

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 4545

To amend the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 with respect to emergency assistance for farmworkers, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 13, 2024

Mr. BENNET (for himself and Mr. PADILLA) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

A BILL

To amend the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 with respect to emergency assistance for farmworkers, 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 “Disaster Relief for
5 Farmworkers Act of 2024”.

6 **SEC. 2. EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FOR FARMWORKERS.**

7 Section 2281 of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation,
8 and Trade Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 5177a) is amended
9 to read as follows:

1 **“SEC. 2281. EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FOR FARMWORKERS.**

2 “(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

3 “(1) COVERED DISASTER.—The term ‘covered
4 disaster’ means—

5 “(A) an adverse weather event, such as a
6 drought, wildfire, earthquake, hurricane, flood,
7 derecho, excessive heat, tornado, winter storm,
8 freeze, hail, polar vortex, smoke exposure, or ex-
9 cessive moisture;

10 “(B) an unexpected health crisis, such as
11 a pandemic; and

12 “(C) such other event or condition—

13 “(i) that has caused farmworkers to
14 lose income, be unable to work, or stay
15 home or return home in anticipation of
16 work shortages; or

17 “(ii) as the Secretary determines to be
18 appropriate.

19 “(2) ELIGIBLE FARMWORKER ORGANIZATION.—

20 The term ‘eligible farmworker organization’ means
21 an organization that is—

22 “(A) a farmworker membership-based or-
23 ganization; or

24 “(B) an organization—

25 “(i) described in section 501(c)(3) of
26 the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and ex-

1 empt from taxation under section 501(a)
2 of that Code; and

3 “(ii) that has experience in providing
4 support or relief services to farmworkers,
5 including migrant or seasonal farm-
6 workers.

7 “(3) MIGRANT OR SEASONAL FARMWORKER.—
8 The term ‘migrant or seasonal *farmworker*’ means
9 an individual—

10 “(A) who has, during any consecutive 12-
11 month period within the preceding 24-month
12 period, performed farm work for wages; and

13 “(B) who has received not less than $\frac{1}{2}$ of
14 such individual’s total income from, or been em-
15 ployed at least $\frac{1}{2}$ of such individual’s total
16 work time in, farm work.

17 “(4) SECRETARY.—The term ‘Secretary’ means
18 the Secretary of Agriculture.

19 “(b) EMERGENCY RELIEF.—For fiscal year 2024
20 and each succeeding fiscal year, during any period for
21 which the Secretary determines there is a covered disaster,
22 the Secretary, acting through the Under Secretary for
23 Rural Development, shall make grants to eligible farm-
24 worker organizations to provide emergency relief to farm-
25 workers affected by that covered disaster.

1 “(c) USE OF FUNDS.—An eligible farmworker orga-
2 nization may use funds received pursuant to a grant
3 awarded under subsection (b)—

4 “(1) to provide emergency relief (including
5 through direct distribution of funding) to farm-
6 workers to address loss and damage due to the cov-
7 ered disaster;

8 “(2) to build capacity to provide emergency re-
9 lief described in paragraph (1);

10 “(3) to build resiliency in farmworker commu-
11 nities to address future losses and damages due to
12 covered disasters;

13 “(4) to provide infrastructure support, includ-
14 ing shelter; and

15 “(5) to provide emergency services (including
16 such types of assistance as the Secretary determines
17 to be appropriate) to farmworkers in response to the
18 covered disaster.

19 “(d) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—Any funds provided
20 to an eligible farmworker organization under this section
21 shall remain available until expended.

22 “(e) PROMOTIONAL PLAN.—The Secretary shall—

23 “(1) before making grants under subsection (b),
24 develop a promotional plan; and

1 “(2) carry out that promotional plan through-
2 out the distribution of those grants.

3 “(f) CONSULTATION.—In carrying out this section,
4 the Secretary shall consult with eligible farmworker orga-
5 nizations.”.

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