

Title VII – Research

SUBTITLE A – NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH, EXTENSION, AND TEACHING POLICY ACT OF 1977

(1) Option to be included as Non-Land-Grant College of Agriculture

The House bill authorizes a Hispanic-serving Agricultural College and University and any institution eligible to receive funds under the McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Act of 1962 to opt out of their respective designation in order to qualify as a Non-Land-Grant College of Agriculture. (Section 7101)

The Senate amendment contains no comparable provision.

The Conference substitute adopts the House provision with an amendment. The amendment allows a Hispanic-serving agricultural college and university and any institution eligible to receive funds under the McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Act to opt out of their respective designation in order to qualify as a Non-Land-Grant College of Agriculture. The amendment also requires a NLGCA institution to offer a baccalaureate or higher degrees in the study of food and agricultural sciences and the Secretary to establish a process for NLGCA designation. (Section 7101)

The Managers do not take a position on how an institution should be designated, but have provided the Hispanic Serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities, as well as institutions eligible to receive funding under the McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Research Program, with the option to choose whether to be designated as such or to opt out of their designation for purposes of access to program funding eligibility. The Managers believe institutions with degree programs in the agricultural sciences that may automatically qualify as a Hispanic Serving Institution or as a McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Research institution should not be precluded from being able to opt out of those programs in favor of qualifying as a Non-Land-Grant College of Agriculture.

(2) Specialty Crop Committee

The House bill authorizes the current annual report to include recommendations regarding the improvement of quality and taste of processed specialty crops and programs that would improve remote sensing. (Section 7103)

The Senate amendment authorizes the current annual report to include an analysis of alignment of Specialty Crop Committee recommendations with specialty crop research initiative grants, requires membership on the Specialty Crop Committee to reflect diversity in the specialty crops represented and that the Specialty Crop Committee to consult on an ongoing basis with diverse sectors of the specialty crop industry. (Section 7102)

The Conference substitute adopts the Senate provision, including Section 12212, with an amendment. The amendment requires that the Specialty Crop Committee membership reflect diversity in the specialty crops represented, that the annual report include recommendations regarding the improvement of quality and taste of processed specialty crops, programs that would improve remote sensing, and an analysis of alignment of committee recommendations with specialty crop research grants and that the specialty crops committee to consult with diverse sectors of the specialty crop industry. The amendment also establishes a Citrus Disease Subcommittee and its duties. (Section

7103)

The Managers intend the NAREEEAB and Specialty Crop Committee to consult with industry groups on agricultural research, extension, education, and economics, and to make recommendations to the Secretary and Congress based on that consultation.

In creating the NAREEEAB and Specialty Crop Committee, Congress intended for these entities to recommend policies, to identify short and long-term national priorities for REE programs, and to evaluate program results and effectiveness among other assigned duties. Congress has since added multiple duties and consultative functions to the Board's mandate. In doing so, the Managers are aware that the work load and learning curve of the volunteer members is high. It has become apparent to the Managers that it can take several years for new board members to become comfortable not only with the diverse subject matter under review, but likewise the law and administrative functions they are required to evaluate. While the statute defines the length of a board member's individual term, Congress has never intended for board members to be subject to a limit on the number of terms they can serve. Unfortunately, the Managers have become aware that USDA has instituted an arbitrary term limit policy on advisory board members that inhibits the individual members and the advisory board's effectiveness. The Managers strongly encourage the Secretary to reverse this policy.

The Managers recognize the interest in growing agricultural commodities in less traditional production areas. As such, the Managers encourage the Secretary in consultation with the NAREEEAB, in both the intramural research carried out by the Agricultural Research Service and in the competitive grants programs carried out through AFRI and other authorities, to carry out and fund research into the unique situations facing producers in urban areas. These unique situations may include reclaiming land previously used for industrial purposes or neglected residential areas, and addressing needs such as the remediation of soils to make them capable of producing agricultural commodities for human consumption.

(3) Veterinary Services Grant program

The House authorizes a Veterinary Services Grant program to award competitive grants to develop, implement and sustain veterinary services. (Section 7104)

The Senate amendment authorizes a Veterinary Service Grant program to award competitive grants to develop, implement and sustain veterinary services. The amendment authorizes the Secretary to develop additional grant preferences and requires a 25 percent match requirement unless waived by the Secretary. (Section 7103)

The Conference substitute adopts the House provision. (Section 7104)

Our veterinary workforce is responsible for ensuring that the food we eat is safe, but the nation faces a critical shortage in the public, private, industrial and academic sectors. Our nation's large-animal veterinarians are truly on the front lines of food safety, public health, animal health and national security. The demand for large-animal veterinarians is increasing, and the lack of these specialists in many areas of the country will continue to put our agricultural economy and the safety of our food supply at risk.

Since the fall of 2000, the House and Senate Agriculture Committees have worked on ways of resolving the serious veterinary shortage problem confronting many rural communities. With the passage of the National Veterinary Medical Service Act in December of 2003, a program was authorized to incentivize large animal veterinarians to practice in communities that USDA designated as veterinarian shortage areas. With this

program in place, large animal veterinarians are able to apply on a competitive basis for educational loan repayment assistance in exchange for their commitment to practice in shortage areas.

To the extent that the loan program is successful, it is important to consider that this was just the first step. While this assistance will be very helpful in attracting veterinarians to these communities, gaps remain in veterinarian recruitment, attracting and training technical support staff, and simply meeting the long-term costs of operating veterinarian practices in these communities.

The Veterinarian Services Investment Act is meant to address these secondary needs and is designed to complement the loan repayment program to help large animal veterinarians become established in these rural communities.

The Conference substitute recognizes and addresses a real problem in rural America by authorizing grants to address workforce shortages based on the needs of underserved areas. For example, grants could be used to recruit veterinarians and veterinary technicians in shortage areas and communities, expanding and establishing practices in high-need areas. The program could also establish mobile portable clinics and televet services and establish education programs, including continuing education, distance education, and increase recruitment in veterinary science.

