

It is estimated that nearly 40 percent of the illegal population here today are visa overstays. GAO, our Government Accountability Office, has repeatedly said a system such as the one called for in this bill will not reliably identify visa overstays, and that without a biometric exit system:

DHS cannot ensure the integrity of the immigration system by identifying and removing those people who have overstayed the original period of admission.

That is the Government Accountability Office's objective, nonpartisan analysis of the legislation.

Beyond violating our laws, visa overstays pose a substantial threat to national security. Visa overstayers come from all over the world. The 9/11 Commission, after the 9/11 attacks, recommended that:

The Department of Homeland Security, properly supported by Congress, should complete, as quickly as possible, a biometric entry-exit system.

In a report entitled "Tenth Anniversary Report Card: The Status of the 9/11 Commission Recommendations," they came back together to see how well their recommendations had been carried out. They praised the fact that we have an entry system, a biometric entry system known as US-VISIT. It has been proven to be valuable, they say, in national security too.

Despite this successful deployment of the entry component of US-VISIT, the Commission notes there is still no comprehensive exit system in place. As important as it is to note when foreign nationals arrive, it is also important to note when they leave. Full deployment of the biometric exit component of US-VISIT should be a high priority. Such a capability would have assisted law enforcement and intelligence officials in August and September of 2001 in conducting a search for two of the 9/11 hijackers who were in the United States on expired visas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. SESSIONS. I thank the Chair. I believe 5 o'clock has arrived. I thank the managers of the Agriculture bill. I know they worked hard on their legislation.

I yield the floor.

AGRICULTURE REFORM, FOOD, AND JOBS ACT OF 2013

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 954, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 954) to reauthorize agriculture programs through 2018.

Pending:

Stabenow (for Leahy) amendment No. 998, to establish a pilot program for gigabit Internet projects in rural areas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 5:30 p.m. will be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees.

The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. I see the distinguished Senator from North Dakota on the floor. This is Senator HEITKAMP's first farm bill we are about ready to vote on. She has been an extraordinary voice and really hit the ground running. It is my pleasure to yield 5 minutes to her.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Madam President, I would first like to thank the Senator from the great State of Michigan for her incredible leadership. I met her over a year ago and knew she was a force to be reckoned with, not only because she has red hair but because she is someone who understands that to move something forward, we need to have compromise and we need to understand that a farm bill represents the interests of the entire country, not just the interests of maybe the Great Plains States or the Southern States or even our urban areas that care desperately about nutrition. She understands that we need to forge a bill that can pass both Chambers and keep our country moving.

The fact is that agriculture is a shining star in the American economy today. When we look at States such as North Dakota and Nebraska and Kansas and South Dakota, all agriculture-based States, we see they did not have the deep trough of this recession because agriculture did pretty well. And why did agriculture do pretty well? Because the last farm bill that was crafted provided an appropriate balance of concern for our long-term fiscal obligations along with providing our producers with a legitimate and appropriate safety net.

We have a farm bill today that is even better that we are going to be voting on. Why is it better? Because it not only provides that certainty and that safety net for American producers—the backbone, historically, of our economy—but it reduces the deficit \$24 billion by eliminating a process of direct payments, by cutting some unnecessary expenditures, by streamlining conservation, and by taking a look at a rational and reasonable approach to some of the issues regarding nutrition.

So I am very proud today to stand before this body about to cast one of my first votes—not the first vote but one of my first votes—doing what is absolutely essential for the North Dakota economy; that is, passing a farm bill.

I want to give an idea of what North Dakota is all about because we like to brag but also because people forget about North Dakota being an agricultural State with so much attention having been focused in recent months and recent years on our dramatic energy development. So let me give a rundown on what we do in North Dakota as far as our production. We are No. 1 in barley; No. 1 in beans, dry and edible; No. 1 in navy beans and pinto beans; No. 1 in canola, flaxseed, and honey; No. 1 in lentils and dry edible

peas; No. 1 in all forms of sunflower; No. 1 in durum wheat and spring wheat; and we are No. 2 in sugar beets and No. 2 in all wheat. So 90 percent of North Dakota's land base—90 percent—is engaged in agriculture. It is the backbone of what we do.

As we talk about the importance of public policy not only to protect our producers but to give them opportunities for certainty, I would like to talk about two unique things of which I am exceptionally proud.

The first is that this Crop Insurance Program will provide the safety net so many of our young farmers in our States need to get engaged in the business of farming. Why is that important? Well, 10 years ago when I was still in elected office, I would go to farm meetings and look around the table, and everybody was in their fifties and sixties and a 50-year-old farmer would be a young farmer. Now we go to those same meetings, and sitting around that table are 20- and 30- and 40-year-old farm families saying: We want to engage in the business of agriculture. And that is good for the world because we not only need to produce our products for America, we need to produce our products for the entire world.

So this is a farm bill that strikes the right balance. It is a farm bill that addresses the priorities not only of my State but hopefully the priorities of this country. There are 16 million jobs—16 million American jobs—depending on this bill.

The second point I wish to make about this bill—and people remind me occasionally that it is a year late because we have already gone to one extension since I have been here—is that it is a bill which will send a message to the American people that we need to provide certainty once and for all. We need to do things in a timely fashion, and I think moving this farm bill right now is moving it in a timely fashion.

This is an excellent piece of legislation, and I urge all of my colleagues to vote for it.

I thank the chairwoman from Michigan for her excellent and exceptional leadership, along with her ranking member Senator COCHRAN, who has been so instrumental in forging the compromises that make today possible.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, at this point I want to take a moment before we vote today to recognize folks who have worked so hard to get us to this point.

First of all, I thank my colleagues in advance for coming together one more time and leading for rural America—for farmers, for ranchers, for the 16 million people who have jobs because of agriculture in this country. It has been a long road for the Agriculture Reform, Food, and Jobs Act, and I have been blessed and pleased to have a wonderful partner and ranking member,

the distinguished Senator from Mississippi. He has been a partner every step of the way, and I thank him and look forward—as the House hopefully this time will complete their work—to having the opportunity to go to conference and crafting an agreement we can then present back to the Senate. I can't thank Senator COCHRAN and his staff enough for their wonderful partnership.

We started this last year. We had 3 weeks that the farm bill was on the floor of the Senate. We had 73 votes, adopted 42 amendments, and we took that as the basis for the bill this year. Once the House did not take up the bill—and, in my judgment, walked away from rural America last year—we had to come back and do it again, so we used the work product the Senate did last year as the basis of our work, and we had 2 weeks of debate on the floor of the Senate. We have added 14 more amendments to the bill that is in front of us.

So I thank the majority leader for his hard work and leadership and patience. As always, he knows how important agriculture is to our economy, how important it is to support rural communities and families and consumers around our country. I appreciate that he has not just once but twice given us precious time on the Senate floor so that we could do our job in standing up for rural America and for consumers across this country.

I am proud we once again voted—or are about to vote today—in a bipartisan way to move this bill forward. This bill has been bipartisan from start to finish, and I believe that is the reason for our success. I am grateful to colleagues who have worked in such a diligent way on both sides of the aisle. There are many leaders on both sides of the aisle on this bill. We wouldn't be here today without leadership on both sides of the aisle, and I am very grateful for that. This is how the Senate is designed to work, where people who care very deeply on both sides of an issue can sit down—in our case, around a table in the Senate agriculture room—look each other in the eye, talk to each other, listen, and make the compromises necessary to come together with a balanced bill. That is what we did.

Last year we passed the farm bill, as I said before, in a bipartisan way as well. The House Agriculture Committee passed a bipartisan farm bill last year, but for whatever reason the full House didn't consider the bill. It was allowed to expire. The good news is that this year it looks as though it is going to be different. That is good news for rural America and the men and women who work hard every day to give us the safest, most affordable, most abundant food supply in the world—in the world.

I thank my incredible staff, who have done this now not once but twice. Actually, because we engaged and had a work product when the supercom-

mittee deficit commission was operating, we have actually done this three times. I think they could do farm bills in their sleep. Hopefully they have not been sleeping when they have been writing this one, but I am very grateful for their leadership.

I thank Chris Adamo, my terrific staff director for the Agriculture Committee, who is living and breathing these issues every minute and only takes occasional breaks to go fly fishing in Michigan. We have a historic agreement on conservation and crop insurance in this bill thanks to his leadership and that of our team.

