

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1809

To amend the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 to establish an Office of Small Farms, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 6, 2023

Mr. BOOKER introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

A BILL

To amend the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 to establish an Office of Small Farms, 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 “Office of Small Farms
5 Establishment Act of 2023”.

6 **SEC. 2. OFFICE OF SMALL FARMS.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subtitle B of the Department of
8 Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6931
9 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

1 **“SEC. 229. OFFICE OF SMALL FARMS.**

2 “(a) DEFINITION OF SMALL FARM, RANCH, OR FOR-
3 EST OPERATION.—In this section, the term ‘small farm,
4 ranch, or forest operation’ means a farm, ranch, or forest
5 operation that—

6 “(1)(A) is less than 180 acres; or

7 “(B) meets another acreage-based definition of
8 ‘small’, as determined by the Secretary, that takes
9 into consideration—

10 “(i) the State or region in which the farm,
11 ranch, or forest operation is located;

12 “(ii) the production system of the farm,
13 ranch, or forest operation; or

14 “(iii) both; and

15 “(2) has an annual gross cash farm income of
16 less than \$350,000.

17 “(b) ESTABLISHMENT.—

18 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall estab-
19 lish within the farm production and conservation
20 mission area the Office of Small Farms.

21 “(2) DIRECTOR.—The Secretary shall appoint a
22 Director of the Office of Small Farms (referred to
23 in this section as the ‘Director’). A senior official
24 within the farm production and conservation mission
25 area may be appointed to serve as the Director.

26 “(c) DUTIES.—The Director shall—

1 “(1) coordinate efforts to improve support for
2 small farms, ranches, and forest operations across
3 all Department agencies and offices;

4 “(2) review Department programs and policies
5 and identify statutory, regulatory, and administra-
6 tive provisions, policies, and guidance that disadvan-
7 tage small farm, ranch, or forest operation participa-
8 tion, and recommend changes to ensure that those
9 programs and policies adequately serve small farms,
10 ranches, and forest operations;

11 “(3) develop recommendations for new initia-
12 tives, including financing mechanisms and technical
13 assistance opportunities, to specifically serve small
14 farms, ranches, and forest operations relating to
15 production, conservation, business planning, land ac-
16 cess, and other issues, as determined by the Sec-
17 retary;

18 “(4) make recommendations to Department
19 agencies and offices and other Federal agencies on
20 tracking small farm, ranch, or forest operation data,
21 including demographics and program participation
22 rates;

23 “(5) propose research agendas on topics that
24 are of special interest to small farms, ranches, and
25 forest operations;

1 “(6) provide or coordinate technical assistance
2 through the Department or through cooperative
3 agreements with other entities to operators of small
4 farms, ranches, and forest operations to enable those
5 operators to access the full complement of Depart-
6 ment grant, cost-share, and loan programs;

7 “(7) implement program directly or through co-
8 operative agreements with other entities to provide
9 grants of not more than \$25,000 to operators of
10 small farms, ranches, and forest operations for—

11 “(A) equipment and infrastructure repairs
12 and upgrades;

13 “(B) uninsured losses;

14 “(C) business planning and market devel-
15 opment assistance;

16 “(D) conservation practice adoption;

17 “(E) down payments for land acquisition;

18 and

19 “(F) such other purposes as the Secretary
20 determines to be appropriate;

21 “(8) operate a hotline through which operators
22 of small farms, ranches, and forest operations can
23 anonymously report problems that the operators en-
24 counter in attempts to access Department programs;
25 and

1 “(9) advise other Federal agencies on how to
2 effectively reach and serve small farms, ranches, and
3 forest operations.

4 “(d) LIAISONS.—The following officials shall appoint,
5 from among the officers and employees under the respec-
6 tive official, a liaison to the Office of Small Farms:

7 “(1) The Chief of the Natural Resources Con-
8 servation Service.

9 “(2) The Administrator of the Farm Service
10 Agency.

11 “(3) The Administrator of the Risk Manage-
12 ment Agency.

13 “(4) The Under Secretary of Agriculture for
14 Rural Development.

15 “(5) The Director of the National Institute of
16 Food and Agriculture.

17 “(6) The Administrator of the Agricultural
18 Marketing Service.

19 “(7) The Administrator of the National Agri-
20 cultural Statistics Service.

21 “(8) The Director of the Office of Partnerships
22 and Public Engagement.

23 “(9) The heads of such other agencies, offices,
24 and advisory groups as the Secretary determines to
25 be appropriate, including—

1 “(A) the Office of Urban Agriculture and
2 Innovative Production; and

3 “(B) the Office of Tribal Relations.

4 “(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
5 are authorized to be appropriated—

6 “(1) \$15,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2023
7 through 2028 for the administration of the Office of
8 Small Farms; and

9 “(2) \$10,000,000 for each fiscal year to provide
10 technical assistance and grants authorized by this
11 section.”.

12 (b) TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.—The Department of
13 Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 is amended by re-
14 designating the first section 225 (7 U.S.C. 6925) (relating
15 to the Food Access Liaison) as section 224A.

16 (c) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 296(b) of
17 the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of
18 1994 (7 U.S.C. 7014(b)) is amended by adding at the end
19 the following:

20 “(11) The authority of the Secretary to carry
21 out section 229.”.

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