(4) Policy Research Centers

The House bill requires the Secretary, acting through the Office of the Chief Economist, to make competitive grants to or enter into cooperative agreements with eligible recipients that possess a history of providing unbiased, nonpartisan economic analysis to Congress. The provision authorizes other public research institutions and organizations as eligible recipients. The Secretary is directed to give a preference to policy research centers that have extensive databases, models and demonstrated experience in providing Congress with agricultural market projections, rural development and agricultural policy analysis and baseline projections at the farm, multiregional, national, and international levels. The bill also authorizes appropriations of \$5,000,000 for each fiscal years 2014 through 2018. (Section 7106)

The Senate amendment requires the Secretary, acting through the Office of the Chief Economist, to enter into agreements with eligible recipients that possess a history of providing unbiased, nonpartisan economic analysis to Congress. The amendment authorizes other public research institutions and organizations as eligible recipients. The Secretary is directed to give a preference to policy research centers that have extensive databases, models and demonstrated experience in providing Congress with agricultural market projections, rural development and agricultural policy analysis and baseline projections at the farm, multiregional, national, and international levels, including information, analysis and research relating to drought mitigation. The amendment also authorizes appropriations of \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 2013 and each fiscal year thereafter and authorizes funding for activities including developing theoretical applied and research methods. (Section 7015)

The Conference substitute adopts the Senate provision with an amendment. The amendment requires the Secretary, acting through the Office of the Chief Economist, to make competitive grants or cooperative agreements with eligible recipients and to award a preference to policy research centers with extensive databases, models and demonstrated experience in providing Congress with various types of information or

drought mitigation information, analysis and research. The amendment also authorizes funding for applied research methods and authorizes appropriations of \$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2014 through 2018. (Section 7106)

The Managers recognize the invaluable role that the Drought Monitor, produced at the National Drought Mitigation Center, in coordination with USDA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, plays on several fronts. The conference substitute includes the provision of information, analysis and research relating to drought mitigation as one of the preferences for funding under this section. The Managers expect that the Drought Monitor will continue to be available for use in determining eligibility for Federal disaster response programs, as well as providing invaluable information for other segments of government, agricultural producers and the sectors that support agricultural production.

(5) Human Nutrition Intervention and Health Promotion Research program

The House bill repeals section 1424. (Section 7107)

The Senate amendment contains no comparable provision.

The Conference substitute adopts the House provision. (Section 7108)

The Conference substitute builds upon the efforts from 2008, either repealing or allowing unfunded and unused program authorities to expire with fiscal year 2013, and combining, consolidating and streamlining authorities to make a more concentrated and effective use of limited funding. The remaining authorities are extended through fiscal year 2018 with few changes.

(6) Pilot research program to combine medical and agricultural research

The House bill repeals section 1424A. (Section 7108)

The Senate amendment contains no comparable provision.

The Conference substitute adopts the House provision. (Section 7109)

(7) Continuing animal health and disease research programs

The House bill authorizes appropriations of \$15,000,000 for each fiscal year 2014 through 2018. (Section 7110)

The Senate amendment reauthorizes appropriations through fiscal year 2018. (Section 7108)

The Conference substitute adopts the Senate provision with an amendment. The amendment reauthorizes and allocates the authorization of appropriations through 2018 between the capacity program in current law and the newly authorized competitive grant program. (Section 7111)

The Managers have heard concerns from stakeholders that there has been a lack of emphasis on animal science by USDA. Additional focus needs to be placed on critical issues facing animal agriculture. Advancements in animal science will play an important role in meeting a growing global demand for food while making efficient use of natural resources, strengthening the competitiveness of American agriculture and addressing critical animal health issues. The expansion of Section 1433 includes a competitive mechanism that will enable the Department to better focus resources on key animal science priorities.

The Managers appreciate the efforts brought forward by the Farm Animal Integrated Research 2012 (FAIR 2012) priority setting process which identified food

security, one health and stewardship as key focal areas for future investments in animal science. The Managers encourage the Department to use these focal areas and the underlying priorities identified in FAIR 2012 as a starting point and to regularly consult with industry when developing requests for proposal under the new competitive component of Section 1433.

(8) Research on national or regional programs

The House bill repeals section 1434. (Section 7111)

The Senate amendment contains no comparable provision.

The Conference substitute adopts the Senate provision.

The Conference substitute reauthorizes many critical agricultural research programs. In so doing, the Managers recognize the need to streamline the authorities in this title and permitted some authorities that had not received funding in recent years to expire.

(9) Grants to upgrade agriculture and food science facilities and equipment at insular area land-grant institutions

The House bill authorizes grants to support tropical and subtropical agricultural research, including pest and disease research and reauthorizes appropriations through fiscal year 2018. (Section 7113)

The Senate amendment reauthorizes appropriations through fiscal year 2018. (Section 7110)

The Conference substitute adopts the House provision. (Section 7113)

(10) National research and training virtual centers

The House bill repeals section 1448. (Section 7114)

The Senate amendment contains no comparable provision.

The Conference substitute adopts the House provision. (Section 7114)

(11) Competitive grants program for Hispanic agricultural workers and youth

The House bill authorizes the award of competitive grants to provide for training in the food and agricultural sciences of Hispanic agricultural workers and Hispanic youth working in the food and agricultural sciences. (Section 7116)

The Senate amendment contains no comparable provision.

The Conference substitute adopts the House provision. (Section 7116)

(12) Research equipment grants

The House bill declares repeals section 1462A. (Section 7118)

The Senate amendment contains no comparable provision.

The Conference substitute adopts the House provision. (Section 7118)

(13) Auditing, reporting, bookkeeping, and administrative requirements

The House bill states that notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary may retain not more than 4 percent of amounts made available for agricultural research, extension, and teaching assistance programs for the administration of those programs authorized under this Act or any other Act, except for peer panel expenses or any other provision that contains a limitation of less than 4 percent. The Secretary is

authorized, to the maximum extent practicable and for the purposes of supporting ongoing research and information dissemination activities, to enter into grants, contracts, cooperative agreements, or other legal instruments with former Department of Agriculture agricultural research facilities. The Secretary is also authorized, for the purposes of receiving support for agricultural research, to enter into grants, contracts, cooperative agreements or other legal instruments with agricultural research organizations. (Section 7121)

The Senate amendment contains no comparable provision.

The Conference substitute adopts the House provision with an amendment. The amendment authorizes the Secretary to enter into agreements with former USDA agricultural research facilities. (Section 7121)

Agricultural research, extension, and education programs serve the food and agriculture sector, consumers of American agricultural products, and rural communities throughout the United States. Research programs and funding are primarily delivered by two agencies at USDA: the Agriculture Research Service (ARS), which focuses on 'intramural' research and basic research; and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) which was created by the 2008 Farm Bill to restructure, combine and improve 'extramural' research functions at USDA to make better use of limited funds.

