

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 4346

To direct the Secretary of Agriculture to provide assistance in support of nurseries and seed orchards, to establish a grant program in support of nurseries and seed orchards, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 15, 2024

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

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Agriculture to provide assistance in support of nurseries and seed orchards, to establish a grant program in support of nurseries and seed orchards, 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 “Reforestation, Nurs-
5 eries, and Genetic Resources Support Act of 2024” or the
6 “RNGR Support Act of 2024”.

7 **SEC. 2. NURSERY AND SEED ORCHARD SUPPORT.**

8 (a) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

1 (1) ELIGIBLE RECIPIENT.—The term “eligible
2 recipient” means—

3 (A) a State forestry agency;

4 (B) an Indian Tribe; and

5 (C) a private nursery that has experience
6 growing high-quality native trees of appropriate
7 genetic sources in bareroot or container
8 stocktypes specific for reforestation, restoration,
9 or conservation, including native plants and
10 seeds that are of cultural significance to Indian
11 Tribes.

12 (2) NURSERY.—The term “nursery” means a
13 tree or native plant nursery.

14 (3) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
15 the Secretary of Agriculture.

16 (4) SEED ORCHARD.—The term “seed orchard”
17 means a tree or native plant seed orchard.

18 (5) STATE.—The term “State” means—

19 (A) each of the several States;

20 (B) the District of Columbia;

21 (C) the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico;

22 and

23 (D) any territory or possession of the
24 United States.

1 (b) PARTNERSHIPS, COLLABORATION, AND OTHER
2 ASSISTANCE IN SUPPORT OF NURSERIES AND SEED OR-
3 CHARDS.—The Secretary, acting through the Chief of the
4 Forest Service, shall—

5 (1) partner with Federal and State agencies,
6 Indian Tribes, and private nurseries to provide
7 training, technical assistance, and research to nurs-
8 ery and tree establishment programs that support
9 natural regeneration, reforestation, agroforestry, and
10 afforestation;

11 (2) promote information-sharing to improve
12 technical knowledge and practices and understand
13 demands, climate change impacts, and other issues
14 as necessary to address all facets of the reforestation
15 pipeline;

16 (3) provide technical and financial assistance to
17 international nursery and tree establishment pro-
18 grams through the Forest Service International Pro-
19 grams, the Institute of Pacific Islands Forestry, and
20 the International Institute of Tropical Forestry;

21 (4) collaborate with other relevant Federal de-
22 partments and agencies, including the Foreign Agri-
23 cultural Service, the United States Agency for Inter-
24 national Development, and the United States Fish
25 and Wildlife Service, and international organiza-

tions, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, to provide technical and financial assistance relating to nurseries and reforestation;

(5) coordinate the efforts of the Department of Agriculture—

(A) to address the challenges associated with the reforestation pipeline; and

(B) to leverage economic development assistance for work with private nurseries; and

(6) expand climate-informed reforestation supply chains through science and research, seed collection and storage, and nursery infrastructure and operations.

(c) NURSERY AND SEED ORCHARD GRANTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall establish a program to provide grants to eligible recipients to support nurseries and seed orchards.

(2) ELIGIBLE PROJECTS.—An eligible recipient that receives a grant under paragraph (1) shall carry out a project that comprises one or more of the following activities:

1 (A) The development, expansion, enhance-
2 ment, or improvement of nursery production ca-
3 pacity or other infrastructure—

4 (i) to improve seed collection and stor-
5 age;

6 (ii) to increase seedling production,
7 storage, and distribution; or

8 (iii) to enhance seedling survival and
9 properly manage tree genetic resources.

10 (B) The establishment or expansion of a
11 nursery or seed orchard, including by acquiring
12 equipment for a nursery or seed orchard.

13 (C) The development or implementation of
14 quality control measures at nurseries or seed
15 orchards.

16 (D) The promotion of workforce develop-
17 ment within any facet of the reforestation pipe-
18 line.

19 (E) Such other activities as the Secretary
20 determines to be appropriate.

21 (d) FUNDING.—

22 (1) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

23 There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out
24 this section \$25,000,000 for each of fiscal years
25 2025 through 2029.

1 (2) REFORESTATION TRUST FUND.—In addi-
2 tion to amounts appropriated pursuant to paragraph
3 (1), notwithstanding subsection (d) of section 303 of
4 Public Law 96–451 (16 U.S.C. 1606a), of amounts
5 in the Reforestation Trust Fund established by sub-
6 section (a) of that section that are not otherwise ob-
7 ligated, the Secretary may obligate not more than
8 \$5,000,000 for each fiscal year to carry out this sec-
9 tion.

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