Jonathan Coppess, our chief counsel, and Joe Shultz, our economist extraordinaire, who understand the ins and outs of agriculture like nobody else, have done so much as we have transitioned in this bill toward market-based risk management tools for our farmers.

Jonathan Cordone, our general counsel, crossed every “t” and dotted every “i” in this bill, and frankly, there are a lot of them. He has been keeping track of all the amendments and making sure this process runs smoothly.

Karla Theiman, who leads our livestock and dairy issues, has helped make the energy title something we could really be proud of. I am very grateful for all her leadership and hard work.

Tina May, who wrote our original conservation title and then decided to go have a baby, is amazing. She knows more about conservation than anyone I know, and we are very proud that not only the conservation title in the Senate but one that is very similar in the House bears the mark of her hard work and leadership.

I do want to note that Jonathan Coppess had a son during the last farm bill and Tina had a son during this farm bill. So I am not sure what it is about farm bills, but we will see what comes next.

One thing about Tina's maternity leave is that it allowed us to get the T2 team back together. Kevin Norton came back from the USDA to work with Catie Lee, as they picked up very excellently the heavy load and made it look easy. Thanks to them, our country will have healthy wildlife habitats and clean, fishable waters for generations to come.

Jacqlyn Schneider, who is another of our farm bill veterans, ably led our nutrition team and has done such a wonderful job. She has done so much for the diversity of American agriculture through organics, fruits and vegetables, and all the things we call specialty crops, as well as Jess Taylor. Jess has done terrific work in partnership as well.

Brandon McBride led our efforts to reorganize the rural development title and worked so hard this year to make sure the energy title continued to grow the economy in rural America.

Russ Behnam is our expert on technology issues—biotechnology issues—

on crop protection and has lent very important expertise to our efforts. I am grateful.

Cory Claussen led our efforts on dairy last year, and his hard work led to the major advances we have made in this bill for beginning farmers and ranchers as well as for our veterans who want to get into agriculture.

I am very proud that in our bill we have a new agriculture liaison for our veterans. So many of our men and women coming home are from small communities around America, and they want to have the opportunity to go into farming, and we want to help them do that.

Cory is also leading our CFTC efforts, so Cory's work is just getting started. Hanna Abou-El-Seoud, who kept the trains running on time, made sure we were all prepared and prepped—no easy job as well. Alexis Stanczuk and Kyle Varner, who is the newest member of our team, have once again done a great job doing whatever needed to be done in order to help us be successful. Jessie Williams, Nicole Hertenstein, Jacob Chaney, and our entire great team on the committee have helped us to get to this point.

I also wish to say thank you to my chief of staff Dan Farough, who manages our personal office; Matt VanKuiken, my terrific legislative director who followed the floor procedure and made sure everything was happening as it should; Bill Sweeney, my great deputy chief of staff; Cullen Schwarz, my communications director; and Ben Becker, our press secretary who made sure we were telling the story of rural America and this farm bill and the reforms in it every day. We couldn't have done it without them and our entire team, Matt Williams, Will Eberle, and Alex Barriger.

I wish to thank my State team and all of the outreach efforts led by the outstanding Teresa Plachetka, Kali Fox, Mary Judnich, Brandon Fewins, and Korey Hall, making sure that Michigan is truly represented on every page.

This was a bipartisan effort, and I wish to thank everyone on Senator COCHRAN's team, especially T.A. Hawks and James Gleueck, for their leadership. Once again, Doug Elmendorf's CBO farm team came through thanks to Jim Langley and everyone on their team.

I wish to thank Kasey Gillette from Senator REID's office, who is part of our extended family. It is great working with her again. This is like a second annual family reunion, always having Kasey with us.

Nothing could get done around here without our excellent floor staff who have been led by Gary Myrick and Tim Mitchell, and thank you to everybody on our team for their very long hours as usual.

Of course, we wouldn't have had anything to pass without the amazing expertise of our legislative counsel team, Michelle Johnson-Wieder and Gary Endicott, and their invaluable assistance;

last, but not least, the great team at the USDA and who I believe is an absolutely terrific Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack, and his General Counsel's Office.

There are so many people to thank. I will stop. There are other colleagues who wish to speak. I just want everyone to know that when you take basically 12 different chapters or titles—any one of which could be its own piece of legislation—and put it together in something called a 5-year farm bill, it happens because of a tremendous amount of talent and experience and hard work and it happens because, in our case, we have what I believe is the most seasoned Agriculture Committee former chairs, former Secretary of Agriculture. We have people who know agriculture and care about it deeply. With so much talent and experience, it has been a real privilege—and continues to be—to chair this committee.

This farm bill is the product of 2 years of hard work by a long list of talented people. As we vote today, we support 16 million people who depend on agriculture for their jobs. We are providing \$24 billion in deficit reduction on a bipartisan basis. We are providing policies that will conserve our land and our water resources for generations to come; that help families who have fallen on hard times keep food on the table for their children; a bill that helps our veterans get started in agriculture; that supports our small towns all across America; and recognizes the diversity of American agriculture and strengthens efforts to give families the opportunity to buy fresh local food in their supermarkets and have it available in their schools. This farm bill creates jobs.

I am very proud of the work we have done, and I ask all of our colleagues to support us in voting yes today on this bill.

I yield 5 minutes to Senator KLOBUCHAR.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I rise in support of this very important bill.

First, I wish to thank Senator STABENOW for her leadership, as well as the Senator from Mississippi. It was a true bipartisan effort. As I heard her list all the names of these wonderful staff people who worked on this bill, I also wish to mention my staff director Adam Durand.

The other thing I wish to mention is this wouldn't have happened without Senator STABENOW, with her ever optimistic view, never giving up on this bill.

It has been 354 days since the Senate passed its last farm bill—I have been counting it down—and this is long overdue. This got done in record speed because we had gone through all of these issues, 70-something amendments, last time, and this time we were able to get the farm bill through the Agriculture Committee in record

time—in 3 hours. Now it is on the floor, and I predict we will have strong bipartisan support.

You ask why. First of all, last year our country experienced the worst drought since 1956, costing the country tens of billions of dollars. In Minnesota 74 counties were eligible for disaster relief due to drought.

This year the late spring and wet conditions have prevented many farmers in my State from even getting their crop into the ground. Dairy farmers have been especially hurt because of the alfalfa shortage because of the rot because of the water.

We can't do anything about the weather, but we can make sure our country has a steady food supply and that we are not dependent on foreign food. How do we do that? By having a smart, fiscally sound farm bill.

I can tell you what we have is a bill that literally saves the taxpayers \$24 billion in 10 years over the last farm bill. That is why it makes no sense for me to play a game of green light-red light and at the end of the year we are going to extend the last farm bill that is even more expensive, when we have a very smart farm bill here.

It matters in my State. My State is No. 1 in turkeys, sweet corn, green peas, and oats, No. 2 in spring wheat, No. 3 in hogs and soybeans, and No. 4 for in corn. But it is more than the crops and the sugar beets and the wheat. We don't just raise livestock. We don't just produce crops. We also produce the foods—milk at Land O'Lakes, the turkey at Jennie-O, the animal feed at Cargill, the Spam at Hormel.

When we look at this farm bill, we have to understand it involves not just our farmers—in fact, that is the smaller percentage of the farm bill than, say, the nutrition program—but it also involves our entire economy and how that all goes together from energy on down. What I like about this farm bill is it does connect these dots and makes sure we have a strong economy across the board, starting with our farmers, also including strong conservation efforts.

I see the Senator from North Dakota Ms. HEITKAMP. She and I, along with Senator HOEVEN, worked very hard to make sure there were strong provisions in this bill for the conservation efforts, which include our retention of water with floodings in the Fargo-Moorhead area, also making sure we had strong efforts for agriculture research, something everyone in our country cares about as we move forward.

We streamlined the conservation program from 23 to 13 programs. The bill funds the energy title programs, which this last extension did not do, and it also does a lot with ag research. I also had some of my amendments included which help beginning farmers and ranchers; that includes reducing the cost of crop insurance for beginning farmers by 10 percent. The second amendment helps beginning farmers access land for grazing.

These are just a few of the things in this bill. We are excited about this bill.

I would just end by saying, as Senator STABENOW did, that this is a call for action. The Senate has gotten its act together. We were able to work out a bipartisan compromise in the committee. We are able to get a strong vote on the floor. Now it is time for Speaker BOEHNER to call up the House bill so then we can work out the differences—as we should—in regular order, in conference committee.