The Managers are concerned about the increasing use of assessments, fees, and higher indirect costs rates imposed on its university partners by ARS. These university partners play a major role in achieving ARS research priorities and objectives. In a time of scarce budgetary resources, ARS must ensure limited research dollars are maximized and administrative costs are reduced to the fullest extent possible. In recent years, ARS has imposed a variety of administrative assessments on its university partners, effectively reducing funds intended for important research projects. The Managers expect ARS to operate within historical administrative cost parameters, namely by imposing a total indirect cost rate not exceeding four percent. All administrative assessments, fees, dues, or charges, of any type, must be included within this overall administrative cost cap. ARS must administer its programs more efficiently to ensure valuable research funds are maximized so it may continue to maintain a robust agricultural research enterprise. The Managers encourage ARS to continue university research partnerships to ensure our nation's premier educational and clinical institutions play a major role in achieving ARS and congressional research objectives.

The Managers encourage the Secretary, acting through ARS, to continue and expand the Agricultural Technology Innovation Partnership (ATIP). The Managers recognize the success of the ATIP initiative in facilitating technology transfer from USDA to the private sector, and particularly encourage the Secretary to support the further development of public-private partnerships to provide venture development training, promote the sustainability of soil health for multiple agricultural uses, and expand the National Nutrient Database to facilitate a healthier food supply.

The Managers encourage the Secretary to review and assess technological solutions for the disposal of acid whey associated with the production of certain dairy products. The Managers recognize that USDA and the ARS can maximize resources through public-private partnerships to develop technologies to effectively process acid whey in an effort to address concerns of the dairy and food industries.

(14) Special authorization for biosecurity planning and response

The House bill authorizes authorization of appropriations of such sums as necessary through fiscal year 2013 and \$10,000,000 for fiscal years 2014 through 2018. (Section 7126)

The Senate amendment amends the authorization of appropriations of such sums as necessary through fiscal year 2013 and \$20,000,000 for each fiscal year 2014 through 2018. (Section 7119)

The Conference substitute adopts the Senate provision. (Section 7126)

(15) Matching funds requirement

The House bill authorizes the requirement of matching funds from the recipient of competitive grants under certain covered laws. The recipient shall provide, from sources other than funds provided through the grant, funds or in-kind contributions or a combination of both to match at least 100 percent of the amount of the grant. The match requirement shall not apply to grants awarded to a research agency of the USDA, an entity eligible to receive funds under a capacity and infrastructure program as defined in the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 or to the partner of such eligible entity. (Section 7128)

The Senate amendment contains no comparable provision.

The Conference substitute adopts the House provision with an amendment. The amendment requires at least a 100 percent match from the recipient of competitive grants under certain covered laws but exempts grants awarded to a research agency of the USDA and entities, including their partners, that are eligible to receive capacity funds. The amendment authorizes the Secretary to waive the match requirement if the grant involves research or extension activities that the NAREEE Advisory Board has determined is a national priority specific to a statutory purpose of the program under which the grant is awarded. The match policy will apply to new grants awarded after October 1, 2014. (Section 7128)

The use of matching funds has proven to be an effective tool in leveraging limited Federal resources with commitments from those benefitting from agricultural research and extension. Unfortunately, concerns about the consistency of USDA's application of these policies have been brought to the attention of the Managers.

Efforts by the Congress to develop a comprehensive policy on research and extension matching funds originated during the development of the 2008 farm bill. At the time, it was noted that as research programs have been authorized or modified, the incorporation of matching requirements was done in a subjective manner. An effort was initiated during the 2008 farm bill conference to harmonize the matching requirements, but due to the complexity of the task and time constraints, the effort was dropped with the understanding that the Congress and USDA would undertake a stakeholder process designed to provide recommendations in advance of the 2012 farm bill. Unfortunately that process never materialized after passage of the 2008 bill.

The House Agriculture Committee maintained an interest in engaging stakeholders in a discussion about how to harmonize these policies to improve consistency and transparency in their application. Several requests were made for suggestions on how best to approach this issue and the consensus seemed to be that the Committee should propose a discussion draft. The language included in the 2012 House Committee legislation was the result of technical assistance received by the USDA and was meant to begin this discussion.

As part of the discussion that commenced following release of the 2012 House Agriculture Committee farm bill draft, several comments were received and a consensus was formed regarding an effort to utilize matching fund policies to leverage Federal investment, while at the same time reducing the administrative and accounting burden on USDA and grant recipients.

The Conference substitute recognizes the value of matching funds, but likewise takes into account the long-standing Federal investment in research, extension and teaching capacity and infrastructure programs (as defined in Sec. 251(f)(1)(C) of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994). Whereas the 2012 House draft bill allowed for capacity and infrastructure program funds to be utilized in meeting the matching requirement for competitive research and extension grants, the resulting accounting burden was deemed to be counterproductive. In the conference substitute, eligibility to receive capacity and infrastructure program funds is deemed to be sufficient to authorize a blanket exemption from competitive grant matching requirements. Likewise, any individual grant awarded to multiple recipients would be exempt from matching requirements if at least one of the recipients is eligible to receive capacity and infrastructure program funds from USDA.

The Conference substitute includes a provision requiring the Secretary to establish an ongoing process through which institutions may apply for designation as a Non-Land Grant College of Agriculture. The Managers expect the Secretary to take all reasonable steps for the purposes of ensuring additional institutions that meet the criteria can be designated as a Non-Land Grant College of Agriculture.

Additionally, the conference substitute provides the Secretary the authority to issue a waiver of the matching funds requirement for competitively awarded grants that support research or extension activities that the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board has deemed to be a national priority. The Managers expect the national priorities identified by the Board to be consistent with the priorities established in the authorizing statute for the various agricultural research, education and extension programs

(16) Sense of Congress regarding expansion of the Land Grant program

The House bill provides a Sense of Congress that land-grant programs should be expanded to include enhanced funding and additional institutions should be considered. (Section 7129)

The Senate amendment contains no comparable provision.

