

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 629

To amend the Agricultural Credit Act of 1978 to remove barriers to agricultural producers in accessing funds to carry out emergency measures under the emergency conservation program, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 19, 2025

Mrs. FISCHER (for herself, Mr. LUJÁN, and Mr. SCHIFF) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

A BILL

To amend the Agricultural Credit Act of 1978 to remove barriers to agricultural producers in accessing funds to carry out emergency measures under the emergency conservation 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 “Emergency Conserva-
5 tion Program Improvement Act of 2025”.

1 **SEC. 2. IMPROVING THE EMERGENCY CONSERVATION PRO-**
2 **GRAM.**

3 Section 401 of the Agricultural Credit Act of 1978
4 (16 U.S.C. 2201) is amended—

5 (1) in subsection (b)—

6 (A) in the subsection heading, by inserting
7 “AND OTHER EMERGENCY CONSERVATION
8 MEASURES” after “FENCING”;

9 (B) in paragraph (1)—

10 (i) by inserting “or for other emer-
11 gency measures to replace or restore farm-
12 land or conservation structures requiring
13 an immediate response (as determined by
14 the Secretary),” after “replacement of
15 fencing,”; and

16 (ii) by striking “option of receiving”
17 and all that follows through the period at
18 the end and inserting the following: “op-
19 tion of receiving, before the agricultural
20 producer carries out the repair, replace-
21 ment, or restoration—

22 “(A) with respect to a payment to the agri-
23 cultural producer for a replacement, 75 percent
24 of the cost of the replacement, as determined by
25 the Secretary; and

1 “(B) with respect to a payment to the ag-
 2 ricultural producer for a repair or restoration,
 3 50 percent of the cost of the repair or restora-
 4 tion, as determined by the Secretary.”; and

5 (C) in paragraph (2), by striking “60-day”
 6 and inserting “180-day”; and

7 (2) by adding at the end the following:

8 “(c) WILDFIRE DETERMINATION.—A wildfire that
 9 causes damage eligible for a payment under subsection (a)
 10 includes—

11 “(1) a wildfire that is not caused naturally, if
 12 the damage is caused by the spread of the wildfire
 13 due to natural causes; and

14 “(2) a wildfire that is caused by the Federal
 15 Government.”.

16 **SEC. 3. IMPROVING THE EMERGENCY FOREST RESTORA-**
 17 **TION PROGRAM.**

18 Section 407 of the Agricultural Credit Act of 1978
 19 (16 U.S.C. 2206) is amended—

20 (1) in subsection (a)(2), by striking “wildfires,”
 21 and inserting “wildfires (including a wildfire that is
 22 not caused naturally, if the damage is caused by the
 23 spread of the wildfire due to natural causes, and a
 24 wildfire that is caused by the Federal Govern-
 25 ment),”;

1 (2) by redesignating subsection (e) as sub-
2 section (f); and

3 (3) by inserting after subsection (d) the fol-
4 lowing:

5 “(e) ADVANCE PAYMENTS.—

6 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall give an
7 owner of nonindustrial private forest land the option
8 of receiving, before the owner carries out emergency
9 measures under this section, not more than 75 per-
10 cent of the cost of the emergency measures, as de-
11 termined by the Secretary.

12 “(2) RETURN OF FUNDS.—If the funds pro-
13 vided under paragraph (1) are not expended by the
14 end of the 180-day period beginning on the date on
15 which the owner of nonindustrial private forest land
16 receives those funds, the funds shall be returned
17 within a reasonable timeframe, as determined by the
18 Secretary.”.

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