

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2706

To amend the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 to require the Secretary of Agriculture to enter into cooperative agreements relating to drought prevention, preparedness, response, and mitigation, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 27, 2023

Mrs. FISCHER (for herself and Mr. BENNET) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

A BILL

To amend the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 to require the Secretary of Agriculture to enter into cooperative agreements relating to drought prevention, preparedness, response, and mitigation, 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. POLICY RESEARCH CENTER ON DROUGHT PRE-**
4 **VENTION, PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE, AND**
5 **MITIGATION.**

6 Subtitle C of the National Agricultural Research, Ex-
7 tension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3151

1 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 1419D the
 2 following:

3 **“SEC. 1419E. POLICY RESEARCH CENTER ON DROUGHT**
 4 **PREVENTION, PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE,**
 5 **AND MITIGATION.**

6 “(a) IN GENERAL.—Consistent with this section, the
 7 Secretary shall enter into multiyear cooperative agree-
 8 ments of up to 5 years each with a policy research center
 9 described in subsection (b) to conduct research and edu-
 10 cation programs that—

11 “(1) are objective, operationally independent,
 12 and external to the Federal Government;

13 “(2) concern the effect of public policies and
 14 trade agreements on—

15 “(A) the farm and agricultural sectors (in-
 16 cluding commodities, livestock, dairy, and spe-
 17 cialty crops);

18 “(B) the environment;

19 “(C) rural families, households, and econo-
 20 mies; and

21 “(D) consumers, food, and nutrition; and

22 “(3) focus on matters relating to drought pre-
 23 vention, preparedness, response, and mitigation.

24 “(b) POLICY RESEARCH CENTER DESCRIBED.—A
 25 policy research center referred to in subsection (a) that

1 is eligible to apply for funding under that subsection is
 2 a State agricultural experiment station, college or univer-
 3 sity, or other public research institution or organization
 4 that has a history of providing objective, scientific infor-
 5 mation to Federal agencies and the public to support and
 6 enhance efficient, accurate implementation of Federal
 7 drought preparedness and drought response programs, in-
 8 cluding interagency thresholds used to determine eligi-
 9 bility for mitigation or emergency assistance.

10 “(c) PREFERENCE.—In making awards under this
 11 section, the Secretary shall give a preference to policy re-
 12 search centers that have information, analysis, and re-
 13 search relating to drought mitigation.

14 “(d) ACTIVITIES.—Funding may be provided under
 15 this section for disciplinary and interdisciplinary research
 16 and education concerning policy research activities con-
 17 sistent with this section, including activities that—

18 “(1) support weekly production of and enhance-
 19 ments to the United States Drought Monitor;

20 “(2) support other products and services to help
 21 better prepare and respond to drought, including—

22 “(A) work carried out in collaboration with
 23 the Department of Agriculture;

24 “(B) through the expansion of drought re-
 25 silience and monitoring tools that span across

1 disciplines from climatology and remote sensing
2 to planning and geospatial analysis; and

3 “(C) communications products and serv-
4 ices; or

5 “(3) support climate and drought resilience and
6 profitability on working agriculture lands, targeting
7 marginal lands and Tribal regions in the western
8 United States, including efforts to provide tools to
9 address water quantity.

10 “(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
11 is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
12 \$19,000,000 for the period of fiscal years 2024 through
13 2028, to remain available until September 30, 2028.”.

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