The Conference substitute adopts the House provision with an amendment. The amendment designates Central State University as a land grant institution, but prohibits the University from receiving formula funds for two years. (Section 7129)

(17) Education grants program for Alaska and Hawaiian Native serving institutions

The Senate amendment eliminates grants without regard to any requirement for competition and reauthorizes appropriations through 2018. (Section 7106)

The House bill contains no comparable provision.

The Conference substitute adopts the Senate provision. (Section 7107)

(18) Sustainable agriculture technology development and transfer

The House bill authorizes authorization of appropriations of \$5,000,000 for fiscal years 2014 through 2018. (Section 7203)

The Senate amendment amends authorization of appropriations of such sums as necessary for fiscal years 2014 through 2018. (Section 7203)

The Conference substitute adopts the House provision. (Section 7203)

(19) National Agricultural Weather Information System

The House bill repeals Title XVI. (Section 7206)

The Senate amendment authorizes appropriations of \$1,000,000 for fiscal years 2014 through 2018. (Section 7206)

The Conference substitute adopts the Senate provision. (Section 7206)

The Managers are aware that advanced weather forecasts, using systems such as Tropospheric Airborne Meteorological Data Reporting, have been utilized by various Federal agencies for nearly a decade. The Managers support advanced forecasting in that it enhances U.S. meteorological forecasting systems, which are particularly useful in agricultural weather forecasts. The Managers therefore encourage continued use of these systems.

(20) Rural Electronic Commerce Extension Program

The House bill repeals section 1670. (Section 7207)

The Senate amendment contains no comparable provision.

The Conference substitute adopts the House provision. (Section 7207)

(21) Agricultural Genome Initiative

The House bill repeals Section 1671. (Section 7208)

The Senate amendment authorizes the Secretary to encourage awards to consortia of eligible entities. (Section 7207)

The Conference substitute adopts the Senate provision. (Section 7208)

(22) High-priority research and extension initiatives

The House bill repeals high-priority research and extension areas in subsections (e), (f) and (i). Pollinator protection is reauthorized through fiscal year 2018 and an annual report is amended to address honey bee health disorders and best management practices. A coffee plant health initiative is authorized as well as the authorization of appropriations through 2018. Section 7405(b)(2)(C) addresses research needs regarding cervidae and Section 6405 authorizes a Pulse Health Initiative. (Section 7209)

The Senate amendment repeals certain high-priority research and extension areas. Pollinator protection is reauthorized through fiscal year 2018. A cervidae initiative, a Corn, Soybean Meal, Cereal Grains, and Grain Byproducts Research and Extension priority, Forestry Products Advanced Utilization Research, Training Coordination for Food and Agriculture Protection, and Farm Animal Agriculture Integrated Research are authorized as well as the authorization of appropriations through 2018. (Section 7208)

The Conference substitute adopts the Senate provision with an amendment. The amendment reauthorizes the authorization of appropriations through 2018, strikes certain

high-priority research and extension areas, authorizes a coffee plant health initiative, a corn and soy meal high-priority research and extension area, a pulse crop health initiative, and training coordination for food and agriculture protection. Pollinator protection is reauthorized and amended to include health and population status surveillance. The amendment also authorizes Forestry products advanced utilization research in Section 7310. (Section 7209 and 7310)

The Managers recognize that it is in the economic interest of agricultural producers and American consumers to ensure a healthy, sustainable population of native and managed pollinators, including managed honey bees. Pollinators are essential to the production of an estimated one-third of the human diet and to the reproduction of at least 80 percent of flowering plants. Insect-pollinated agricultural commodities result in significant income for agricultural producers and account for about \$20 billion in U.S. agricultural output yearly.

The Managers remain concerned about the decline in the health and viability of managed honey bees due in part to a loss of appropriate habitat. As a result, the conference substitute continues to include a priority for creating pollinator habitat utilizing the Title II conservation programs. The Managers remain committed to pollinator protection activities, including the granting of priority treatment to conservation program applicants who commit to providing pollinator habitat. The Managers expect the Secretary to continue to utilize conservation programs to create, restore and enhance native and managed pollinator habitat quantity and quality, and specifically encourage the Secretary to ensure that conservation programs are resulting in sufficient high-quality pollinator habitat for managed honey bees--habitat that includes common alfalfa and sweet clover varieties utilized effectively in farm bill conservation programs.

The Conference substitute also continues the authorization for research on pollinator protection, and adds a consideration for honey bee health disorders and best management practices related to colony collapse disorder to the annual report that the Secretary is required to submit to Congress. The Managers also recognize the need to assist honey bee producers who suffer from disasters in the commodity title with the funding provided for the emergency assistance program that includes honey bees. Additionally, the Managers are aware that specialty crop producers groups are working collaboratively with institutions of higher learning on research and education activities. The Managers applaud these actions and encourage the Secretary to support their efforts.

The Cooperative Extension system is a nationwide, non-formal educational network. Each state, territory, and the District of Columbia has an office at its land-grant universities and a network of local or regional offices which are staffed by experts who provide practical, research-based education to agricultural producers, small business owners, youth, consumers, and others in rural and urban communities. The Managers encourage the Secretary to ensure that Cooperative Extension is effectively utilized to deliver the educational component of USDA programs. The Secretary is also encouraged to engage in discussions with other federal departments and agencies to consider ways to use the Cooperative Extension to deliver education for other federal programs as practicable.

In addition, the Managers recognize the unique knowledge and information that the Cooperative Extension system experts provide to various groups regarding farm and food systems. As mentioned, this education and information is disseminated through a

network of local or regional offices, and when the Secretary utilizes the Cooperative Extension to deliver the educational component of the various programs at the Department, to the extent practicable, the Rural Development mission area programs should be included.

During the creation of the Reservation Extension Agent Program, the Congress required the Secretary to consult with Native American farmers and ranchers in establishing Extension programs on Indian reservations and tribal jurisdictions. The Managers understand that changes in the operation of grant programs have impacted this consultation, and expect that the Secretary would find ways to continue the dialogue on the operation of these Extension programs with the populations that they are serving.

The Conference substitute moves the Forestry Products Advanced Utilization Research Initiative provision from High Priority Research and includes it as a separate provision in the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998. The Managers intend for this provision to address research needs of the forestry sector and their respective regions. The Conference substitute directs the Secretary to ensure that this program is administered in coordination with the U.S. Forest Service Research and Development Program and the Forest Products Laboratory. The Managers encourage the U.S. Forest Service Research and Development Program to contribute funding to carry out this initiative. The Managers also recognize the benefits the Land Grant System can offer this initiative in terms of developing and disseminating science-based tools through research and extension activities.

