

115TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 5208

To amend the Competitive, Special, and Facilities Research Grant Act and the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 to further plant cultivar research, development, and commercialization, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 7, 2018

Mr. POCAN (for himself and Mr. SOTO) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture

A BILL

To amend the Competitive, Special, and Facilities Research Grant Act and the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 to further plant cultivar research, development, and commercialization, 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 “Seeds for the Future
5 Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. PUBLIC CULTIVAR DEVELOPMENT.**

2 Section 2 of the Competitive, Special, and Facilities
3 Research Grant Act (7 U.S.C. 3157) is amended—

4 (1) in subsection (a), by adding at the end the
5 following:

6 “(3) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

7 “(A) CONVENTIONAL BREEDING.—The term
8 ‘conventional breeding’ means the development of
9 new varieties of an organism through controlled
10 mating and selection without the use of transgenic
11 methods.

12 “(B) CULTIVAR.—The term ‘cultivar’ means a
13 variety of a species of plant that has been inten-
14 tionally selected for use in cultivation because of the
15 improved characteristics of that variety of the spe-
16 cies.

17 “(C) PUBLIC CULTIVAR.—The term ‘public
18 cultivar’ means a cultivar that is the commercially
19 available uniform end product of a publicly funded
20 breeding program that has been sufficiently tested to
21 demonstrate improved characteristics and stable per-
22 formance.”; and

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

24 “(1) PUBLIC CULTIVAR DEVELOPMENT FUNDING.—

25 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Of the amount of grants
26 made under subsections (b) and (c), the Secretary of

1 Agriculture (referred to in this subsection as the
2 ‘Secretary’) shall ensure that not less than
3 \$50,000,000 for each fiscal year is used for competi-
4 tive research grants that support the development of
5 public cultivars.

6 “(2) PRIORITY.—In making grants under para-
7 graph (1), the Secretary shall give priority to high-
8 potential research projects that lead to the release of
9 public cultivars.

10 “(3) GRANTS.—The Secretary shall ensure that
11 the terms and renewal process for any competitive
12 grants made under subsection (b) facilitate the de-
13 velopment and commercialization of public cultivars
14 through long-term grants not less than 5 years in
15 length.

16 “(4) REPORT.—Not later than October 1 of
17 each year, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a
18 report that provides information on all public
19 cultivar and breeding research funded by the De-
20 partment of Agriculture, including—

21 “(A) a list of public cultivars and varieties
22 of public cultivars developed and released in a
23 commercially available form;

24 “(B) areas of high-priority research;

1 “(C) identified research gaps relating to
2 public cultivar development; and

3 “(D) an assessment of the state of com-
4 mercialization for cultivars that have been de-
5 veloped.”.

6 **SEC. 3. PUBLIC CULTIVAR RESEARCH COORDINATION.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 251 of the Department of
8 Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6971)
9 is amended—

10 (1) in subsection (e), by adding at the end the
11 following:

12 “(6) PUBLIC CULTIVAR RESEARCH ACTIVITIES
13 COORDINATOR.—

14 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary
15 shall appoint a coordinator within the Research,
16 Education, and Extension Office that reports to
17 the Under Secretary to coordinate research ac-
18 tivities at the Department relating to the breed-
19 ing of public cultivars (as defined in paragraph
20 (3) of section 2(a) of the Competitive, Special,
21 and Facilities Research Grant Act (7 U.S.C.
22 3157(a))).

23 “(B) DUTIES OF COORDINATOR.—The co-
24 ordinator appointed under subparagraph (A)
25 shall—

1 “(i) coordinate plant breeding re-
2 search activities funded by the Department
3 relating to the development of public culti-
4 vars;

5 “(ii)(I) carry out ongoing analysis and
6 track activities for any Federal research
7 funding supporting plant breeding (includ-
8 ing any public cultivars developed with
9 Federal funds); and

10 “(II) ensure that the analysis and ac-
11 tivities are made available to the public not
12 later than 60 days after the last day of
13 each fiscal year;

14 “(iii) develop a strategic plan that es-
15 tablishes targets for public cultivar re-
16 search investments across the Department
17 to ensure that a diverse range of crop
18 needs are being met in a timely and trans-
19 parent manner;

20 “(iv) convene a working group in
21 order to carry out the coordination func-
22 tions described in this subparagraph com-
23 prised of individuals who are responsible
24 for the management, administration, or

1 analysis of public breeding programs with-
2 in the Department from—

3 “(I) the National Institute of
4 Food and Agriculture;

5 “(II) the Agricultural Research
6 Service; and

7 “(III) the Economic Research
8 Service;

9 “(v) in order to maximize delivery of
10 public cultivars, promote collaboration
11 among—

12 “(I) the coordinator;

13 “(II) the working group convened
14 under clause (iv);

15 “(III) the advisory council estab-
16 lished under section 1634 of the
17 Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and
18 Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 5843);

19 “(IV) genetic resource conserva-
20 tion centers;

21 “(V) land-grant colleges and uni-
22 versities (as defined in section 1404 of
23 the National Agricultural Research,
24 Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of
25 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3103));

1 “(VI) Hispanic-serving institu-
2 tions (as defined in section 502(a) of
3 the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20
4 U.S.C. 1101a(a)));

5 “(VII) Native American-serving
6 nontribal institutions (as defined in
7 section 371(c) of the Higher Edu-
8 cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
9 1067q(c)));

10 “(VIII) nongovernmental organi-
11 zations with interest or expertise in
12 public breeding; and

13 “(IX) public and private plant
14 breeders;

15 “(vi) convene regular stakeholder lis-
16 tening sessions to provide input on na-
17 tional and regional priorities for public
18 cultivar breeding research activities across
19 the Department; and

20 “(vii) evaluate and make rec-
21 ommendations to the Under Secretary on
22 training and resource needs to meet future
23 breeding challenges.”; and

1 (2) in subsection (f)(1)(D)(i), by striking “(7
2 U.S.C. 450i(b))” and inserting “(7 U.S.C.
3 3157(b))”.

4 (b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section
5 296(b)(6)(B) of the Department of Agriculture Reorga-
6 nization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 7014(b)(6)(B)) is amended
7 by striking “Office; and” and inserting “Office (including
8 the public cultivar research activities coordinator under
9 subsection (e)(6) of that section); and”.

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