

Rogers Supports Federal Funding Bill for Rural Development, Child Nutrition Programs and Combatting Drug Abuse

House Appropriations Committee Passes
FY 2018 Agriculture Appropriations Bill

WASHINGTON, DC -- The House Appropriations Committee today approved the fiscal year 2018 Agriculture Appropriations Bill to fund important agricultural and food programs and services, including rural development, nutrition programs and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The bill totals \$20 billion in discretionary funding, which is \$876 million lower than the fiscal year 2017 enacted level and \$4.64 billion above the President's budget request. The legislation prioritizes this funding in programs for rural communities, farmers, ranchers, food and drug safety, and nutrition for those in need. In addition, the bill contains several policy provisions to rein in unnecessary and burdensome regulations that harm U.S. food producers and that impede growth in important U.S. industries.

U.S. Rep. Hal Rogers, Chairman Emeritus of the House Appropriations Committee, applauded Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen and the committee for boosting funds to combat the national opioid abuse epidemic. The bill provides the FDA with \$2.8 billion in discretionary funding, plus its revenue for user fees, bringing the total to \$5.2 billion - a nearly \$500 million increase above fiscal year 2017.

"For years we have lamented the fact that the FDA has taken a soft shoe to the problem. Now, as opioid abuse has overtaken the country, finally we've got the FDA's new commissioner, Scott Gottlieb, who is taking positive steps almost every day to tackle the substance abuse problem that is afflicting the country as an epidemic. So, thank you for helping with the fight to rid us of this epidemic," said Congressman Rogers, who co-chairs the Congressional Caucus on Prescription Drug Abuse. "The bill also boosts rural programs to help support water and wastewater projects, as well as direct loans for rural community facilities and low-income families who hope to purchase their own home."

Additionally, Congressman Rogers advocated for robust funding for vital programs in southern and eastern Kentucky, including:

U.S. Department of Agriculture - Rural Development to support basic rural infrastructure, loans for rural businesses and balance for rural housing markets;

Rural Community Facilities Direct Loans to provide affordable funding to develop essential community facilities, like rural hospitals, courthouses and police stations; and

Section 502 Single Family Direct Loans to support mortgages for low-income homebuyers in rural areas.

Funding for Rural Programs

Agricultural Research – The bill provides \$2.8 billion for agriculture research programs, including the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture. This funding will support research at all ARS facilities to help mitigate and stop devastating crop diseases, improve food safety and water quality, increase production, and combat antimicrobial resistance. This funding also includes research investments in U.S. land-grant colleges and universities.

Rural Economic Infrastructure Grants – The bill includes \$122.7 million to establish the Rural Economic Infrastructure Grant account. The account uses existing authorities from Community Connect grants, Distance Learning and Telemedicine grants, Community Facility grants, and Rural Assistance Housing grants to provide flexibility on resource allocation to achieve maximum impact.

Rural Infrastructure – The legislation includes \$1.25 billion – the same as the FY17 enacted level – for rural water and waste program loans. It also provides \$473 million for grants and related costs, a decrease of \$96 million below current levels that includes savings from reduced subsidy costs and \$473 million above the request. In addition, \$6.94 billion is provided for rural electric and telephone infrastructure loans, the same level as FY17.

Rural Housing Loans and Rental Assistance – The bill provides a total of \$24 billion in loan authority for the Single Family Housing guaranteed loan program, the same as FY17. In addition, the bill includes \$900 million in direct loans that provide low-income rural families with home loan assistance. In addition, \$1.345 billion is provided for rental assistance for affordable rental housing for low-income families and the elderly in rural communities for renewal of all existing rental assistance contracts.

Animal and Plant Health – The legislation includes \$906 million – \$96 million above the President's budget request and \$40 million below the FY17 enacted level – for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. This funding will support programs to help control or eradicate plant and animal pests and diseases that can be crippling to U.S. producers. The funding level preserves previous funding increases, which will help address harmful outbreaks of citrus greening and highly pathogenic avian influenza, as well as funds to support specialty crops and the Zoonotic Disease Management Program for antimicrobial resistance activities.

Business and Industry Loans – The legislation includes a loan level of \$819 million for the rural business and industry loan program. This funding will help small businesses in rural areas, many of which face unique challenges due to local economic conditions.

Conservation Programs – The bill provides \$904 million to help farmers, ranchers, and private forest landowners conserve and protect their land. This includes \$45 million for infrastructure rehabilitation to help small communities meet current safety standards for watershed projects.