(23) Nutrient management research and extension initiative

The House bill repeals section 1672A. (Section 7210)

The Senate amendment contains no comparable provision.

The Conference substitute adopts the House provision. (Section 7210)

(24) Organic agriculture research and extension initiative

The House bill eliminates the funds transfer, encourages farm business management, authorizes \$20,000,000 in mandatory funding for each fiscal year 2014 through 2018 and reauthorizes appropriations for 2014 through 2018. (Section 7211)

The Senate amendment eliminates the funds transfer and authorizes \$16,000,000 in mandatory funding for each fiscal year 2014 through 2018. (Section 7209)

The Conference substitute adopts the House provision with an amendment. The amendment authorizes competitive grant purposes, including farm business management, reauthorizes the authorization of appropriations and authorizes \$20,000,000 of Commodity Credit Corporation funds for each fiscal year 2014 through 2018. (Section 7211)

The Conference substitute provides additional funding for the Organic Research and Education Initiative. One of the primary activities necessary to encourage continued market growth, improved food safety and risk management for both of these industries is adequate dedicated research support. The Managers recognize that research is one of the primary means by which the Farm Bill provides assistance to organic farmers, so conference substitute increases funding beyond the levels in the 2008 Farm Bill, consistent with increased market needs.

The Managers encourage the USDA to explore technology that meets the requirements of the National Organic Program and that can control weeds and pests while maintaining healthy water resources.

(25) Agricultural bioenergy feedstock and energy efficiency research and extension initiative

The House bill repeals section 1672C. (Section 7212)

The Senate amendment contains no comparable provision.

The Conference substitute adopts the House provision. (Section 7212)

(26) Centers of excellence

The House bill moves the authority in subsection 1672(i) requiring the Secretary to prioritize any center of excellence established for specific agricultural commodities for the receipt of funding for any competitive research or extension program administered by the Secretary. A center of excellence is composed of 1 or more eligible entities specified in subsection (b)(7) of the Competitive, Special, and Facilities Research Grant Act that provide financial or in-kind support to the center. Certain criteria will be considered for recognition as a center of excellence and where practicable, the criteria for consideration shall include efforts to improve teaching capacity and infrastructure at colleges and universities. (Section 7214)

The Senate amendment moves the authority in subsection 1672(i) providing that the Secretary may prioritize regional centers of excellence established for specific agricultural commodities for the receipt of funding and authorizes appropriations of \$10,000,000 for fiscal years 2014 through 2018. (Section 7211)

The Conference substitute adopts the House provision with an amendment. The amendment authorizes the Secretary to prioritize centers of excellence established for the purposes of carrying out research, extension, and education activities relating to the food and agricultural sciences for the receipt of funding for any competitive research or extension program. (Section 7214)

With limited resources to invest in critical programs, the Managers considered multiple options by which Federal funds can be leveraged to improve overall program effectiveness. With the recognition that multiple institutions and organizations participate in projects of similar interest, the Managers have sought to incentivize the formation of formal partnerships and other organizational structures as Centers of Excellence. The conference substitute directs that such centers that meet established criteria be granted priority in receipt of competitive research and extension grants.

The Managers would recommend that USDA establish procedures to implement this provision in accordance with appropriate regulatory procedures in order to allow interested stakeholders to gain a firm understanding of USDA's implementation of the provision.

(27) Red Meat Safety Research Center

The House bill repeals section 1676. (Section 7215)

The Senate amendment contains no comparable provision.

The Conference substitute adopts the House provision. (Section 7215)

(28) Assistive Technology Program for Farmers with Disabilities

The House bill authorizes appropriations of \$6,000,000 for fiscal year 2013 and \$3,000,000 for each fiscal year 2014 through 2018. (Section 7216)

The Senate amendment authorizes appropriations of \$6,000,000 for fiscal year 2013 and \$5,000,000 for each fiscal year 2014 through 2018. (Section 7212)

The Conference substitute adopts the Senate provision. (Section 7216)

SUBTITLE C – AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH, EXTENSION, AND EDUCATION REFORM ACT OF 1998

(29) Coordinated program to improve visibility of small and medium size dairy, livestock and poultry operations

The House bill repeals section 407. (Section 7303)

The Senate amendment contains no comparable provision.

The Conference substitute adopts the Senate provision.

(30) Fusarium Graminearum

The House bill authorizes appropriations of such sums as necessary through fiscal year 2013 and \$7,500,000 for each fiscal year 2014 through 2018. (Section 7304)

The Senate amendment authorizes appropriations of \$10,000,000 for each fiscal year 2014 through 2018. (Section 7303)

The Conference substitute adopts the Senate provision. (Section 7303)

(31) Bovine Johne's Disease Control Program

The House bill repeals section 409. (Section 7305)

The Senate amendment contains no comparable provision.

The Conference substitute adopts the House provision. (Section 7304)

(32) Specialty Crop Research Initiative

The House bill authorizes research in plant breeding, genetics and genomics to include other methods and also authorizes handling and processing. It authorizes the Secretary to award competitive grants on the basis of an initial scientific peer review and a final funding determination made by the Secretary based on a review and ranking for merit, relevance and impact conducted by a panel of specialty crop industry representatives for the specific crop. \$50,000,000 of mandatory monies is authorized for fiscal years 2014 and 2015, \$55,000,000 for fiscal years 2016 and 2017, and \$65,000,000 for fiscal year 2018 and each fiscal year thereafter and the authorization of appropriations is reauthorized for 2014 through 2018. Section 6128 provides a universal match policy that applies to this provision. (Section 7307)

The Senate amendment authorizes the Secretary to consult with the Specialty Crops Committee during the peer and merit review process. \$25,000,000 of mandatory monies is authorized for fiscal year 2014, \$30,000,000 for fiscal years 2015 and 2016, \$65,000,000 for fiscal year 2017 and \$50,000,000 fiscal year 2018 and each fiscal year thereafter. The amendment also eliminates the non-federal funds limitation on the match requirement. (Section 7305)

The Conference substitute adopts the House provision with an amendment. The amendment authorizes the initiative to address research in genomics and other methods as

well as efforts to improve handling and processing. The Secretary is directed to award competitive grants on the basis of a scientific peer review and a review and ranking for merit, relevance and impact and to consult each fiscal year with the Specialty Crops Committee and report to Congress the results of the consultation and the committee's review of the grants awarded in the previous year, including the Citrus Disease subcommittee's consultation and grant review in Section 1408(g) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977.. The amendment also authorizes \$80,000,000 of Commodity Credit Corporation funds for fiscal year 2014 and each fiscal year thereafter and reauthorizes the authorization of appropriations for each year 2014 through 2018.

