pe-
 10 riod at the end and inserting “; and”; and

11 (C) by adding at the end the following:

12 “(4) Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for
 13 Tribal Relations.”;

14 (2) in subsection (b), by striking “(1) or (3)”
 15 and inserting “(1), (3), or (4)”; and

16 (3) by adding at the end the following:

17 “(d) ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE FOR
 18 TRIBAL RELATIONS.—

19 “(1) APPOINTMENT.—In appointing an indi-
 20 vidual to the position of Assistant Secretary for
 21 Tribal Relations, the Secretary shall give priority to
 22 an individual who has a background in Tribal rela-
 23 tions or affairs.

24 “(2) DUTIES.—The Secretary may delegate to
 25 the Assistant Secretary for Tribal Relations respon-
 26 sibility for—

1 “(A) overseeing the Office of Tribal Rela-
2 tions of the Department;

3 “(B) planning, coordinating, and imple-
4 menting policies and programs of the Depart-
5 ment serving Indian Tribes and Tribal organi-
6 zations;

7 “(C) coordinating Tribal programs and ac-
8 tivities in all offices and agencies of the Depart-
9 ment; and

10 “(D) being a participant in any negotiated
11 rulemakings relating to, or having an impact
12 on, projects, programs, or funding associated
13 with the Tribal programs of the Department.”.

14 (b) COMPENSATION.—Section 5315 of title 5, United
15 States Code, is amended by striking “Assistant Secre-
16 taries of Agriculture (3)” and inserting “Assistant Secre-
17 taries of Agriculture (4)”.

18 (c) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 296(b) of
19 the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of
20 1994 (7 U.S.C. 7014(b)) is amended by adding at the end
21 the following:

22 “(11) The authority of the Secretary to estab-
23 lish within the Department the position of Assistant
24 Secretary of Agriculture for Tribal Relations, and

- 1 delegate duties to the Assistant Secretary, under
- 2 section 218.”.