Our farmers deserve nothing less, the kids who depend on these school nutrition programs deserve nothing less, and the conservation efforts in our country, those who hunt, those who fish, those who enjoy the outdoors, deserve nothing less.

It is time to get this bill done. We will vote on it tonight and then it goes over to the House. I would like to get this bill out of the House by the time we are ready to head into August, where we talk to a lot of our farmers and they have a few words to say every time we speak to them. I think the House would like to hear good things for a change.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. COCHRAN. Madam President, I am pleased to join the distinguished Senator from Michigan in urging approval of this bill by the Senate. It has been a pleasure working with her and other members of the Agriculture Committee to produce a farm bill that meets the needs of those involved in agriculture production and the consumers of the crops produced by American farmers and ranchers.

This farm bill will also encourage and reward protection of water, soil and forestry resources.

The bill also authorizes and improves Federal nutrition programs administered by the Department of Agriculture. It contains reforms to the nutrition title to eliminate waste, fraud and abuse.

This bill deserves the support of the Senate.

The Senate debate on the farm bill has included votes on a number of amendments over the last 2 weeks. American agricultural producers deserve the certainty that comes with a strong 5 year farm bill. I am pleased that we have come up with a bill that will meet that need.

This legislation will provide farmers in all regions of the country with a robust and workable safety net, while also reducing by \$24 billion the cost of the programs authorized by current law.

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I yield time now to the Senator from Florida for a colloquy with myself.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

GREENING

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, I am grateful to the chairman of the committee to engage in a colloquy with me

about a devastating disease of bacteria called greening, which is devastating the citrus industry. We know of no cure. The bacteria kills the citrus tree in 5 years, and we are not going to have a citrus crop or industry unless we can find a cure for this bacteria.

The bacteria is transported by an insect called a psyllid, and once the psyllid bores its snout into the bark of the tree and the bacteria is injected into the foam or sap of the tree, it will kill the tree. They found various methods of spraying to try to prolong the life of the tree, but in essence the tree will die in about 5 years. It is in every grove in Florida. It is now in the citrus industry in California and Arizona and they have found the psyllid likewise in other gulf coast States—Alabama, Louisiana—and greening is also in the State of Georgia.

So what we are trying to do is set up a trust fund, which is authorized in the bill, and to get it funded in order to find a cure for this disease so an industry that has become so important to the entire country can be saved.

I have talked at length with the chairman of the Finance Committee Senator BAUCUS, who has been very supportive. As a matter of fact, we passed a similar bill out of the Finance Committee in the last Congress. I plan to work with Senator BAUCUS and Senator STABENOW to make sure this trust fund becomes a reality as we move forward with this farm bill.

Ms. STABENOW. I would just indicate to my colleague who has been such a strong advocate for his State, for his growers, his people—I am very grateful for that.

He has made his case very strongly. I understand that once a tree is exposed to the disease, there is no cure. The tree will die within 5 years. It must be entirely replaced. In fact, as the Senator indicated, this is something that affects many States—not only Florida but Texas, California, Louisiana, Alabama, Arizona, Georgia as well. So I know this is a serious issue for our citrus growers, and I am committed to working with Senator BAUCUS to make sure the trust funds for citrus, as well as cotton and wool, are included in the final conference committee.

I know these are concerns shared by a number of our colleagues, and I look forward to working with the Senator from Florida as well as other colleagues. This is a very important issue.

Mr. NELSON. I thank Senator STABENOW for her commitment to helping fund a cure for citrus greening, and it is just that; it is an emergency situation.

Because of the devastating nature of this citrus greening disease, the citrus research trust fund must have guaranteed funding in the farm bill. We simply can't wait any longer. Graciously, Senators STABENOW and BAUCUS have both been so encouraging and have agreed with me personally to restore the funding mechanisms of the trust fund when the Senate and the House go

to conference on the farm bill. When this farm bill makes its way to the President's desk, the citrus trust fund needs to be a fully functional and a funded component.

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, let me just say in conclusion that I look forward to working with my colleagues to ensure there is a guaranteed source of funding for the citrus trust fund. I understand the devastation to an entire industry that he is speaking about to and look forward to working with him.

Mr. NELSON. I would just conclude by saying that I not only speak of this for my State of Florida, of which citrus is one of its primary industries and now the product of which is a staple on every American breakfast table, but I speak also of our sister States, Arizona, California—and, by the way, to the Presiding Officer I can say that the psyllid and the bacteria are in the State of Hawaii as well—Georgia, Louisiana, and Alabama. I am very grateful for this commitment.

USDA BIOBASED MARKETS PROGRAM

Mr. KING. Madam President, I appreciate the opportunity to talk with the Chairman today to get clarity about the products that will be included in the USDA Biobased Markets Program. The Senator's hard work and vision on the issue of innovation in natural resources industries has provided the essential leadership to support growth in this critical economic sector.

I greatly appreciate the work that she and Senator COCHRAN did to expand the program's application in this farm bill, including the explicit definition of forest products and the expanded definition of innovation as it applies to the program.

The Senator and I both represent States that have strong forest products industries in fact in Maine there are over 16,700 people who are employed by the forestry, logging, wood products, and pulp and paper industries. This industry also helps ensure that Maine's 233,000 family woodland owners have income to conserve and sustain their working forests. Both of our States' forest-based economies have been hit hard by the downturn in the housing market as well as increased pressure overseas so it is important that we do not further hinder them in any way.

I have learned recently of the USDA Biobased Markets Program and the fact that in some cases, this program favors foreign products and other biobased products over forest products, which are some of the most biobased products in existence.

Ms. STABENOW. I thank the Senator for raising this important issue. In Michigan the same industries employ over 24,600 people and I agree that these jobs are vital to the economy. I was pleased to be able to lay out a clearer path forward in this farm bill for the inclusion of forest products in USDA's Biobased Markets Program.

Mr. KING. I would like to clarify that it is not the Committee's or the

Senator's intent to exclude forest products from this program. And I would also like to clarify the meaning of the new provisions around innovation in the program.

Ms. STABENOW. Yes, it is our intent to include forest products that apply an innovative approach to growing, harvesting, sourcing, procuring, processing, manufacturing, or application of biobased products. Products should be included regardless of the date of entry of the product into the marketplace.

Mr. KING. Let me give the Senator an example of a forest products manufacturer in my home state that I believe is incredibly innovative in how they grow and source their materials for their products.

Verso Paper Company has 1600 employees at their two mills in Bucksport and Jay. They make coated commercial printing papers that utilize manufacturing technologies that deliver increasingly improved print quality through new coating formulations that incorporate newly developed chemicals and materials. These products are some of the most biobased products in the marketplace and should be eligible for the program.

In addition to these changes in their product, Verso has also in the last few years, significantly increased innovation in the sourcing of their products, by increasing the amount of certified, sustainable fiber that feeds their mills.

An improvement in this year's bill is the addition of language that allows for innovation in the sourcing and application of biobased products. In regards to innovation in sourcing of biobased products does the Senator agree that innovations like forest certification systems would qualify products for the program?

Ms. STABENOW. I appreciate the Senator mentioning Verso, since they also have a mill in Quinnesec, MI and recently made a significant investment in upgrading its energy system. It is our intention that products that are sourced with innovative sourcing strategies like forest certification systems and products that have improved their manufacturing are included in the program.

Mr. KING. I thank the Senator. And what about companies like Robbins Lumber in Maine that produces solid wood products, like 2x4s or flooring? While the product may be the same product that has been on the market for decades, the company producing it now generates all the heating for the mill and offices as well as the energy for drying lumber from their own biomass waste, as compared with using energy from the grid. Further, they have worked with several organizations to permanently conserve thousands of acres of land for wildlife habitat and recreation.

Ms. STABENOW. That truly is what we are trying to inspire with this innovation provision we are trying to help companies think outside the box in

how they can improve their processes. Their efforts in both energy generation from waste and land conservation are both excellent examples that they are doing so.

Mr. KING. I thank the Senator. Again I truly appreciate the attention to this issue and look forward to working with you and USDA in the implementation of this legislation to support the important forest products industry which has been an integral part of the economy of this country for centuries.

• Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, I would like to make a few remarks about the farm bill that's before the Senate this week.

