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**MEMORANDUM**

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**TO:** INTERESTED CLIENTS  
**FROM:** CORNERSTONE GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS, INC.  
**SUBJECT:** HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE: TO CONSIDER H.R.2, AGRICULTURE AND NUTRITION ACT OF 2018  
**DATE:** APRIL 18, 2018

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**Members in Attendance**

Chairman Mike Conaway (R-TX), Ranking Member Collin Peterson (D-MI), Rep. David Scott (D-GA), Rep. Rodney Davis (R-IL), Rep. Marcia Fudge (D-OH), Rep. Ted Yoho (R-FL), Rep. Cheri Bustos (D-IL), Rep. Alma Adams (D-NC), Rep. Jim McGovern (D-MA), Rep. Jim Costa (D-CA), Rep. Al Lawson (D-FL), Rep. Blunt Rochester (D-DE), Rep. Darren Soto (D-FL), Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney (D-NY), Rep. Timothy Walz (D-MN), Rep. Rick Nolan (D-MN), Rep. Ann Kuster (D-NH), Rep. Jimmy Panetta (D-CA), Rep. Dwight Evans (D-PA), Rep. Frank Lucas (R-OK), Rep. Stacey Plaskett (D-VI), Rep. Tom O'Halleran (D-AZ), Rep. Vicky Hartzler (R-MO), Rep. Mike Bost (R-IL), Rep. Austin Scott (R-GA), Rep. James Comer (R-KY), Rep. Rick Crawford (R-AR), Rep. Jodey Arrington (R-TX), Rep. Steve King (R-IA), Rep. Glenn Thompson (R-PA)

**Opening Remarks**

Committee Democrats all spoke very harshly against the Farm Bill, calling it mean-spirited, ideologically misguided, hurtful and shameful. In his opening statement, Ranking Member Peterson stated that the Farm Bill is a bad bill; he opposes it and urged his colleagues to oppose it. Rep. Peterson stated that with respect to a Farm Bill, nothing is agreed upon until everything is agreed upon. He highlighted areas of concern within the nutrition title, and stated that he thought it would be more clear after 23 hearings on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). He expressed dismay with the work requirements included in the bill. In his opinion, this is an ideological battle that has been ongoing for years. While stating that he doesn't disagree that work is a pathway out of poverty, he does not agree with a methodology that is entirely untested. He stated that everyone he's spoken to says that the legislation would create a giant, untested bureaucracy at the state level. As currently written, the bill kicks people off the SNAP program. Beyond the nutrition title, he raised many other concerns under the bill. Rep. Peterson very passionately urged the committee to consider working collaboratively, saying that there is still time to reconsider the Farm Bill.

Committee Republicans voiced support for the Farm Bill, calling it a positive step forward. Rep. Davis applauded Chairman Conaway's efforts on the continuation of crop insurance programs and showed his support for the chairman's changes to the nutrition title. Rep. Davis reiterated that the bill provides SNAP benefits to the most vulnerable people while investing in those that are capable of working through investment in workforce training programs. He stated, "today we are going to make a choice to invest in work force training that gets people into jobs, or we have a choice to vote against them and for the status quo." Vice Chairman Thompson also expressed his support for the changes made to the nutrition title reaffirming the importance of nutrition assistance funding in the farm bill. Funding to address food insecurity accounts for 77% of this \$867 billion bill. He believes without these changes,

under current farm bill provisions, a significant number of families experiencing food insecurity will continue to be ineligible for SNAP benefits, by eliminating the asset test. Thompson continued to restate that the bill supports SNAP recipients and will not affect the eligibility of food-insecure recipients.

Several Republican members offered amendments with 18 adopted en bloc and 2 adopted on separate vote. Democratic members did not offer any amendments; rather debate was entirely focused on SNAP. The bill was approved in a 26-to-20 party-line vote and House Ag Committee moved to advance the bill to the House Floor. At this time, it appears that House Democrats will not support the bill, thus requiring Republican leadership to ensure that they can hold at least 216 GOP votes for the legislation. Depending on those efforts, the bill could be considered by the full House of Representatives as early as the week of May 7.

