

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 4451

To authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to guarantee investments that will open new markets for forest owners in rural areas of the United States, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

AUGUST 5, 2020

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

A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to guarantee investments that will open new markets for forest owners in rural areas of the United States, 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 “Rural Forest Markets
5 Act of 2020”.

6 **SEC. 2. RURAL FOREST MARKET INVESTMENT PROGRAM.**

7 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

1 (1) RURAL.—The term “rural” has the mean-
2 ing given the term in section 343 of the Consoli-
3 dated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C.
4 1991).

5 (2) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
6 the Secretary of Agriculture.

7 (b) ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish
9 a program, to be known as the “Rural Forest Mar-
10 ket Investment Program”, to guarantee an environ-
11 mental impact bond, loan, or other investment vehi-
12 cle, as determined by the Secretary, issued for the
13 sole purpose of financing eligible projects described
14 in subsection (c), to enable rural private forest land-
15 owners to participate in an innovative market for
16 forest carbon or other products.

17 (2) CONSIDERATION.—In establishing the pro-
18 gram under paragraph (1), the Secretary may con-
19 sider ways to ensure that the program minimizes, to
20 the extent practicable, disruptions to traditional for-
21 est products markets.

22 (c) ELIGIBLE PROJECTS.—An eligible project re-
23 ferred to in subsection (b)(1) is a project developed by pri-
24 vate entity, or a publicly supported, charitable nonprofit
25 organization, engaged in the aggregation of sustainable

1 forestry practices implemented by rural private forest
2 landowners to facilitate the sale of credits in the voluntary
3 carbon market or other environmental market, using a
4 methodology approved by a credible, third-party entity, as
5 determined by the Secretary.

6 (d) REQUIREMENTS.—A project described in sub-
7 section (c) that includes the practice of tree planting may
8 only be carried out, as determined by the Secretary—

- 9 (1) on land that was historically forested;
10 (2) using tree species that are native to the re-
11 gion and at ecologically appropriate densities; and
12 (3) in a manner that does not create other neg-
13 ative impacts to biodiversity or the environment.

14 (e) GUARANTEE AMOUNT.—The Secretary may guar-
15 antee not more than \$150,000,000 with respect to each
16 bond, loan, or other investment vehicle under subsection
17 (b)(1).

18 (f) REGULATIONS.—Not later than 30 days after the
19 date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall issue
20 regulations to implement the program established under
21 subsection (b)(1).

22 (g) TERMINATION OF AUTHORITY.—The authority
23 provided by this section terminates on September 30,
24 2023.

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