As my colleagues know, this is our second attempt in 2 years to pass a new 5-year farm bill. The Senate passed its version last Congress, which is essentially the same bill we are debating today. Last year, the House refused to consider the Senate bill with good reason. This bill is loaded with costly farm subsidies and hidden pet-projects. I believe most Americans would be angered to know how we are wasting their hard-earned tax dollars.

Congress already plunged our Nation into \$16 trillion worth of debt partially through farm bills like this. On average, Congress spends about \$1 trillion more annually than the Federal budget allows. According to the Congressional Budget office, the budget deficit for fiscal year 2014 will be about \$624 billion. This bill alone—all one-thousand pages—will cost nearly \$1 trillion. That's almost \$1 billion per page. We must reduce the size of the Federal Government and the farm bill is certainly ripe for cuts.

I will concede that my colleagues on the Senate Agriculture Committee did make some effort to eliminate our more outdated farm subsidy programs like the Direct Payments Program, which spends about \$5 billion a year to pay farmers of staple crops like corn whether or not they grow anything. Direct payments have held on for decades until now. Perhaps that gives the American public a sense of the shelf-life of the new farm subsidies we are debating today.

Unfortunately, the savings generated by eliminating direct payments are plugged back into the farm bill to finance new, more expensive subsidies like those that are part of the Federal Crop Insurance Program. While I agree that our farmers need some form of safety net, farm bill crop insurance isn't "insurance" as most people know it. Crop insurance is just a roundabout way to influence the free market, subsidize overproduction and ultimately fleece consumers. Taxpayers spend \$14 billion a year subsidizing about 60 percent of insurance premiums for everything from oysters to almonds. Even non-food products like tobacco get \$33 million a year in crop insurance hand-outs. Worse yet, crop insurance isn't about protecting farmers against crop losses due to weather or infestation; it

protects farmers against revenue loss. I am hard pressed to think of any other industry in America that can take out an insurance policy at the taxpayer's expense to ensure their profits. This is clearly egregious when one realizes that commodity prices are at record-highs.

This is all part of farm bill politics. In order to pass a farm bill, Congress must find a way to appease every special interest and every commodity association. Here are some other examples of hand-outs that special interests win in this year's farm bill: \$150 million to establish a "Citrus Research Trust Fund" as well as a "Wool Apparel Manufacture Trust Fund"; \$25 million to study the health benefits of lima beans and peas; \$1.4 million to study commercial mushroom growing; \$1.3 million to study the DNA sequencing of Christmas trees; \$25 million to teach school children how to grow food in backyard gardens; \$10 million for eliminating "feral swine"; \$200 million for the Market Access Program, which subsidizes overseas advertising campaigns for large corporations, like handing out samples of Tennessee whiskey in India or subsidizing a sampling tour of mint candies in the U.K.

This is how we pass behemoth farm bills the Capitol Hill-rule of "dispersed costs and concentrated benefits."

Take for example the protectionist provision concerning catfish inspections that was added in conference to the 2008 Farm Bill. It forces USDA to create a special catfish inspection office that will cost taxpayers \$15 million a year. GAO has said it is duplicative and wasteful of FDA seafood inspection services. But it helps prop up domestic catfish farmers in southern States from having to compete with Asian catfish imports. I had an amendment to repeal this office but was denied the courtesy of a vote despite it having 15 cosponsors and overwhelming support in the Senate. My statement on this matter is in the RECORD of last week when I attempted to call up my amendment and make it pending.

I also sought a vote on another amendment that I introduced with Senator TOOMEY concerning the repeal of something known as "permanent farm law." Because of permanent farm law, it's not an option for my colleagues or I who want to put our feet down and say enough is enough to reckless farm bills. Permanent farm law is essentially old farm bills from 1938 and 1949 that are still on the books that automatically kick-in if we fail to renew the farm bill or pass a temporary extension.

Reverting to permanent farm law requires USDA to implement economic Soviet-style "command and control" policies that require farmers to achieve "parity prices" rooted in 1914 which bear no resemblance to today's market. Nobody wants permanent farm law because it would severely disrupt planting decisions for farmers and, according to USDA, will cost taxpayers up to

\$50 billion in subsidies and increase food prices by \$20 billion. Yet these Depression-era farm bills work as a "deadman's switch" to pressure Congress into passing modern farm bills. This almost happened last year when the Senate passed a farm bill and the House did not. Americans may remember we faced a "dairy cliff" in December when milk would double to \$7 per gallon of milk. Within one week of the pressure from national media coverage over the "dairy cliff," Congress rushed through a business-as-usual extension of the 2008 farm bill that was absent of any reform.

There's no reason to keep a 1938 farm law on the books except to force Congress into passing farm bills by holding consumers hostage. My amendment would have repealed this permanent farm law to prevent this budgetary gamesmanship from repeating. But again, the Senate's farm bill managers refused to allow us a vote on this amendment as well.

At the end of the day, this farm bill will be hailed by its supporters as reform-minded. But let me assure the American public, it is anything but. It was managed under a closed-amendment process and will prove to be just as wasteful and costly as any farm bill we have seen to date.

For these reasons, I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing this bill. •

Mrs. FISCHER. Madam President, I rise today to speak on amendment No. 1169, a bipartisan amendment that Senator CARPER and I offered to the farm bill to fix bureaucratic hurdles that impact farmers' access to seeds. Like so many of the amendments that were offered to this farm bill, our amendment unfortunately was not considered despite broad, bipartisan support and a strong need for the legislation.

Legislation is needed to ensure that American farmers continue to have sufficient quantities of seeds each planting season. Every year, seed is produced in South America in the winter and is delivered just-in-time for spring planting in the United States. Due to the historic drought in 2012, it is estimated that 20 percent of U.S. corn seed will be brought in from South America for planting in 2013.

All seeds are regulated by the Department of Agriculture, USDA. All imported seed must be accompanied by the appropriate forms required by Customs and Border Protection, CBP and USDA, allowing the U.S. Government to electronically track the shipments. In addition to providing information on the seed and the U.S. destination, if seed is still in a research and development phase, it is imported under a strict permitting program administered by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, APHIS. As part of its oversight role, USDA also frequently samples and tests incoming seed shipments.

The Environmental Protection Agency, EPA requires a Notice of Arrival,

NOA for all pesticides that enter the United States. Recently and without warning, EPA began requiring the same NOA form used for imported chemical pesticides on seed import shipments. These duplicative and unnecessary paperwork requirements imposed by EPA threaten to disrupt vital seed shipments.

The NOA is designed for imports of commercial pesticides not seeds, and EPA procedures are antiquated. The form cannot be processed electronically. It must be physically presented to and signed by EPA and then returned to the importer who then gives it to CBP so the shipment can enter. Some 2,000 to 3,000 shipments of counter-seasonally-produced commercial seed arrive 24 hours a day, 7 days a week during the critical period from January to April, but EPA only operates during regular business hours. This volume can quickly overwhelm the NOA process. A delay of even a day can result in delayed deliveries, delayed plantings, and reduced yield for farmers.

EPA has never issued any rule or guidance suggesting that seeds containing a pesticide require an NOA to enter the country. However, EPA officials have been enforcing this requirement for commercial seeds containing a pesticide. No seeds should be subjected to these additional paperwork requirements.

Our amendment to the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, FIFRA would clarify the roles of EPA and USDA and ensure that unnecessary paperwork does not disrupt an adequate supply of seeds. This language would clarify that the NOA required for the importation of conventional pesticides is not required for imports of treated seed. All seeds would continue to be regulated by USDA under existing statutes and would remain subject to all applicable USDA and CBP entry requirements. EPA's authority to regulate the pesticides themselves would not be affected.

This bipartisan legislation was adopted by voice vote as an amendment to the House Agriculture Committee farm bill and is supported by the American Farm Bureau Federation, American Seed Trade Association, National Farmers Union, Agricultural Retailers Association, National Corn Growers Association, and National Council of Farmer Cooperatives.

Senator CARPER and I worked with Senator BOXER to make changes to our amendment to address concerns about the scope of the amendment. We are hopeful that when the farm bill is considered in conference, our amendment is adopted.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I rise today in support of the Senate farm bill, S. 954, which would make significant reforms to federal agriculture programs and important investments in nutrition, conservation, and rural development. In addition to providing a safe and healthful food supply, Amer-

ica's farmers sustain our rural communities, protect the environment, and preserve the open space that is a vital part of our heritage.