The amendment also adopts the Senate amendment, Section 12212, with an amendment, authorizing an Emergency Citrus Disease Research and Extension Program with a reservation of Commodity Credit Corporation funds authorized for SCRI of \$25,000,000 for fiscal year 2014 through 2018, available and reserved until expended, and an authorization of appropriations of \$25,000,000 for each fiscal year 2014 through 2018. (Section 7306)

The Managers are aware of concerns that the current merit review process for competitive research grants generally and the Specialty Crops Research Initiative can provide a significantly better approach to evaluating the relevancy of the proposed research projects through industry participation. The conference substitute incorporates amendments to strengthen the merit review process to address these shortcomings.

As the Secretary implements the amendments to sections 103 and 412 of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998; and section 1408A of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, the Managers intend the Secretary to institute a grant review process that will consist of a scientific peer review and a merit/relevance review of proposals to be conducted by panels of industry representatives for the specific crop or livestock species being evaluated to assess industry relevance.

While the Managers do not specify the order of review between scientific peer review and merit/relevance review, it is understood that there exists an initial preference among industry, academia and the Department that merit/relevance review should be sequenced first. If the Secretary chooses to sequence merit/relevance review prior to scientific peer review, the Managers expect future modifications to the overall process to be guided by an ongoing evaluation to be conducted by the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board, and the Specialty Crop Committee (for merit/relevance review related to the Specialty Crop Research Initiative). The advisory committee review of this process should occur before and after each annual funding cycle. The results of these reviews should be made publicly available and forwarded to the House Committee on Agriculture, the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry, and the Appropriations Subcommittees on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies in the House and Senate.

The Managers further understand that the Department is considering a pre-proposal process to conduct an enhanced merit/relevance review. While a pre-proposal process is neither authorized nor prohibited, the Managers expect that if the Secretary uses his discretion to pursue this process, this too would be evaluated as part of the ongoing review of program effectiveness.

In order to sufficiently evaluate the pre-proposals for merit/relevance, the Managers expect the submission must include: the process used to obtain stakeholder input to identify the industry need and proposed project objectives; the problem, rationale, significance, and hypotheses; how the proposed research approach will address each objective; the process to be used for continued stakeholder engagement to achieve project objectives; how the project will translate results into delivery of usable information to the entire stakeholder community in a timely fashion; and documentation of the relevance of the Principal Investigator(s) scientific background to project objectives.

Applicants submitting project pre-proposals that are found to rank high on merit/relevance review would then be invited to submit full proposals for scientific peer review conducted by a panel of subject matter experts from Federal agencies, non-Federal entities, and the industry. Among those project proposals that pass scientific peer review, final awards determinations should, to the maximum extent practicable, emphasize the results of the merit/relevance review process.

The Managers encourage the Secretary to prioritize competitive grants to address imminent threats which may impact the future of specialty crop production in this country.

The Conference substitute provides additional funding for the Initiative. One of the primary activities necessary to encourage continued market growth, improved food safety, and risk management is adequate dedicated research support. The Managers recognize that research is one of the primary means by which the Farm Bill provides assistance to specialty crop producers, so the reported bill significantly increases funding beyond the levels in the 2008 Farm Bill, consistent with increased market needs.

The U.S. citrus industry has been devastated by huanglongbing, an invasive disease also known as citrus greening disease, which has been spread by a foreign pest known as the Asian Citrus Psyllid. Citrus greening poses an imminent threat to the viability of this multibillion dollar industry in several states and promises to ravage the rest of the U.S. citrus producing sector if a cure or effective treatment is not found expeditiously. USDA has already affirmed this emergency with the citrus quarantine for Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Hawaii, Louisiana, and Mississippi as well as parts of California, South Carolina, and Arizona in October 2012. Citrus greening spreads quickly, and because of its dormancy period, surrounding groves are often already destroyed by the time the disease has been discovered.

The conference substitute establishes a research program dedicated to discovering or developing a cure or effective treatment for citrus greening and any other diseases and pests, domestic or invasive, that emerge to threaten the U.S. citrus producing and processing industry. The Managers recognize the need to target research toward citrus greening in a sustained and adequately funded manner. The urgent need to find a cure or effective treatments for citrus greening that will be useful in all of the major citrus-producing states of Arizona, California, Florida, and Texas is paramount. This urgency should guide the Department's operation of this program.

The Managers also recognize the importance of ensuring close collaboration between the Department, the industry stakeholders described in this section, and the relevant entities engaged in scientific research under this program. The Managers intend that the Department will consult closely and regularly with the industry stakeholders in the formulation, consideration, and approval of research projects performed under this

program and will give great weight to input from these stakeholders. Those persons selected to serve as industry stakeholders should be chosen in a manner that reflects the views and interests of the commercial citrus-producing sectors in the major citrus-producing states.

(33) National Swine Research Center

The House bill repeals section 612. (Section 7309)

The Senate amendment contains no comparable provision.

The Conference substitute adopts the House provision. (Section 7308)

(34) Studies of agricultural research, extension and education

The House bill repeals Subtitle C of title VI. (Section 7311)

The Senate amendment contains no comparable provision.

The Conference substitute adopts the House provision. (Section 7311)

SUBTITLE D –

(35) Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994

The House bill adds Aaniih Nakota College, College of the Muscogee Nation, Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College, and Navajo Technical College and removes Crownpoint Institute of Technology, Fort Belknap College, and Si Tanka/Huron University to the authority and updates the names of Chief Dull Knife College and Sisseton Wahpeton College. The bill reauthorizes appropriations through fiscal year 2018 and requires certification that research will be performed under a cooperative agreement with ARS or at least one other land grant college or university (exclusive of another 1994 Institution), at least one non-land grant college of agriculture or at least one cooperating forestry school. (Section 7402)

The Senate amendment adds the same institutions as the House bill and updates the name of the Sisseton Wahpeton College, reauthorizes appropriations through fiscal year 2018 and requires the same certification as the House provision.

