

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 4551

To amend the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 to modify the BARD Fund, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 13, 2024

Mr. HOEVEN (for himself and Mrs. GILLIBRAND) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

A BILL

To amend the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 to modify the BARD Fund, 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 “United States-Israel
5 Agriculture Cooperation Improvement and Expansion
6 Act”.

7 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

8 Congress finds that—

1 (1) the United States-Israel Binational Agricultural
2 Research and Development Fund (referred to
3 in this section as the “BARD Fund”)—

4 (A) was established in 1977; and

5 (B) is a competitive funding program that
6 supports collaborative agricultural research in
7 areas of mutual interest to the United States
8 and Israel;

9 (2) the primary mission of the BARD Fund is
10 to bring together United States and Israeli scientists
11 to jointly address key agricultural and food produc-
12 tion challenges that concern both countries;

13 (3) since its establishment, the BARD Fund
14 has approved more than 1,300 research projects,
15 with a total investment of \$315,000,000 that has
16 gained \$16 for every \$1 spent; and

17 (4) research funded by the BARD Fund has led
18 to new agricultural practices, commercial engage-
19 ments, patents, and breeding rights licenses, which
20 serve as a growth engine to the United States and
21 Israeli economies.

22 **SEC. 3. BARD FUND.**

23 Section 1458(e) of the National Agricultural Re-
24 search, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7
25 U.S.C. 3291(e)) is amended—

1 (1) in paragraph (1), by striking “entered into”
2 and inserting “as entered into in 1977”;

3 (2) in paragraph (2)—

4 (A) in subparagraph (A), by striking
5 “and” at the end;

6 (B) in subparagraph (B), by striking “sec-
7 tor.” and inserting “sector in the United
8 States, Israel, signatories of the Abraham Ac-
9 cords Declaration, done at Washington Sep-
10 tember 15, 2020, Arab States that have nor-
11 malized relations with Israel, and other inter-
12 ested nations; and”;

13 (C) by adding at the end the following:

14 “(C) support mid-stage research to ad-
15 vance cooperative agricultural research projects
16 of mutual interest to the United States and
17 Israel.”; and

18 (3) by adding at the end the following:

19 “(3) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

20 There is authorized to be appropriated to the BARD
21 Fund to carry out activities under this subsection
22 \$8,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2025 through
23 2029.”.

24 **SEC. 4. AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT.**

25 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

1 (1) ELIGIBLE COMMODITY.—The term “eligible
2 commodity” means an agricultural commodity (or
3 the product of an agricultural commodity) that—

4 (A) is produced in, and procured from, a
5 developing country; and

6 (B) at a minimum, meets each nutritional,
7 quality, and labeling standard of the country
8 that receives the agricultural commodity, as de-
9 termined by the Secretary.

10 (2) ELIGIBLE ORGANIZATION.—The term “eligi-
11 ble organization” means an organization that—

12 (A) is a private voluntary organization or
13 cooperative or intergovernmental organization;
14 and

15 (B) partners with an Israeli institution to
16 carry out a field-based project under this sec-
17 tion.

18 (3) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
19 the Secretary of Agriculture.

20 (b) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall establish
21 a program to provide grants to, or enter into cooperative
22 agreements with, eligible organizations to carry out, in
23 partnership with Israeli institutions, field-based projects
24 in foreign countries that enable local or regional procure-
25 ment of eligible commodities to respond to food shortages,

1 with an emphasis on developing long-term, sustainable,
2 self-sufficient food ecosystems.

3 (c) PROPOSALS.—

4 (1) APPLICATIONS.—To be eligible to receive a
5 grant from, or enter into a cooperative agreement
6 with, the Secretary under this section, an eligible or-
7 ganization shall submit to the Secretary an applica-
8 tion by such date, in such manner, and containing
9 such information as the Secretary may require.

10 (2) SELECTION OF PROJECTS.—

11 (A) PROJECT DIVERSITY.—

12 (i) IN GENERAL.—Subject to clause
13 (ii) and subparagraph (B), in selecting
14 proposals for field-based projects to fund
15 under this section, the Secretary shall se-
16 lect a diversity of projects, including—

17 (I) projects located in food sur-
18 plus regions;

19 (II) projects located in food def-
20 icit regions that are carried out using
21 regional procurement methods; and

22 (III) projects located in multiple
23 geographical regions.