This 5-year reauthorization bill demonstrates much-needed fiscal responsibility by eliminating wasteful direct payments, which over the years have provided financial benefits to hundreds of wealthy individuals not involved in farming. Overall, the bill would cut spending by \$24 billion, which is a step in the right direction.

The farm bill contains some significant help for family farms in Maine and throughout the country. It contains a provision I authored with Senator GILLIBRAND that would reform the way the USDA sets dairy prices, reforms that are supported by Maine's dairy farmers. The provision would require the USDA to begin the hearing process to restructure the milk pricing system and would direct the Secretary of Agriculture to release the Department's recommendations to Congress.

S. 954 would maintain fruit and vegetable research programs, which are critical for Maine's potato and wild blueberry growers. In addition, the bill includes several local and organic food initiatives that would benefit Maine's agriculture community.

The bill would also continue vital programs to address hunger and nutrition promotion while strengthening the integrity and accountability of federal nutrition programs. I was pleased to see the adoption of commonsense reforms and the rejection of an amendment that would have made harmful changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program safety net.

Given the significant budget pressures, the bill would appropriately improve the effectiveness of conservation and rural energy initiatives. S. 954 demonstrates a continuing commitment to voluntary working lands programs that help improve stewardship practices with technical assistance and cost-share programs for working agricultural and private forest lands, including in Maine.

There are, however, some disappointments. In an arbitrary decision by the USDA, the fresh white potato is the only fresh vegetable or fruit to be specifically excluded from the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, or WIC. I filed an amendment that would allow for the purchase of nutritious and affordable fresh white potatoes in WIC, which is cosponsored by a group of bipartisan colleagues, including Senators MARK UDALL, RISCH, KING, CRAPO, BENNET, JOHANNIS, SCHUMER, CANTWELL, and BALDWIN. The modification I proposed is strongly endorsed by Maine's potato industry and supported by sound nutritional science, and I am disappointed I was denied a vote on it. I will continue to press for this reform as the Senate and House negotiate a final farm bill.

An amendment I cosponsored with Senator LEAHY that would eliminate a

payment limit for organic farmers under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, also did not receive a vote. It is also regrettable that the amendment to reform the sugar program by Senator SHAHEEN, which I cosponsored and which was endorsed by a broad coalition of consumer, business, and environmental groups, failed to pass. According to CBO, these reforms would save \$82 million over the next 10 years.

The leadership of the Senate Agriculture Committee deserves credit for putting together a bipartisan farm bill during this time of partisanship. This bill is a welcome change from the previous reauthorization, which was loaded with wasteful spending and subsidies. I continue, however, to have concerns that the cost of this farm bill remains too high and that more should be done to reform agribusiness programs to help address our skyrocketing deficit. This is an area I hope Congress will continue to work on moving forward.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, despite its name, farm bill policies touch the lives of all Americans, not just those who work in the agricultural sector. In addition to reauthorizing farm programs, this legislation deals with domestic and international food aid, conservation and the environment, trade, rural development, renewable energy, forestry, and financial markets, among other issues. This year's reauthorization presented an opportunity to enact significant reforms in these critical areas. While some progress was made, I believe the bill falls short of its potential and, ultimately, I cannot support it.

The farm bill took an important step toward reform by ending the longstanding practice of giving direct payments to farmers of certain commodity crops, regardless of whether a farmer experienced losses or even planted a crop. It also places caps on the amount of farm payments an individual can receive, expands crop insurance opportunities for specialty and organic crops, establishes conservation compliance as a requirement for receiving premium insurance subsidies, and invests in rural broadband.

In spite of these successes, however, the farm bill does not do enough for Rhode Island families.

Of greatest concern to me, it includes a \$4.5 billion cut over 10 years to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP also known as food stamps. These cuts could lead to a reduction in food stamp benefits for an estimated 500,000 households across the country, including possibly 20,000 households in Rhode Island. SNAP is our Nation's most important anti-hunger program. In this challenging economic climate, which has affected low-income individuals more harshly than anyone, and from which Rhode Island is recovering very slowly, it is wrong to cut critical food-assistance funding.

I am also discouraged that this legislation provides no funds for fisheries

disasters, including those declared in 2012. Like our farmers, fishermen feed this nation. Americans enjoyed an average of 15 pounds of fish and shellfish per person in 2011, making us second in total seafood consumption in the world. Accordingly, fishing is also a major economic cornerstone of our coastal communities. In 2011, fisheries supported over 1.2 million jobs in the United States.

Despite adhering to strict catch limits, many fishermen and historic fishing communities are suffering dramatic declines in stocks. In 2012, Commerce Secretary Bryson and Acting Secretary Blank issued fisheries disaster declarations ranging from Alaska to Samoa, and from Mississippi up to my home State of Rhode Island. Despite being included in the Senate version, emergency funding for many of these fisheries was left out of final version of the Sandy disaster relief bill ultimately signed into law.

Farm bill programs provide billions of dollars in subsidies and technical assistance to farmers every year. In comparison, fishermen have little access to similar kinds of federal subsidies. Several amendments have been filed that attempt to correct this inequity, including the creation of a pilot program for Farm Service Agency operating loans and crop insurance for shellfish growers. We are a long way, however, from adequately supporting and protecting the role of fisheries in our food supply chain. Fishermen remain second-class citizens when it comes to federal support.

Finally, American agriculture springs from the richness of our land and natural resources, and the farm bill has long supported programs to conserve and protect those resources. As the harmful effects of climate change become more prevalent, our agricultural policy should reflect the threat posed to farming and food production by these changes. In this farm bill, "climate change" and "extreme weather" are hardly even mentioned. Congress can start by opening the Regional Conservation Partnership Program to climate change adaptation and mitigation projects.

The farm bill is important and wide-ranging legislation. Unfortunately, the bill before the Senate leaves out essential protections for low-income Americans, hard-hit fisheries, and precious natural resources.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, I rise today in opposition to amendment No. 991, filed by my colleague, the junior Senator from South Dakota.

This amendment would eliminate \$2 billion from SNAP by limiting the funds available for cost-effective nutrition education programs.

While I appreciate and share my colleague's deep commitment to deficit reduction, this amendment would do so at the expense of those who can least afford it.

It is a shortsighted amendment pennywise and pound foolish.

A \$2 billion cut to this program would chip away at vital programs that combat obesity, a growing epidemic that weighs on our health care system and our economy. Estimates of the medical cost of adult obesity in the United States range from \$147 billion to nearly \$210 billion per year, according to the Trust for America's Health.

Cutting this program may save money in the short term, but it would cripple ongoing efforts to deliver innovative and effective nutrition education to the most vulnerable populations in our country.

And these education programs are working, Madam President.

According to a study published in the Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior, USDA's SNAP nutrition education programs contributed to a 17 percent increase in the number of California adults who ate at least five servings of fruits and vegetables each day.

The study showed that the greatest improvements in daily fruit and vegetable consumption were seen in populations with the greatest need.

There was a 91 percent increase among the poorest segment of the population, those with less than \$15,000 in annual income, who consumed five or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day; a 77 percent improvement in the African American population, and a 43 percent improvement in the Latino population.

The staggering cost of obesity will continue to increase until we take significant action to improve our health and diet.

That's not to say that there's no room for reform; there certainly is.

That is why Congress passed the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act 3 years ago, a bill that made significant reforms to SNAP nutrition education programs.

Most notably, the law changed how the program is funded to make it more equitable. The formula now reflects the actual number of SNAP beneficiaries in each State.

Some would have us believe that the amendment, which mandates an across-the-board \$5 cap per recipient, is fiscally responsible. I don't think that is the case. I believe this is simply an attempt to redistribute SNAP funding to States that have shown no interest in reducing obesity among SNAP beneficiaries.

Under the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010, funding for the SNAP Education Program is allotted based on two factors: a State's historical contributions to healthy eating and lifestyle programs, and the number of SNAP participants in the State.

The amendment offered by my colleague from South Dakota undoes that formula, instead allocating funds solely on a per-recipient basis.

The Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act formula was the product of a compromise.

The old formula, which allowed the Federal Government to match all State

contributions to programs that encourage healthy eating and lifestyles for SNAP recipients, was not affordable.

By eliminating the unlimited match provision and replacing it with a block grant, the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act was able to save taxpayers more than \$1 billion over 10 years.

In exchange for this reduction, a new formula was created. Under the new provision, States that committed hundreds of millions of their own dollars to reduce obesity, like California and Michigan, received marginally higher obesity education funding from USDA.

