

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8522

To improve connections between the Department of Agriculture and national and homeland security agencies, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 23, 2024

Mrs. BICE (for herself and Mr. KHANNA) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture

A BILL

To improve connections between the Department of Agriculture and national and homeland security agencies, 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 “Agriculture and Na-
5 tional Security Act of 2024”.

6 **SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**
7 **AND NATIONAL SECURITY.**

8 It is the sense of Congress that there are increasingly
9 robust Federal activities to address homeland security
10 vulnerabilities across the food and agriculture sector, in-

cluding with regard to agriculture and food defense, critical infrastructure, emergency management, and catastrophic events, but additional efforts are needed to identify national security vulnerabilities related to food and agriculture, particularly with regard to emerging technologies.

SEC. 3. NATIONAL SECURITY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In recognition that food and agriculture are critical to the national security of the United States, the Secretary of Agriculture (referred to in this Act as the “Secretary”) shall prioritize national security in addition to homeland security in the Department of Agriculture (referred to in this Act as the “Department”), including by increasing the number of staff at the Department with security clearances and access to classified systems and networks.

(b) SENIOR ADVISOR FOR NATIONAL SECURITY.—

(1) APPOINTMENT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall—

(A) establish within the Office of the Secretary the position of Senior Advisor for National Security (referred to in this Act as the “Senior Advisor”); and

1 (B) appoint an individual to the position of
2 Senior Advisor.

3 (2) DUTIES.—The Senior Advisor shall, in co-
4 ordination with and complementary to the duties of
5 the Office of Homeland Security of the Depart-
6 ment—

7 (A) serve as the principal advisor to the
8 Secretary on national security;

9 (B) act as the primary liaison on behalf of
10 the Department with the National Security
11 Council and other Federal departments and
12 agencies in activities relating to national secu-
13 rity;

14 (C) coordinate national security activities
15 across the Department, including to ensure that
16 national security concerns are integrated into
17 the homeland security activities of the Depart-
18 ment wherever appropriate; and

19 (D) communicate with stakeholders to
20 identify national security vulnerabilities and
21 risk mitigation strategies relevant to food and
22 agriculture.

23 (c) INTERAGENCY COORDINATION.—Section 221(e)
24 of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of

1 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6922(e)) is amended by adding at the end
2 the following:

3 “(3) DETAILEES AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary
4 may provide detailees to, and accept and employ per-
5 sonnel detailed from, defense, national and homeland
6 security, law enforcement, and intelligence agencies,
7 with or without reimbursement, to improve informa-
8 tion sharing, vulnerability identification, and risk
9 mitigation related to food and agriculture.”.

10 (d) BIENNIAL REPORTS.—Section 221 of the Depart-
11 ment of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C.
12 6922) is amended by adding at the end the following:

13 “(f) BIENNIAL REPORTS.—Not later than 180 days
14 after the date of enactment of this Act, and not less fre-
15 quently than once every 2 years thereafter, the Secretary
16 shall submit to Congress and the National Security Coun-
17 cil a report that includes—

18 “(1) from the perspective of the Department,
19 an assessment of any gaps or limitations in national
20 security efforts related to food and agriculture in the
21 United States, including—

22 “(A) influence of foreign state-owned en-
23 terprise;

24 “(B) control of and access to agricultural
25 data;

1 “(C) foreign acquisition of intellectual
2 property, agricultural assets, and land;

3 “(D) agricultural input shortages and de-
4 pendence on foreign-sourced inputs;

5 “(E) supply chain and trade disruptions;

6 “(F) science and technology cooperation;

7 “(G) cybersecurity and artificial intel-
8 ligence;

9 “(H) unequal investments in research, de-
10 velopment, and scale-up;

11 “(I) incongruent regulatory policies; and

12 “(J) other vulnerabilities throughout the
13 food and agriculture sector, particularly with
14 regard to emerging technologies;

15 “(2) the actions taken by the Secretary to ad-
16 dress any gaps or limitations identified under para-
17 graph (1), including through interagency coordina-
18 tion, threat information sharing, and stakeholder
19 outreach;

20 “(3) policy recommendations, including rec-
21 ommendations for executive actions and legislative
22 proposals—

23 “(A) to reduce any gaps or limitations
24 identified under paragraph (1); and

1 “(B) to address any identified
2 vulnerabilities with respect to the gaps or limi-
3 tations identified under paragraph (1); and
4 “(4) resources the Department requires to ad-
5 dress current and future national security
6 vulnerabilities related to food and agriculture.”.

○