24 (ii) PRIORITY.—In selecting proposals
25 for field-based projects to fund under this

1 section, the Secretary shall ensure that the
2 majority of selected proposals are for field-
3 based projects that—

4 (I) are located in Africa; and

5 (II) procure eligible commodities
6 that are produced in Africa.

7 (B) DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE.—A por-
8 tion of the funds made available to carry out
9 this section shall be made available for field-
10 based projects under this section that provide
11 development assistance for a period of not less
12 than 1 year.

13 (C) PREFERENCE.—In selecting proposals
14 for field-based projects to fund under this sec-
15 tion, the Secretary may give preference to eligi-
16 ble organizations that receive, or are working
17 toward receiving, assistance to carry out
18 projects under the McGovern-Dole International
19 Food for Education and Child Nutrition Pro-
20 gram established under section 3107 of the
21 Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of
22 2002 (7 U.S.C. 1736o–1).

23 (d) PROCUREMENT.—

24 (1) IN GENERAL.—Any eligible commodity that
25 is procured for a field-based project carried out

1 under this section shall be procured through any ap-
2 proach or methodology that the Secretary considers
3 to be an effective approach or methodology to pro-
4 vide adequate information regarding the manner by
5 which to expedite, to the maximum extent prac-
6 ticable, the provision of food aid to affected popu-
7 lations without significantly increasing commodity
8 costs for low-income consumers who procure com-
9 modities sourced from the same markets in which
10 the eligible commodity is procured.

11 (2) REQUIREMENTS.—

12 (A) IMPACT ON LOCAL FARMERS AND
13 COUNTRIES.—The Secretary shall ensure that
14 the local or regional procurement of any eligible
15 commodity under this section will not have a
16 disruptive impact on farmers located in, or the
17 economy of—

18 (i) the recipient country of the eligible
19 commodity; or

20 (ii) any country in the region in which
21 the eligible commodity may be procured.

22 (B) TRANSSHIPMENT.—The Secretary
23 shall, in accordance with such terms and condi-
24 tions as the Secretary considers to be appro-
25 priate, require from each eligible organization

1 seeking a grant or cooperative agreement under
2 this section commitments designed to prevent
3 or restrict—

4 (i) the resale or transshipment of any
5 eligible commodity procured under this sec-
6 tion to any country other than the recipi-
7 ent country; and

8 (ii) the use of the eligible commodity
9 for any purpose other than food aid.

10 (C) WORLD PRICES.—

11 (i) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out this
12 section, the Secretary shall take any pre-
13 caution that the Secretary considers to be
14 reasonable to ensure that the procurement
15 of eligible commodities will not unduly dis-
16 rupt—

17 (I) world prices for agricultural
18 commodities; or

19 (II) normal patterns of commer-
20 cial trade with foreign countries.

21 (ii) PROCUREMENT PRICE.—The pro-
22 curement of any eligible commodity shall
23 be made at a reasonable market price with
24 respect to the economy of the country in

1 which the eligible commodity is procured,
2 as determined by the Secretary.

3 (e) NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS.—An eligi-
4 ble organization receiving a grant or entering into a coop-
5 erative agreement under this section that is a nongovern-
6 mental organization shall be subject to regulations pro-
7 mulgated or guidelines issued by the Secretary to carry
8 out this section, including United States audit require-
9 ments that are applicable to nongovernmental organiza-
10 tions.

11 (f) REPORTING.—

12 (1) IN GENERAL.—Each year, the Secretary
13 shall submit to the committees of Congress described
14 in paragraph (2) a report that describes the use of
15 funds under this section, including—

16 (A) the impact of procurements and
17 projects on—

18 (i) local and regional agricultural pro-
19 ducers; and

20 (ii) markets and consumers, including
21 low-income consumers; and

22 (B) implementation time frames and costs.

23 (2) COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS DESCRIBED.—

24 The committees of Congress referred to in para-
25 graph (1) are—

1 (A) the Committee on Agriculture, Nutri-
2 tion, and Forestry of the Senate;

3 (B) the Committee on Agriculture of the
4 House of Representatives; and

5 (C) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of
6 the House of Representatives.

7 (g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
8 authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry
9 out this section \$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2025
10 through 2029.

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