And States that had not dedicated their own resources to combating obesity received a relatively smaller share of the funding.

Allowing the changes from 2010, which are just now being implemented, to take effect is the best way to effectively reform this program.

This amendment would devastate a program that helps SNAP-eligible children and families learn to stretch their food budgets, reduce hunger, make improvements to their diets and reduce obesity.

I urge my colleagues to let USDA implement the thoughtful comprehensive reforms from 2010.

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, the Agriculture Reform, Food, and Jobs Act of 2013 contains many important provisions for my State of Michigan and for our Nation's farmers and that is why I am voting in support. The Senate passed a farm bill in 2012, but the House took no action. This was unfortunate, as that farm bill as well as the one before us now contain important reforms to agricultural programs. Reforms that will better help farmers manage their risk and better protect the environment.

CBO estimates that the Senate introduced bill would reduce direct spending by \$18 billion over a 10-year period. The bulk of these savings come from the elimination of direct payments to growers and restructuring of conservation programs. While achieving this budgetary savings, the bill provides important funding for agricultural producers. I am pleased that this farm bill provides funding for specialty crops. My home State is second only to California in the number of crops grown and is second to none in production of 18 different commodities including tart cherries, cucumbers, blueberries, dry black and red beans and cranberries. The bill before us provides mandatory funding for the Specialty Crop Research Initiative, continues funding for specialty crop block grants and consolidates efforts to fight invasive pests.

The bill also includes important conservation provisions to reduce erosion, improve wildlife habitat, and protect water quality, including that of the Great Lakes. Compliance with conservation measures is required for lands receiving Federal assistance. Every year, about 600 million tons of topsoil erode from agricultural lands in the Great Lakes region. This soil erosion also includes fertilizer and other

chemicals, polluting waterways and contributing to harmful algal blooms, a growing problem in the Great Lakes. The conservation requirements in the bill would help prevent this from occurring, as well as protecting the soil quality and productivity of the farmland.

I am also pleased the bill includes the Regional Conservation Partnership Program, which would support locally-led conservation projects in priority watersheds such as the Great Lakes. The program would allow a broad range of issues to be addressed including sediment reduction, water quality improvements, and habitat conservation. Because the Great Lakes region already has a regional plan in place, our region should be able to effectively compete for the \$110 million in annual funding that would be provided for this program. We have made some solid progress in cleaning up our Great Lakes and other waters in Michigan, but there is still much to be done. The conservation funding provided in the farm bill would help to protect and restore the Great Lakes as well as Michigan's inland waterways.

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, sometimes Congress passes legislation that directly creates jobs. More often, we approach job creation indirectly, with legislation that lays the groundwork for a more productive and dynamic private sector. An excellent example of this is this new farm bill.

The chairwoman, Senator STABENOW, and the ranking member, Senator COCHRAN, deserve congratulations and our sincere gratitude for all of their efforts and their success in bringing this bill through the Agriculture Committee and to the Senate floor. And because this bill reflects so much of the work done in the last Congress, I also want to recognize the many contributions of Senator ROBERTS.

As a senior member and former chairman of the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, this is the eighth farm bill I have worked on since coming to Congress in 1975. I chaired the committee during passage of the 2002 and 2008 bills. From that experience, I can tell my colleagues the new farm bill—the Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act of 2013—is good for Iowa and our entire Nation.

It is a difficult enough process to craft a farm bill without the extra hardship of having to take spending reductions out of the budget baseline. These budget cuts are very difficult because there are compelling needs respecting food, agriculture, and rural America. This measure embodies genuine sacrifices and serious deficit reduction. It exceeds the farm bill deficit reduction in the budget resolution we passed here in the Senate.

This bill reflects a bipartisan balance among numerous competing demands. It was broadly supported in the committee and I hope it will be broadly supported by the full Senate. Again, I commend the leadership of our com-

mittee for striking that balance and building support for this legislation.

Overall net farm income has been strong in our Nation in recent years, and that has given a boost to rural economies. But this strong income has not been enjoyed by all producers of all commodities, or in all regions of the country. For example, many farmers and ranchers are still struggling to survive the devastating impact of drought and other natural disasters.

This bill wisely continues programs that offer some income protection and stability in the face of the inevitable natural disasters and swings in farm production levels and commodity prices. At the same time, this bill continues and builds upon important reforms in recent farm bills, for example, by strengthening and tightening payment limitations.

A landmark reform in this bill is eliminating what are called the direct commodity payments. From their inception, I did not believe the direct payments were sound or responsible policy. They were inadequate when farm prices and incomes fell. Yet when prices and incomes rose, the payments continued anyway, which was unjustified, and even embarrassing.

And so I support replacing the direct payments with the revenue protection program in this bill focused on protecting farmers against losses of revenue, taking into account both prices and yields. The new revenue program is an evolution of the Average Crop Revenue Election—ACRE—program that I was pleased we included in the 2008 farm bill. This bill also continues a strong crop insurance program, and in fact it makes it even more beneficial to farmers. That is certainly of substantial economic value to Iowa farmers.

In the conservation title, I commend Senator STABENOW, Senator COCHRAN, and Senator ROBERTS for important improvements in the programs, and for continuing the Conservation Stewardship Program and other critical initiatives with substantial funding levels. I do very much regret that conservation funding is cut from the budget baseline levels, but I commend and thank the leaders of our committee for limiting those conservation budget cuts.

I especially want to express my strong congratulations for the momentous agreement that was reached between the farm community and the conservation community to reinstate minimum conservation requirements in order for a farmer to receive Federal crop insurance subsidies. This is a very important policy reform. I very strongly urge my colleagues to support this agreement on making basic conservation an integral part of crop insurance.

I am pleased this bill continues to provide fresh fruits and vegetables to school children across the country. That is an initiative I started and expanded as chairman. I regret, however, that this legislation reduces funding for nutrition assistance to low-income Americans. I commend the chairwoman

and ranking member for limiting these reductions. I intend to try to mitigate cuts to antihunger programs as the legislative process moves forward.

In the several farm and rural energy programs in the bill, I am very pleased with the substantial level of mandatory funding dedicated to continue these effective and beneficial initiatives.

So, again, I thank the chairwoman and the ranking member for their good work and pledge my support to them in moving this bill through the Senate and to conference with the House—once the House passes its bill, we hope—and then to the President.

This new farm bill is vitally important to our Nation and especially to productivity, vitality and jobs in our Nation's food and agriculture sector. It is far too important to be delayed any longer.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, today I will vote to pass a bipartisan measure to reauthorize the many important programs and reforms included in this year's farm bill. Chairman STABENOW and Senator COCHRAN are to be commended for the good work they and other Agriculture Committee members put into developing this legislation.

This bill is the most sweeping reform of agriculture programs in recent memory. Gone are outdated direct payments that are made regardless of profitability of the farm. Instead, we strengthen the crop insurance program, a vital safety net for our producers, while making commonsense reforms. The amendment I offered with Senator COBURN reducing premium support for the wealthiest farmers is a part of these reforms. So is the move to require conservation compliance from farmers who benefit from subsidized crop insurance. I hope these will be retained in a final conference version of the bill.

The energy title includes mandatory funding for programs to expand bio-based manufacturing, advanced biofuels, and renewable energy. These programs help companies in Illinois like Archer Daniels Midland and Patriot Renewable Fuels process and manufacture products in rural America. There are many examples in Illinois of new markets being developed and new jobs being created in rural areas because of the growth in bio-based industries.

The bill also includes mandatory spending, reauthorizes, and expands several programs in the research title. A new Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research will leverage public dollars to generate private investment in ag research. These investments are important to Illinois producers and major research institutions like the University of Illinois, Southern Illinois University, the Peoria Agriculture Lab, and several other universities and labs across Illinois.

Finally, the bill ensures that programs are in place to help our rural communities grow and thrive and it reauthorizes food assistance programs for

those most in need, at home and abroad. And it does all this while saving roughly \$24 billion compared to pre-sequestration budget levels.

As the Senate and House work through conference, I urge my colleagues to protect access to SNAP for the over 23 million households that depend on the program. It is my great hope that when a final version of the 2013 farm bill is considered in the Senate, I will be able to fully support a bill that protects this important nutrition program.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, across Vermont's food system, businesses are starting, expanding, and creating good jobs. Ever more local food is available in stores, restaurants, and institutions throughout the State and in greater supply, for more months of the year. Important programs are reaching more food insecure Vermonters with fresh, healthy food. Thanks to the Senate farm bill we will continue to see these improvements in Vermont and across the country.

