

Cornerstone Government Affairs

**Budget Reconciliation Measure, [S. Con. Res. 5](#)
House Agriculture Committee meeting, February 10, 2021**

Section 1001: Food Supply Chain and Agriculture Pandemic Response

Section Summary

Appropriates \$4 billion to the Secretary to purchase and distribute food and agriculture commodities, to make grants and loans for small or midsized food processors and distributors, and for assistance to maintain and improve food and agricultural supply chain resiliency.

Amendments Considered

[Amendment Offered by Rep. Feenstra #6](#)

Makes assistance available to producers who suffered disaster losses in 2020, including losses due to high wind events and forest fires. The amendment was an effort to specify the use of funds from Section 1001.

Result: Rep. Thompson supported the amendment Rep. Sablan did not support it because he did not know how the money would be redirected. The amendment was accepted with 24 yays to 23 nays after Rep. Axne changed her vote.

[Amendment Offered by Rep. Davis #10](#)

Lends support to the biofuels industry by access biofuel producers access to the \$4 billion in funds geared toward varied relief under Subtitle A.

Result: The amendment was not supported by Rep. Bustos, who stated that Senate Republicans and former Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue had been blocking biofuel assistance. Rep. Craig added that she also opposed the amendment and that Agriculture Secretary nominee Tom Vilsack already planned to provide money for biofuels. Rep. Fischbach voiced her support for the amendment, saying that it was important for the industry to not be damaged by closures. The amendment was rejected by record vote across party lines with 25 yays and 23 nays.

[Amendment Offered by Rep. LaMalfa #11](#)

Redirects \$200 million of the \$300 million to be used for monitoring and surveillance of susceptible animals for incidence of SARS-CoV-2, towards providing grants and loans for measures to protect workers from COVID-19.

Result: Withdrawn by Rep. LaMalfa.

[Amendment Offered by Rep. Johnson #13](#)

Includes research and vaccination to the activities to receive funding under the animal health and COVID-19 animal surveillance section.

Result: Withdrawn by Rep. Johnson.

Section 1002: Emergency Grants for Rural Health Care

Section Summary

This section directs the Secretary to use \$500 million to establish a pilot grant program to increase capacity for vaccine distribution, provide drug or medical supplies, reimburse for COVID-19-related expenses and loss of revenue, and increase telehealth capabilities.

Section 1003: Pandemic Program Administration Funds

Section Summary

This section provides \$47.5 million for necessary pandemic program administrative expenses at the Department of Agriculture.

Section 1004: Funding for the USDA Office of Inspector General for Oversight of COVID-19 Related Programs

Section Summary

This section provides \$2.5 million for USDA's office of the Inspector General to audit, investigate, and conduct other oversight activities of projects and activities carried out with funds made available to the Department of Agriculture related to the pandemic.

Section 1005: Farm Loan Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers

Section Summary

Directs the Secretary of Agriculture to provide payment equal to 120% of outstanding indebtedness in the form of a direct loan made by the Secretary and/or a farm loan guarantee made by the Secretary for each socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher.

Amendments Considered

[Amendment Offered by Rep. Feenstra #2](#)

This amendment would reduce the percentage of outstanding indebtedness for direct farm loans or farm loan guarantees the Department of Agriculture would pay to each socially disadvantaged farmer from 120% to 100%.

Result: Rep. Adams opposed the amendment, saying that cancellation of debt is still taxed, and providing 120% would allow farmers to have money to pay that tax. Rep. Austin Scott argued extensively in favor of the amendment, stating that paying 120% of farm loan debt would set a dangerous precedent that could one day be applied to housing. He asked counsel if it was explicitly the race or ethnicity that determined eligibility. When he was told yes, Rep. Austin Scott predicted that the amendment would be the target of a "reverse discrimination" lawsuit, which would expand the loan payoff to all farmers, regardless of race. The amendment was rejected by record vote across party lines.

[Amendment Offered by Rep. Hartzler #5](#)

This amendment would keep the bill focused on the pandemic by directing USDA to only repay direct farm loans and farm loan guarantees to socially disadvantaged farmers that incurred indebtedness as a direct result of the pandemic.

Result: Rep. Cammack supported the amendment, saying that the bill should be focused on addressing the pandemic and not on other issues that should be focused on in other bills. Rep. Adams opposed the amendment and stated that a comprehensive package was the best way to address the discrimination people of color have faced in the agriculture industry. The amendment was rejected by record vote across party lines.