#### En Bloc Amendments:

1. Hartzler: Modify the minimum acceptable standard of service for broadband programs by setting a baseline speed of 25 megabits per second download and 3 MBPS upload. It would also require the Rural Utilities Service to issue a report on ways to incentivize utilization of and streamline the RUS loan and loan guarantee programs for the purpose of expanding broadband to rural areas.
2. Bost: This amendment would modify the Conservation Innovation Grants trials provision to include nutrient recovery systems in the definition of 'new and innovative conservation approaches.' These systems can be used to separate nutrient particles like nitrogen and phosphorus from other substances,
3. Rouzer: This amendment would provide for categorical exclusion for small electric generating facilities (10 MW average rating or less) in the rural energy for American program including solar, wind, and biomass. Right now, this CE exists in regulation but has an exception for solar electric projects of 10 acres or greater.
4. Dunn: Updates USDA's authority to promote trade and innovation- friendly policies (i.e. removing nontariff barriers to US exports) globally for new agricultural production technologies. The amendment will support global acceptance of US crops and predictable science-based regulations
5. Dunn: To include algae agriculture research program under the High Priority Research and Extension Initiatives section
6. Dunn: Requiring USDA to provide an updated estimate of the number of dogs imported to the US, including those that are not subject to adequate health screening requirements
7. Dunn: Carry out a national science-based education campaign to increase public awareness regarding the use of technology in food and agriculture production
8. Crawford: Would establish a program in which the Secretary of Agriculture recognizes farms that have been in continuous operation for 100 years.
9. Comer: Modifies Section 6218 of the underlying bill to also include those incarcerated on a long-term basis or in regional jail facilities in the population of individuals excluded from the population calculation for the purposes of defining a rural area. This helps more accurately reflect the population of a community as county jail facilities are more regularly housing individuals for longer sentences and rural counties have collaborated to build regional detention facilities, which house inmates that would not otherwise be part of the community.
10. Marshall: This change would offer producers in the future the opportunity to receive 75% of the USDA established "total allowable cost" upon demonstrating that a fence has been destroyed in a

qualifying event. This change will allow producers to receive much-needed resources sooner, and will also simplify the administration of the program for FSA employees.

11. Yoho: To provide Congress with a report on plans for improving the Federal government's policies and procedures with respect to gene editing and other precision breeding methods. The intent is to foster plant breeding innovation, which is paramount to the future of agricultural sustainability and our quality of life and economic well-being, while also recognizing the longstanding safety record associated with plant breeding and plant breeders' standards of practice in the US.
12. Yoho: Removes a limitation on grant funding from the National Food Safety Training, Education, Extension, Outreach, and Technical Assistance Program that would prohibit entities that have previously received 3 years of funding from this program from competing for new grant funding.
13. Austin Scott: This amendment would authorize the Rural Utilities Service to make loans or loan guarantees to middle mile infrastructure projects under the Rural Broadband Access Loan and Loan Guarantee Program.
14. Austin Scott: This amendment would authorize the USDA Secretary to deem projects that have received RUS grants as unserved if they do not meet the minimum broadband speed of 10 megabits per second download and 1 megabit per second upload, unless they have begun or already constructed broadband facilities in that area which would meet the minimum standard.
15. Arrington: Amends the definition of a Non-Land Grant Colleges of Agriculture (NLGCA) institution to remove the exclusion for Hispanic Serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities (HSACU) and McIntire Stennis institutions.
16. Davis: This amendment would direct the National Organic Standards Board to establish procedures for petitioning substance inclusion on the National List, under which the review process may be expedited if the petition seeks to include a postharvest handling substance
17. Davis: This amendment would repeal the language restricting use of Margin Protection Plans by producers who select ARC.
18. Conaway: This amendment makes technical and conforming changes in addition to addressing concerns of other committees.

#### [Text of the en block amendments](#)

#### Amendments Voted on Separately:

1. Denham: This amendment would amend the Animal Welfare Act to prohibit people from knowingly slaughtering a dog or cat for human consumption. It also prohibits people from knowingly transporting, possessing, buying, selling, or donating: (1) a dog or cat to be slaughtered for human consumption, or (2) dog or cat parts for human consumption. The amendment subjects a violator to imprisonment for up to a year, a fine, or both.
2. King: The purpose of this amendment is to restore integrity to the Interstate Commerce Clause in the Constitution. This amendment will stop states from regulating the production and manufacturing of agricultural products across their state lines. This amendment reestablishes the power of regulating interstate commerce to Congress. This amendment does not prohibit intrastate commerce. This amendment allows for a producer, transporter, distributor, consumer, laborer, trade association, Federal Government, a State government, or a unit of local government who experience an economic loss due to another state's trade regulation to bring suit in the appropriate federal court. Congressman Denham offered a second-degree amendment in the form



of a substitute which would have instead required USDA to submit a study identifying state laws affecting interstate commerce in food and agricultural products. The second-degree failed (12-33) and the underlying text was adopted.

[Text of amendments considered separately](#)

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