Nationwide agriculture supports 16 million jobs. In Vermont our farms and private forestlands play a large role in our economy and our State's cultural and historical identity. Iconic images of Vermont's farms and forests bring millions of visitors to the State each year, supporting our local communities.

The 2013 farm bill that the Senate passed today will continue to support our farmers and rural communities, while also reforming agricultural programs to save taxpayers billions of dollars. I am encouraged that the Senate Agriculture Committee Chairwoman DEBBIE STABENOW and our ranking member THAD COCHRAN have been able to bring the Senate together to pass a bipartisan farm bill. A farm bill that saves more than \$23 billion. A bill that includes many compromises. This bill provides an important framework to help farmers and ranchers in all regions of the country manage their risks more effectively, especially our country's dairy farmers, who strongly support the dairy provisions in the Senate-passed farm bill.

I must also thank the chairwoman for her assistance with my gigabit broadband pilot amendment. This small pilot effort is an important addition to the bill and the broadband program and will help to ensure that the taxpayer dollars we are investing in networks will not become obsolete within the next few years. Gigabit Internet is spreading to cities across the country, and this pilot will allow USDA to test out investment in gigabit networks in rural areas on a pilot basis. The next generation gigabit networks will transform everything from the reliability of the electrical grid, to education and healthcare in rural America. We cannot leave rural America behind in the dust while the rest of the country moves into this next stage of the digital era.

I urge the U.S. House of Representatives to follow suit by bringing a farm

bill up for debate as soon as possible. Time already is running short for us to bring Senate and House bills to a conference committee to work out the vast differences and arrive at a compromise farm bill that can be signed into law prior to the Sept. 30 expiration of the current bill. Farmers face enough uncertainty in their work and do not need Congress to compound the variables with which they must contend by once again delaying final action on a farm bill. Our farmers and the American people deserve a new farm bill and a balanced bill like the one we have passed in the Senate today, a bill which supports our nutrition, conservation, rural development, and farm programs. Our farmers cannot afford to be kept in limbo any longer by congressional gridlock.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, all postcloture time is expired. The question occurs on amendment No. 998, offered by the Senator from Vermont, Mr. LEAHY.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, this amendment is very simple. It sets up a pilot program for real ultra-high-speed Internet in rural areas. We are going to have this in urban areas. All we are saying is let rural areas—and every single Senator represents a rural area somewhere in their State—allow rural areas to compete with urban areas for jobs, for education, for medical care.

The ultra-high-speed Internet service pilot is narrow in scope, carefully drafted. I know it is supported by the distinguished chair and distinguished ranking member. It has the potential of bringing, as I said earlier, the innovation of Silicon Valley to the Upper Valley in Vermont and rural areas across the country.

It is almost what we had to argue about rural electricity back before I was born—whether rural areas would be the same as urban areas. This makes it possible.

I urge its passage.

Ms. STABENOW. I urge a "yes" vote on the Leahy amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the Leahy amendment.

Mr. COCHRAN. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL), the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. UDALL), and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) are necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS), the Sen-

ator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT), and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) would have voted "nay."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 48, nays 38, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 144 Leg.]

YEAS—48

Baldwin	Hagan	Murphy
Baucus	Harkin	Murray
Bennet	Heinrich	Nelson
Boxer	Heitkamp	Pryor
Cantwell	Hirono	Reed
Cardin	Johanns	Reid
Carper	Johnson (SD)	Rockefeller
Casey	Kaine	Schatz
Collins	King	Schumer
Coons	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Cowan	Landrieu	Stabenow
Donnelly	Leahy	Tester
Durbin	Levin	Udall (NM)
Feinstein	Menendez	Warren
Franken	Merkley	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Mikulski	Wyden

NAYS—38

Alexander	Cruz	McCaskill
Ayotte	Enzi	McConnell
Barrasso	Fischer	Moran
Blunt	Flake	Portman
Boozman	Grassley	Risch
Burr	Hatch	Roberts
Chiesa	Heller	Rubio
Coats	Hoeben	Sessions
Coburn	Inhofe	Shelby
Cochran	Isakson	Thune
Corker	Johnson (WI)	Toomey
Cornyn	Kirk	Wicker
Crapo	Lee	

NOT VOTING—14

Begich	Manchin	Scott
Blumenthal	McCain	Udall (CO)
Brown	Murkowski	Vitter
Chambliss	Paul	Warner
Graham	Sanders	

The amendment (No. 998) was agreed to.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. We have one more vote tonight on final passage.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill for the third time.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading and was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill having been read the third time, under the previous order the question is, Shall it pass?

Mr. COATS. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH), the

Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. UDALL), and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) are necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), and the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) would have voted “nay.”

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DONNELLY). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 66, nays 27, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 145 Leg.]

YEAS—66

Alexander	Durbin	McCaskill
Baldwin	Feinstein	Menendez
Baucus	Fischer	Merkley
Bennet	Franken	Mikulski
Blumenthal	Gillibrand	Moran
Blunt	Graham	Murphy
Boozman	Grassley	Murray
Boxer	Hagan	Nelson
Brown	Harkin	Pryor
Burr	Heinrich	Reid
Cantwell	Heitkamp	Rockefeller
Cardin	Hirono	Sanders
Carper	Hoeven	Schatz
Casey	Isakson	Schumer
Chambliss	Johanns	Shaheen
Chiesa	Johnson (SD)	Stabenow
Coats	Kaine	Tester
Cochran	King	Udall (NM)
Collins	Klobuchar	Vitter
Coons	Landrieu	Warren
Cowan	Leahy	Wicker
Donnelly	Levin	Wyden

NAYS—27

Ayotte	Hatch	Risch
Barrasso	Heller	Roberts
Coburn	Inhofe	Rubio
Corker	Johnson (WI)	Scott
Cornyn	Kirk	Sessions
Crapo	Lee	Shelby
Cruz	McConnell	Thune
Enzi	Portman	Toomey
Flake	Reed	Whitehouse

NOT VOTING—7

Begich	Murkowski	Warner
Manchin	Paul	
Mccain	Udall (CO)	

(The bill will be printed in a future edition of the RECORD.)

VOTE EXPLANATIONS

• Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I was not able to vote on final passage of the farm bill today due to an urgent personal matter, but I want the record to reflect my strong support for the Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act. Last year I voted in favor of the farm bill and would have once again supported this bipartisan legislation. S. 954 gives Virginia’s farmers the certainty they need, supports the economies of our rural communities and also improves current farm programs. I am proud that the bill contains two of my priorities: ensuring farmers in the Chesapeake Bay watershed get a fair share of conservation funding and reforming broadband financing programs to provide greater accountability and transparency. I would like to thank the chairwoman and ranking member for their tireless efforts, and wish I could have been there to cast my vote for this important, bipartisan legislation. •

• Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, I was unable to return to Washington, DC, prior to the votes this evening due to unavoidable travels delays that were beyond my control and was therefore unable to cast a vote for rollcall votes No. 144 and 145, Leahy amendment No. 998 and final passage of the farm bill, S. 954. Had I been present, I would have voted “yea” on each. •

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 5 minutes. Following my remarks, Senator SESSIONS will have the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE FARM BILL

Mr. BROWN. Under the leadership of Chairman STABENOW and Ranking Member COCHRAN, the Senate has again passed a bipartisan deficit-reducing bill that will help our farms, our families, our economy, and our environment.

The Agriculture Reform, Food, and Jobs Act of 2013 is a good start to cultivating a new era of prosperity in our country and reinvesting in rural America. That is because this bill benefits all Americans, especially in my home State of Ohio.

One in seven jobs in Ohio, in places such as Custar and Defiance, is related to food and agriculture. To keep our economy growing, the farm bill must remain a priority here in Congress. We have shown the Senate can do its part.

To people who are uncertain about our ability to work across the aisle, I say look at this farm bill. To people who are concerned about spending in Washington, I say look at this farm bill. To people who are disheartened about our ability to help low-income families make ends meet, I say look at this farm bill.

This bill saves more than \$24 billion, and it maintains important investments in conservation, nutrition, renewable energy, and rural development. Farmers across Ohio and across the country tell us they want a leaner, more efficient, and market-oriented farm safety net. Taxpayers deserve that too.

