

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 900

To amend the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 to establish a competitive grant program under which the Secretary of Agriculture provides grants to land-grant colleges and universities to support agricultural producers in adopting conservation and innovative climate practices, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 21, 2023

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

A BILL

To amend the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 to establish a competitive grant program under which the Secretary of Agriculture provides grants to land-grant colleges and universities to support agricultural producers in adopting conservation and innovative climate practices, 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 “Conservation and Inno-
5 vative Climate Partnership Act of 2023”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds that—

3 (1) farmers and producers engage in innovative
4 climate and conservation practices that may include
5 a wide variety of activities, such as—

6 (A) carbon retention or carbon sequestra-
7 tion cropping practices;

8 (B) resource conserving crop rotation;

9 (C) alley cropping;

10 (D) integrated livestock-crop systems;

11 (E) advanced grazing management;

12 (F) improved forestry or agroforestry man-
13 agement; and

14 (G) the insertion of buffers or saturated
15 buffers;

16 (2) the purpose of implementing innovative cli-
17 mate and conservation practices on farm or ranch
18 land is to increase sustainability through—

19 (A) improved soil health and tith;

20 (B) improved water quality, quantity, and
21 management;

22 (C) improved nutrient management;

23 (D) reduction in tillage; or

24 (E) wildlife promotion and management;

25 and

1 (3) the benefits of engaging in innovative cli-
2 mate and conservation practices include—

3 (A) a reduction of greenhouse gases emis-
4 sions, including carbon dioxide, methane, sulfur
5 dioxide, and nitrous oxide;

6 (B) carbon sequestration;

7 (C) soil health improvement; and

8 (D) reduced exposure to climate-related
9 risk.

10 **SEC. 3. CONSERVATION AND INNOVATIVE CLIMATE PART-**
11 **nership Competitive Grant Program.**

12 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subtitle H of title XVI of the
13 Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990
14 is amended by inserting after section 1672 (7 U.S.C.
15 5925) the following:

16 **“SEC. 1672A. CONSERVATION AND INNOVATIVE CLIMATE**
17 **Partnership Competitive Grant Pro-**
18 **gram.**

19 “(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

20 “(1) 1862 INSTITUTION; 1890 INSTITUTION.—

21 The terms ‘1862 Institution’ and ‘1890 Institution’
22 have the meanings given those terms in section 2 of
23 the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education
24 Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7601).

1 “(2) 1994 INSTITUTION.—The term ‘1994 In-
2 stitution’ has the meaning given the term in section
3 532 of the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Sta-
4 tus Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 301 note; Public Law
5 103–382).

6 “(3) ELIGIBLE INSTITUTION.—The term ‘eligi-
7 ble institution’ means—

8 “(A) an 1862 Institution;

9 “(B) an 1890 Institution; and

10 “(C) a 1994 Institution.

11 “(4) PRACTICE.—The term ‘practice’ has the
12 meaning given the term in section 1240A of the
13 Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3839aa–1).

14 “(5) PROGRAM.—The term ‘program’ means
15 the competitive grant program established under
16 subsection (b).

17 “(6) SECRETARY.—The term ‘Secretary’ means
18 the Secretary of Agriculture.

19 “(b) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall estab-
20 lish a program to provide competitive grants pursuant to
21 section 3(d) of the Smith-Lever Act (7 U.S.C. 343(d)) to
22 eligible institutions to carry out projects to increase the
23 voluntary adoption of practices through public awareness
24 campaigns, workshops, and specialized technical assist-
25 ance.

1 “(c) APPLICATIONS.—To be eligible to receive a grant
2 under the program, an eligible institution shall submit to
3 the Secretary an application, including a demonstration
4 that the applicant will—

5 “(1) increase interaction with local agricultural
6 producers by a rate of not less than 25 percent
7 above the outreach rate before the implementation of
8 the project under the program, as determined by the
9 Secretary;

10 “(2) assist agricultural producers in imple-
11 menting new practices on farms or edges of fields,
12 improving existing practices on farms or edges of
13 fields, or any combination thereof; and

14 “(3) assist agricultural producers in imple-
15 menting a combination of practices that contribute
16 to—

17 “(A) the overall improvement of conserva-
18 tion; or

19 “(B) a decrease in, or sequestration of,
20 greenhouse gas emissions.

21 “(d) PARTNERSHIPS.—An eligible institution shall
22 carry out a project using a grant under the program in
23 partnership with not fewer than 1 other entity, which may
24 include—

25 “(1) a nonprofit organization;

1 “(2) a State entity;

2 “(3) the Natural Resources Conservation Serv-
3 ice;

4 “(4) an 1862 Institution;

5 “(5) an 1890 Institution;

6 “(6) a 1994 Institution; or

7 “(7) any combination thereof.

8 “(e) MAXIMUM AMOUNT.—The amount of a grant
9 under the program shall be not more than \$400,000.

10 “(f) USE OF FUNDS.—An eligible institution may use
11 a grant under the program—

12 “(1) to support agricultural producers in imple-
13 menting a practice;

14 “(2) subject to subsection (g), for additional
15 staffing at the eligible institution to assist in car-
16 rying out a project using the grant;

17 “(3) to conduct workshops for agricultural pro-
18 ducers, and develop and distribute digital and hard-
19 copy materials directly to agricultural producers,
20 that provide clear directions for accessing technical
21 assistance for adopting practices; and

22 “(4) for soil testing and the measuring of other
23 indicators of the effectiveness of practices.

24 “(g) LIMITATION ON ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.—
25 An eligible institution may use not more than 30 percent

1 of the amount of a grant under the program for adminis-
2 trative expenses.

3 “(h) DURATION.—A grant provided under the pro-
4 gram shall be for such period as the Secretary determines
5 to be appropriate, but not less than 4 years.

6 “(i) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
7 authorized to be appropriated to provide grants under the
8 program pursuant to section 3(d) of the Smith-Lever Act
9 (7 U.S.C. 343(d)) \$13,000,000 for each fiscal year.”.

10 (b) ELIGIBILITY OF 1994 INSTITUTIONS.—Section
11 3(d) of the Smith-Lever Act (7 U.S.C. 343(d)) is amend-
12 ed, in the third sentence—

13 (1) by striking “program and” and inserting
14 “program,”; and

15 (2) by inserting “, and the conservation and in-
16 novative climate partnership competitive grant pro-
17 gram established under section 1672A of the Food,
18 Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990”
19 before the period at the end.

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