Section 1006: Assistance and Support for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers, Ranchers, Forest Landowners and Operators, and Groups

Section Summary

Provides \$1.01 million for the Secretary to provide assistance for socially disadvantaged ranchers, farmers and forest landowners and operators by providing services such as technical assistance, cooperative development training, development of legal centers focused on agricultural legal issues, and support for research, education, and extension, as well as scholarships, at 1890 and 1994 land-grant university, and Native Hawaiian, Alaska Native, and Hispanic-serving institutions.

Amendments Considered

[Amendment Offered by Rep. Rodney Davis #15](#)

Amends Sec. 1006(b)6 to expand eligibility to entities eligible to receive funds under a capacity and infrastructure funds.

Result: Withdrawn by Rep. Davis.

Section 1007: Funding for Food for Peace Title II Grants

Section Summary

Provides an additional \$800 million for Food for Peace Title 2 grants whose funds remain available until September 30th, 2022.

Section 1011: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Section Summary

Extends the provision requiring the value of benefits provided through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance program be calculated using 115% of the June 2020 value of the thrifty food plan to September 30th, 2021. This section also includes funding for the Secretary and State agencies to Administer the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

Amendments Considered

[Amendment Offered by Rep. Cammack #14](#)

This amendment would strike the provision extending the value benefits calculation and direct funding to be used for employment and training programs.

Result: Reps. Thompson and O'Halleran were united in their support for the amendment, saying that there had to be a way to reduce welfare dependency in the United States. Rep. Hagedorn also supported the bill and said more employment training had to be funded. Rep. Adams responded by stating that this was not the time for training. Rep McGovern was adamantly opposed to the amendment, which he found necessary to address food insecurity. The amendment was rejected by record vote across party lines.

Section 1012: Additional Assistance for SNAP Online Purchasing and Technology Improvements

Section Summary

Provides \$25 million to make technology improvements to online purchasing in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Section 1013: Additional Funding for Nutrition Assistance Programs

Section Summary

Appropriates an additional \$1 billion to remain available until September 30th, 2027, for the Secretary to provide grants to Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands for nutrition assistance.

Section 1014: Commodity Supplemental Food Program

Section Summary

This section provides \$37 million for the Commodities Supplemental Food Program.

Other Amendments Considered

[Amendment Offered by Rep. Feenstra #4](#)

Requires any unobligated balance, without fiscal year limitation, as of September 30, 2022, to be returned to the Treasury.

Result: The amendment was rejected by record vote across party lines.

[Amendment Offered by Rep. Baird #8](#)

Mandates that no money being allocated from this bill be spent until USDA resume the processing payments for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP).

Result: Rep. Axne did not support the amendment because she disagreed with many of the rules the previous administration had left behind and still in place in the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP). Reps. Bacon and Fischbach voiced their support for the amendment. Rep. Hagedorn praised the amendment as containing the right incentives for the Biden administration to reauthorize CFAP. The amendment was rejected by record vote across party lines.

[Amendment Offered by Rep. Thompson #12](#)

Reduces spending of each section by 23%, except for Secs. 1005 and 1006 and the 15% increase in SNAP in Sec. 1011(a) and redirects the money towards The Renewable Fuel Reimbursement Program, Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program, broadband, assistance for rural residence for utility bills, rural hospital and essential facility operators, and relief for borrowers under the Rural Business Service programs.

Result: Reps. Cammack, Austin Scott, and Kelly expressed support for the amendment, citing the continued investment it made in expanding rural broadband. Rep. Adams opposed the amendment on the grounds that it stripped aid from black farmers and would not increase the SNAP benefit. The amendment was rejected with 24 nays to 23 yays, with all members voting along party lines.

[Amendment Offered by Rep. Hagedorn #9](#)

This amendment would delay the spending of the monies under this bill until 80% of funds from previous expenditures that have been approved by Congress are complete. The amendment would apply on a program-by-program basis.

Result: Reps. McGovern, Hayes, and Pingree opposed the amendment over concerns that urgent aid could be delayed or withheld when needed. Reps. Cammack, Thompson, and Baird all supported the amendment, believing that money still unspent should be used up first. Rep. Hartzler added that supporting the amendment means distributing the aid but in a fiscally responsible manner. The amendment was rejected by record vote across party lines.

[Amendment Offered by Rep. Bacon #7](#)

Appropriates \$300 million to support university research programs that were disrupted by COVID-19. The amendment also provides \$80 million to carry out cooperative extension and education programs impacted by COVID-19.

Result: The amendment was rejected by record vote across party lines.