

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 4945

To direct the Secretary of Agriculture to carry out research, technical studies, demonstrations, and pilot programs to further the mission of the Rural Business-Cooperative Service.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

AUGUST 1, 2024

Mr. WELCH 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 carry out research, technical studies, demonstrations, and pilot programs to further the mission of the Rural Business-Cooperative Service.

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 “Rural Opportunities
5 and Revitalization Act of 2024”.

1 **SEC. 2. RESEARCH, TECHNICAL STUDIES, DEMONSTRA-**
2 **TIONS, AND PILOT PROGRAMS TO FURTHER**
3 **THE MISSION OF THE RURAL BUSINESS-CO-**
4 **OPERATIVE SERVICE.**

5 (a) DEFINITION OF SECRETARY.—In this section, the
6 term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Agriculture.

7 (b) AUTHORIZATION.—The Secretary shall carry out
8 the following activities relating to the mission and pro-
9 grams of the Rural Business-Cooperative Service:

10 (1) Research.

11 (2) Technical studies.

12 (3) Demonstrations.

13 (4) Pilot programs.

14 (c) SPECIAL RULES.—

15 (1) RESOURCES.—In carrying out the activities
16 described in subsection (b), the Secretary shall pro-
17 mote long-term prosperity in rural areas by pro-
18 viding the following resources to help individuals liv-
19 ing in rural areas start businesses, grow businesses,
20 or find jobs:

21 (A) Capital.

22 (B) Training.

23 (C) Education.

24 (D) Entrepreneurial skills.

25 (E) Economic development.

1 (2) DEMONSTRATIONS.—In carrying out this
2 section, the Secretary may permit demonstrations
3 involving innovative methods of program delivery
4 that do not meet standards, rules, regulations, or
5 policies of the Department of Agriculture if the Sec-
6 retary determines that—

7 (A) permitting a demonstration is in the
8 best interests of the Federal Government;

9 (B) the health and safety of individuals in
10 the area in which a demonstration is carried
11 out will not be adversely impacted; and

12 (C) deviations from the standards, rules,
13 regulations, or policies do not compromise the
14 core mission of the rural development mission
15 area of promoting rural development, economic
16 growth, and infrastructure development.

17 (d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
18 authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry
19 out this section \$5,000,000 for each fiscal year.

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