Amends subsection (a)(2)(A)(ii) to except 1994 Institutions as provided under section 3(b)(3) of Smith-Lever, and for programs for children, youth and families at risk and for Federally recognized tribes implemented under section 3(d) of that Act (subsection (b)). (Section 7402)

The Conference substitute adopts the House provision. (Section 7402)

The Managers remain concerned about the agency's operation of FRTEP as if it were a 3(d) program. The Reservation Extension Agent Program was not authorized under Section 3(d) of the Smith-Lever Act. While this may have made administration of grants easier for the agency, it has led to confusion and unintended consequences. The Managers encourage the agency to follow congressional intent when implementing programs, old and new.

(36) Carbon cycle research

The House bill repeals section 221. (Section 7404)

The Senate amendment contains no comparable provision.

The Conference substitute adopts the Senate provision.

The Managers encourage the Agricultural Research Service to continue their field studies around the country to assess how biochar affects crop productivity and soil quality. Preliminary studies show promising results of how hardwood biochar can improve soil structure and the ability of sandy soils to retain water.

(37) Competitive, Special, and Facilities Research Grant Act

The House bill reauthorizes appropriations through fiscal year 2018. The provision authorizes priority areas on plant-based foods that are major sources of nutrients of concern, the research and development of surveillance methods, vaccines, vaccination delivery systems or diagnostic test for pests and diseases in wildlife reservoirs, the identification of animal drug needs, conservation practices and technologies addressing nutrient loss and improving water quality, and the economic costs of adopting conservation practices and technologies to improve water quality. The bill requires the Secretary to establish procedures under which State or Federal commodity promotion entities may directly submit proposals for requests for applications to address issues related to established priorities and award grants to eligible entities that submit proposals. Eligible entities are amended to include foundations. The Inter-regional research project number 4 is amended to include pesticides for use on specialty crops. Subsection (k) is repealed. (Section 7405)

The Senate amendment reauthorizes appropriations through fiscal year 2018. Section 7208(6) authorizes the Pulse Health Initiative, including an authorization of appropriations of \$25,000,000 for fiscal years 2014 through 2018. Sec. 12101 amends Title IV of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 to establish a wildlife reservoir zoonotic disease initiative to provide grants for research and development of surveillance methods, vaccines, vaccination delivery systems, or diagnostic tests for covered diseases. Sec. 7308 authorizes four regional integrated pest management centers to provide research and extension programs, outreach, and response to information needs, among other purposes. The amendment also requires that not less than 30 percent of funding be made available for integrated research, extension and education activities and requires the Secretary to submit a report to Congress regarding streamlining the AFRI grant application process. (Section 7404)

The Conference substitute adopts the House provision with an amendment. The amendment authorizes appropriations through 2018, and adds priority areas to the competitive grant program and foundations to the list of eligible entities. The amendment also directs the Secretary to establish procedures under which a commodity promotion board or a State commodity board (or its equivalent) may submit to the Secretary for consideration proposals for requests for applications that address issues related to the priority areas of this grant program. Grants will not be funded under this authority unless the grant is matched with an equal contribution of funds from the entities submitting proposals for requests for applications. The Inter-regional research project number 4 is amended to include specialty crops. (Section 7404)

The Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) is the premier competitive research and extension grants program within the USDA. The AFRI program was established in 2008 as a successor program to the National Research Initiative Competitive Grants Program and the Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems. The statutory priorities for the AFRI program are purposefully broad. In developing these priorities, the Congress was aware that as science evolves, a balance needed to be

achieved between the need for flexibility to respond to new and emerging threats and opportunities, and the need for transparency and accountability in the expenditure of taxpayer funds.

Concerns are periodically raised regarding the annual allocations among the various statutory programmatic priorities and sub priorities. The Managers were aware of these qualitative concerns but lacked quantitative information on which to base any policy modifications. As a continuation of the programmatic audit carried out by the House Committee on Agriculture in preparation for developing the FARRM Act, USDA was requested to provide a listing of recent awards under the AFRI program sorted according to the corresponding statutory priorities and sub priorities. That data revealed a dramatic shift in awards funding away from traditional areas of production agriculture. For instance, awards for research in plant systems dropped from 38.7 percent of available funds in fiscal year 2007, the final full year under the predecessor programs, to 18.4 percent in 2011. Awards for research in animal systems fell from 22.4 percent to 9.4 percent over the same time period.

Following receipt of a final report in February 2013, there remained concern that the allocation of research and extension awards under the AFRI program was inconsistent with national priorities. As a result of the analysis, commitments were made by senior leadership of the National Institutes of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) to address these concerns. Efforts undertaken by the Director of NIFA to incorporate enhancements in the fiscal year 2014 budget submission, while still lacking in certain respects, demonstrate the seriousness to which these commitments are being upheld.

While the Managers are encouraged by the progress being made, there remains a desire to codify the transparency and accountability measures contained within this budget submission language (section 7513).

The Managers recognize the importance of basic animal health research. The Conference substitute includes a priority for the research and development of surveillance methods, vaccines, vaccination delivery systems and diagnostic tests for pests and diseases that cause epizootic diseases in domestic livestock (including deer, elk, bison, and other cervidae) and zoonotic diseases (including bovine brucellosis and bovine tuberculosis) in domestic livestock or wildlife reservoirs that present a potential concern to public health.

The Managers recognize the growing importance of and need for comprehensive and practical scientific and economic assessments of agricultural practices and technologies intended to improve agriculture's water quality and quantity performance. This is particularly the case as states work with producers on high priority or high profile water quality challenges. Such scientific and economic assessments are needed for the major crop producing regions of the country, taking into account soils, climate, crops grown, and the technologies and agricultural practices in use. The goal of such assessments should be to develop information and continue to build on the tools already in place. The assessments should continue to develop new and innovative approaches to help producers and policy makers in states understand what is affordable, achievable and sustainable for producers. The assessment can then be used to consider how different water quality policy choices relate to other important societal objectives involving agriculture. The Managers encourage the Secretary to initiate a multi-year effort to help the states and USDA continue to develop this base of science and knowledge through the

funding of proposals from qualified institutions capable of supporting interdisciplinary teams of researchers and experts to carry out such efforts.