Farm Programs – The legislation provides \$1.6 billion for farm programs, which is \$44 million above the President's budget request. This funding will continue support for various farm, conservation, and emergency loan programs, and will help American farmers and ranchers with the implementation of the farm bill. It will also ensure customer service through full staffing of local county Farm Service Agency offices and meet estimates of demand for farm loan programs.

Food Safety and Inspection Service – The legislation includes \$1.038 billion for food safety and inspection programs – an increase of \$6 million above the 2017 enacted level. These mandatory inspection activities help ensure the safety and productivity of the country's \$211 billion meat and poultry industry, and keep safe, healthy food on American tables. The funding provided will maintain more than 8,000 frontline inspection personnel for meat, poultry, and egg products at more than 6,400 facilities across the country.

Funding for Food-Related Programs

International Programs – The legislation contains \$1.8 billion for overseas food aid and to promote U.S. agricultural exports. This includes \$1.4 billion for "Food for Peace" grants and \$185 million for the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition program. These programs seek to reduce chronic hunger and increase food security by providing American-grown food, transported by U.S. ships, to foreign countries in need of aid.

Child nutrition programs – The bill provides for \$24.28 billion in required mandatory funding for child nutrition programs. This is \$1.5 billion above the FY17 enacted level. This funding will provide free or reduced-price school lunches and snacks for 31 million children who qualify for the program. The bill provides approximately \$640 million for the Summer Food Service Program to ensure low-income children continue to receive nutritious meals when school is not in session. In addition, the bill continues funding for a pilot program that provides additional funds through SNAP or WIC electronic benefit transfer (EBT) cards to ensure children in underserved communities receive food during the summer months.

The bill continues policy provisions to stop onerous regulations on local schools, which cost them money and resources in an already tight budget climate. Some of these provisions include:

A provision that allows schools demonstrating a financial hardship to seek an exemption from the whole grain nutrition standards;

A provision that prevents further implementation of sodium reduction standards; and

A provision that provides schools with flexibility in serving low-fat flavored milk.

Food and Nutrition Programs – The legislation contains discretionary funding, as well as mandatory funding required by law, for food and nutrition programs within the Department of Agriculture. This includes funding for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and child nutrition programs.

Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) – The bill provides \$6.15 billion in discretionary funding for WIC, which is \$200 million below the FY17 enacted level and the same as the President's request. Because of robust prior-year funding and declining enrollments in the program, WIC has large carryover balances left over from previous years. Therefore, to make the best use of taxpayer dollars, the bill rescinds \$600 million in these unobligated balances, which will have no impact on participation in the program.

Other Programs

Food and Drug Administration (FDA) – The FDA receives a total of \$2.8 billion in discretionary funding in the bill, which is equal to the FY17 enacted level. Total funding for the FDA, including revenue from user fees, is \$5.2 billion – \$490 million above FY17. Food safety activities are supported in the bill by more than \$300 million, continuing these investments to the FDA since the enactment of the Food Safety Modernization Act in 2011.

The bill also appropriates \$60 million as authorized in the 21st Century Cures Act, and includes language to allow FDA to receive transfers from the National Institutes of Health for support of the FDA's Oncology Center of Excellence.

Jackson County 4-H Camp 2017



Jackson County Youth attended Feltner 4-H Camp in London on June 22-25th. The theme for our 4-H Camp was Cloverwood Stars and centered on a Hollywood theme. Youth age 9-13 from Jackson County were invited to attend.

Youth attended fun, educational classes during the morning and afternoon. Some of the activities at Feltner 4-H Camp are canoeing, paddleboats, swimming, carpet ball, Gaga ball, nine square, riflery, archery, basketball, zip line, rock wall, low ropes and high ropes just to name a few.

Thank you to the Jackson County Conservation District and the Jackson County Middle School Youth Resource Center for sponsoring Jackson County youth to attend 4-H Camp!! Thank you to Dana Gabbard, 4-H Council member and 4-H Camp volunteer!

Jackson Co. 4-H Teens attend 4-H Teen Conference



During the week of June 12-15, the following youth attended the 4-H Teen Conference on the University of Kentucky's campus: (pictured top to bottom) Sara Christman, Extension Intern; Verlene Congleton-Hacker, 4-H Agent; Nicole Bowling; Cassie Flannery; and Larry Ramsey.

These 4-H Teens participated in leadership, hands-on activities and made new friends while living on the University of Kentucky's campus as students.

For more information on how to join the Jackson County 4-H Teen program contact Verlene Congleton-Hacker 4-H Agent at 287-7693. A special thank you to the Middle School and High School Youth Service Center for sponsoring these youth to attend this 4-H Leadership program.