

118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 3877

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

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 6, 2023

Ms. STRICKLAND (for herself, Ms. ADAMS, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Ms. TOKUDA, Ms. CROCKETT, and Ms. DELBENE) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture

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## 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 annual gross cash farm income of less  
16 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, advisory  
24          groups, and offices as the Secretary determines to be  
25          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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