

115TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 2479

To amend the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 to address deferred maintenance at agricultural research facilities, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 1, 2018

Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. KING, and Ms. WARREN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

A BILL

To amend the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 to address deferred maintenance at agricultural research facilities, 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 “Augmenting Research
5 and Educational Sites to Ensure Agriculture Remains
6 Cutting-Edge and Helpful Act” or the “AG RESEARCH
7 Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH FACILITIES.**

2 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

3 (1) in 2015, agriculture and related indus-
4 tries—

5 (A) contributed \$992,000,000,000 to the
6 gross domestic product of the United States
7 (5.5 percent of the total gross domestic product
8 of the United States); and

9 (B) provided 21,000,000 jobs domestically
10 (11 percent of total employment in the United
11 States);

12 (2) the Department of Agriculture funds more
13 than \$1,500,000,000 in research funding each year
14 to schools of agriculture;

15 (3) a study published in 2015 found that de-
16 ferred maintenance at 91 schools of agriculture
17 across the United States totaled \$8,200,000,000,
18 with a total replacement cost of \$29,000,000,000;
19 and

20 (4) infrastructure investments must be made at
21 schools of agriculture to ensure that United States
22 agricultural research remains globally competitive.

23 (b) GRANTS FOR AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH FACILI-
24 TIES.—Title IV of the Agricultural Research, Extension,
25 and Education Reform Act of 1998 is amended by insert-
26 ing before section 404 (7 U.S.C. 7624) the following:

1 **“SEC. 401. GRANTS FOR AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH FACILI-**
2 **TIES.**

3 “(a) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this section is to as-
4 sist agricultural research facilities in efforts to alter or re-
5 pair those facilities or equipment of the facilities necessary
6 for conducting agricultural research.

7 “(b) DEFINITION OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH FA-
8 CILITY.—In this section, the term ‘agricultural research
9 facility’ has the meaning given the term in section 2 of
10 the Research Facilities Act (7 U.S.C. 390).

11 “(c) GRANT PROGRAM.—

12 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall estab-
13 lish in the National Institute of Food and Agri-
14 culture a competitive grant program to provide to
15 agricultural research facilities the Federal share of
16 the cost of the alteration, modernization, renovation,
17 or remodeling of—

18 “(A) the agricultural research facilities; or

19 “(B) equipment of the agricultural re-
20 search facilities necessary for conducting agri-
21 cultural research.

22 “(2) FEDERAL SHARE.—The Federal share re-
23 ferred to in paragraph (1) shall be not greater than
24 50 percent.

25 “(d) REQUIREMENTS.—

1 “(1) AMOUNT; TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—
2 Grants awarded under this section shall be in such
3 amounts and under such terms and conditions as
4 the Secretary determines are necessary to carry out
5 the purpose of this section.

6 “(2) GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION.—To the
7 maximum extent practicable, grants shall be award-
8 ed under this section to ensure an equitable geo-
9 graphic distribution of funds.

10 “(3) LIMITATION.—Not greater than 20 per-
11 cent of amounts made available to carry out this sec-
12 tion shall be awarded to projects in any 1 State.

13 “(4) ADMINISTRATION.—In carrying out this
14 section, the Secretary shall establish procedures
15 for—

16 “(A) the submission of proposals for com-
17 petitive grants; and

18 “(B) in consultation with representatives
19 of National Institute of Food and Agriculture
20 grantmaking peer review panels, the review and
21 selection of proposals submitted under subpara-
22 graph (A).

23 “(5) PRIORITY.—In selecting proposals under
24 paragraph (4)(B), the Secretary shall give priority
25 to proposals that—

1 “(A) are—

2 “(i) ready to proceed quickly; and

3 “(ii) included in the facilities master
4 plan or capital improvement plan of the
5 college, university, or nonprofit institution;
6 or

7 “(B) incorporate—

8 “(i) renewable energy;

9 “(ii) energy- or water-efficient tech-
10 nology; or

11 “(iii) both energy and technology de-
12 scribed in clauses (i) and (ii).

13 “(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
14 is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
15 \$1,000,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2018 through
16 2028.”.

17 **SEC. 3. AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH CENTERS.**

18 (a) FINDING.—Congress finds that the Agricultural
19 Research Service Capital Investment Strategy dated April
20 2012 indicates that research facilities of the Agricultural
21 Research Services have more than \$1,000,000,000 in de-
22 ferred maintenance.

23 (b) DIRECT FUNDING FOR DEFERRED MAINTENANCE AT ARS RESEARCH FACILITIES.—Title IV of the
24 Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform
25

1 Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7624 et seq.) is amended by insert-
2 ing after section 401 (as added by section 2(b)) the fol-
3 lowing:

4 **“SEC. 402. DIRECT FUNDING FOR DEFERRED MAINTENANCE AT ARS RESEARCH FACILITIES.**
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6 “(a) IN GENERAL.—Using amounts made available
7 under subsection (c), the Secretary shall provide direct
8 payments to research facilities of the Agricultural Re-
9 search Service for the purpose of addressing deferred
10 maintenance.

11 “(b) PRIORITY.—In providing direct payments under
12 subsection (a), the Secretary shall give priority to the most
13 critical structures in accordance with the Agricultural Re-
14 search Service Capital Investment Strategy dated April
15 2012.

16 “(c) FUNDING.—Of the funds of the Commodity
17 Credit Corporation, the Secretary shall use to carry out
18 this section \$100,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2018
19 through 2028.”.

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