By eliminating direct payments, linking crop insurance to conservation compliance, and by further reforming our risk management programs, the Senate has taken that first step.

Every farmer knows the importance of building on last season’s work. Last year, Senators THUNE, DURBIN, Lugar—the predecessor—the Presiding Officer, and I proposed the Aggregate Risk and Revenue Management Program, streamlining the farmer safety net, making it more market-oriented. The Agricultural Risk Coverage Program included in this bill gives farmers the tools they need to mitigate risks, en-

suring that payments happen only when farmers need them most. The program relies on current data and, as a result, is more responsive to farmers’ needs and more responsive to taxpayers.

It also includes a provision to help Ohio farmers and producers sell their products directly to consumers. It will make a world of difference to families and schools that want to eat locally grown food. I appreciate the efforts, interest, and support of Senator COCHRAN in those efforts.

However, this bill does not include my food and agriculture market development amendment, cosponsored by 14 of my colleagues, to provide needed funding to several important programs that support the development of a stronger, more sustainable food system. We will work on that in the House.

By aligning our agricultural, health, and economic policies in ways that ensure farmers get a fair price for their product, all Americans can have access to affordable, healthy food, while contributing to strong communities and thriving local economies.

The farm bill affects every American every day. It is a deficit reduction bill. It is a jobs bill, conservation bill, rural development bill, and it is bipartisan.

I commend again Senator STABENOW and Senator COCHRAN for their work in crafting this bill, and their joint effort to work across party lines is to be commended.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I want to thank the Senate for passing this very important farm bill, the Agriculture Reform, Food, and Jobs Act of 2013.

I especially thank my colleagues DEBBIE STABENOW and PAT ROBERTS and their staff members for the hard work they devoted to this effort. Their bill, when it was begun, passed the Senate last year. Their legislation became the starting point for our work this year on the bill.

The chairwoman of the Agriculture Committee, Senator STABENOW, and her staff director, Chris Adamo, have been outstanding leaders in this effort. I would at this opportunity thank them and all of the members of their staff for their hard work in developing a strategy and developing language of a bill that could enjoy such broad support.

Members of our committee staff and my personal office staff have worked very hard too in this effort. I would like to thank them for their contributions. I appreciate their hard work. They include my staff director, T. A. Hawks, Nona McCoy, Kevin Batteh, Darrell Dixon, Adam Telle, Daniel Ulmer, Ben Mosely, Taylor Nicholas, Julian Baer, Andrew Vlasaty, Chris Gallegos, Steven Wall, Keith Coble, Anne Hazlett, James Glueck, and Sarah Margaret Hewes. The staff members have done an outstanding job, and

I am very pleased they have been members of our team. For all of them and especially for the Senators and the support we have received today, we appreciate the support very much.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

FORTY-EIGHTH ANNIVERSARY OF GRISWOLD V. CONNECTICUT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, 48 years ago on June 5, the U.S. Supreme Court made a landmark ruling in *Griswold v. Connecticut*, which legalized birth control for married couples in all 50 States and paved the way for women and men to have legal access to contraception.

The Justices' decision not only recognized birth control as a right protected under our Constitution, but empowered women and families to make decisions in the best interest of their health and well-being.

In fact, access to birth control has had such a dramatic impact on women and families in this country that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention named it one of the top 10 public health achievements of the past century, along with vaccinations and adding fluoride to water.

Family planning and contraceptive services give women and couples the ability to determine timing of births and family size.

Research shows that having smaller families and spacing out births improve the health of children and women.

Access to contraception also improves the economic and social well-being of women.

Contraception allows young women to postpone pregnancy until they finish school, secure a good job, and are as ready as any parent can be to start a family.

The benefits of contraception help not only women, but their children.

When parents have prepared themselves financially and mentally to love and support a child, the child reaps all the benefits.

While the Supreme Court's 1965 ruling on *Griswold v. Connecticut* paved the way for legalizing contraception, the Federal Government has played a key role in expanding access to family planning services.

In 1970, under President Nixon, title X was created and remains the only dedicated source of Federal funding for family planning services in the U.S.

Title X provides critical family planning and preventive health care to 5.2 million low-income and uninsured women and men across the country.

Title X services prevent nearly 1 million unintended pregnancies each year, almost half of which would otherwise end in abortion.

In 1972, 2 years after the creation of title X, Medicaid funding for family planning was authorized.

Last year, a key provision of the health care reform law took effect that builds on the legacy of *Griswold v. Connecticut*.

New health insurance plans will now cover a range of preventive health services, including contraception services, at no cost.

The annual cost of birth control pills can range from \$160 to \$600. For many women, that expense has been a barrier to accessing basic health care.

Over the last 48 years, we have made tremendous progress ensuring women have access to quality health care and are free to make decisions about their own health.

As we remember *Griswold v. Connecticut*, we must remember those who fought to ensure access to contraception. We must protect personal freedoms and defend our Nation from efforts to undermine access to basic health care.

AWARD OF ABILENE TROPHY TO ST. LOUIS REGION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise today to commend the communities of St. Louis and Southwestern Illinois region for winning the Air Mobility Command Community Support—Award also known as the Abilene Trophy—for their support of Scott Air Force Base in 2012.

The Abilene Trophy is presented annually to a civilian community recognized for providing outstanding support to a nearby US Air Force Air Mobility Command base. The award has been presented every year since 1998 and highlights the role our communities play in support of our service men and women and their families.

Scott Air Force Base in St. Clair County, IL, is home to the 375th Air Mobility Wing, the Air Force Reserve Command's 932nd Airlift Wing, and the Illinois Air National Guard's 126th Air Refueling Wing. Scott Air Force Base also headquarters major military organizations such as USTRANSCOM, the Air Force Global Logistics Support Center, and the Air Mobility Command. Winning the prestigious Abilene Trophy is particularly meaningful, given the multiple missions supported there.

The nomination package for the Abilene Trophy cited over 270 examples of how the surrounding communities have supported military personnel at the base, including in-kind donations such as \$500,000 worth of documented material aid through the H.E.R.O.E.S. Care program. Partnerships were built that could help servicemembers and their families find appropriate resources. Servicemembers and their families were recognized by major league sports teams such as the Cardinals and the Rams and by community schools and businesses. Countless other examples of generosity, support and gratitude from the community have provided financial, physical, and emotional support throughout the year.

We owe a great debt of gratitude to the men and women who have sacrificed their lives or go to work every day to protect our country. I am proud

to support those who have done so much for our Nation and am just as proud of those communities that do the same.

Congratulations to the Southwestern Illinois and St. Louis regions on winning the Abilene Trophy. Tomorrow's awards ceremony reminds us of your commitment to our servicemembers at Scott Air Force Base and to our military families.

SRI LANKA

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I rise to encourage our Department of State to review its current policies regarding the country of Sri Lanka, and seek further engagement with its leadership so as to assist them as they continue their progress toward complete reconciliation and reconstruction after 30 years of the civil war against the Tamil Tiger terrorists.

As you know, four years ago Sri Lanka defeated the Tamil rebels, and is currently recovering from the economic, political, and social upheaval caused by this destructive civil war. Peace has brought historic post-conflict recovery, and I find that Sri Lanka has brought the dividends of peace in an inclusive manner, in particular to those in the north and the east of the country from where suicide bombers and other terrorist attacks were once launched.

It is my understanding that, since the war ended, those two areas have seen an economic growth of 22%, compared to an average of 7.5% in the rest of the country. It is also my understanding that Sri Lanka has removed half a million anti-personnel mines, resettled 300,000 internally displaced people and re-established vital social services in the areas of health and education. It is making progress in other areas of reconciliation in accordance with its legislative and budgetary procedures, and is expected to conduct elections in the north in September—an important step towards political reconciliation. Such processes take time, as we have learned from our own Civil War.

It seems to me that Sri Lanka is developing into a key economy, both in its own right and as a gateway to India. It is my understanding that U.S. private investment there totals billions in long term Sri Lankan bonds. Such investments there, however, are not as visible as the airports and harbors financed by China and other governments. Regardless, it is my understanding that at this time, Sri Lanka continues to present a unique window of investment opportunities for U.S. companies.

In addition, Sri Lanka's geo-strategic location and deep-water ports could be vital to the long term financial and national security interests of the U.S. Some 50% of all container traffic and 70% of the world's energy supplies pass within sight of the Sri Lankan coast.