The Managers recognize the success of the Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) and the cross collaborative approach between multiple agencies at USDA, and strongly encourages USDA to continue and expand on those efforts. The Managers do not intend for this provision to be a replacement for or duplication of CEAP, but rather as a source of sound, complementary economic and technical information that could be used in conjunction with CEAP to create more accurate assessments of the effects of prospective conservation measures on agricultural land.

The Managers recognize that maintaining and enhancing wild rice, a uniquely American specialty crop, depends on continued use of traditional breeding methods, along with the application of new genetic tools to make conventional breeding more efficient. Genetic analysis of shattering, disease resistance, reduced plant height, and other traits require not only development of new genetic markers for wild rice, but also new methods for gathering accurate phenotypic information on the plants. The use of these improved genetic resources in the future depends on their continued availability through reliable seed storage methods. Some research has been done on maintaining viability of stored seeds, but these need to be translated into reliable and useful methods at the local level to ensure breeding progress.

The Managers would hope that the Secretary would consider the following research objectives regarding wild rice genetic resources: preserving and enhancing wild rice breeding lines for testing and release as future varieties; developing phenotyping methods and genotypic markers for various traits; using genotypic and phenotypic information to identify superior genetic resources for breeding and to develop more efficient breeding methods; evaluating and maintaining the genetic distinctiveness of wild rice breeding lines and populations; and developing improved methods for short- and medium-term storage of wild rice breeding lines and populations.

The Managers are concerned about the spread of tick-borne illnesses, particularly Lyme Disease in humans. The disease is heavily concentrated in the Northeast and upper Midwest. Lyme Disease, along with other tick-borne illnesses which affect livestock, presents a public health concern, particularly in the Agriculture community. Recognizing the impact of pests such as ticks, the Managers have reauthorized important research and development priorities and urge NIFA, in conjunction with other agencies, to build upon its existing efforts and pest management resources to protect humans and livestock from tick-borne illnesses.

The Managers recognize that eligible applicants with limited institutional capacity may face unique challenges in successfully competing for funding administered by NIFA. The Managers encourage the Secretary to assess these challenges and to consider appropriate methods of streamlining the competitive grants application process.

(38) Remote sensing data

The House bill repeals section 892. (Section 7408)

The Senate amendment contains no comparable provision.

The Conference substitute adopts the House provision. (Section 7407)

(39) Reports under Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002

The House bill repeals Sections 7409, 7410 and 7411. (Section 7409)

The Senate amendment contains no comparable provision.

The Conference substitute adopts the House provision. (Section 7408)

(40) Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program

The House bill amends the authorized areas for programs and services and includes school-based agricultural educational organizations as a priority recipient. The bill requires that not less than 5 percent of the funds in a fiscal year used to make grants be used to support programs and services that address the needs of military veteran beginning farmers and ranchers and authorizes the Secretary to coordinate between a recipient of a grant used for this purpose and a recipient of a grant under section 1680 of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990 in addressing the needs of military veteran beginning farmers and ranchers with disabilities. The provision prohibits a recipient of a grant from using more than 10 percent of grant funds for the indirect costs of carrying out an authorized grant initiatives. Of the funds of the Commodity Credit Corporation, \$20,000,000 for each fiscal year 2014 through 2018 is authorized and the authorization of appropriations is extended for fiscal years 2014 through 2018. (Section 7410)

The Senate amendment includes beginning farmers and ranchers who are veterans in the current set-aside of funding and authorizes competitive grants to States to establish and improve farm safety program at the local level. Of the funds of the Commodity Credit Corporation, \$17,000,000 for each fiscal year 2014 through 2018 is authorized and the authorization of appropriations is extended for fiscal years 2014 through 2018. (Section 7408)

The Conference substitute adopts the House provision with an amendment. The amendment authorizes grant purposes including farm safety and awareness and a priority for school-based agricultural educational organizations. It also specifies that an eligible entity may be a community-based or nongovernmental organization and provides at least a 5 percent set-aside for those programs and services already qualified for the set-aside in current law as well as another 5 percent set-aside for veteran farmers and ranchers. The amendment limits indirect costs and permits coordination with recipients of an assistive technology program for farmers with disabilities grant. \$20,000,000 of Commodity Credit Corporation funds for each fiscal year 2014 through 2018, to remain available until expended, is authorized and the authorization of appropriations is extended through 2018. (Section 7409)

The Conference substitute reauthorizes and provides mandatory funding to the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, which develops and offers education, training, outreach and mentoring programs to ensure the success of the next generation of farmers. The conference substitute expands eligibility to include military veterans who wish to begin a career in agriculture.

(41) McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Act

The House bill amends the definition of state to include American Samoa, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. (Section 7411)

The Senate amendment amends the definition of state to include the Federated States of Micronesia, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands and the District of Columbia and exempts eligible 1890 Institutions from the matching funds requirement if

the allocation is below \$200,000. (Section 8301)

The Conference substitute adopts neither the House nor the Senate provision. Both the House bill and Senate amendment included amendments to the McIntire-Stennis cooperative forestry program to extend eligibility to the 1862 land grant colleges in insular areas not currently specified in the Act. USDA has since provided the Managers with technical assistance clarifying that those institutions were already eligible to participate by virtue of other law, specifically section 1361(a) of P.L. 96-374, thus negating the need for this provision.

The National Association of University Forest Resources Programs (NAUFRP), (formerly the National Association of Professional Forestry Schools and Colleges) represents 69 of our nation's universities and their respective scientists, educators and extension specialists. NAUFRP's purpose is to advance the health, productivity, and sustainability of America's forests by providing university-based natural resource education, research, science, extension and international programs. The Managers would encourage USDA to engage in discussions with NAUFRP to ensure that their proposals for resource management are appropriately addressed.

SUBTITLE E –

(42) Enhanced Use Lease Authority Pilot Program

The House bill states that section 308 is amended to terminate 10 years after the date of enactment of section 308 and reports are required not later than 6, 8, and 10 years after enactment. (Section 7511)

The Senate amendment states that subparagraph (b)(6)(A) is amended to extend the authority of this section on September 30, 2018. (Section 7405)

The Conference substitute adopts the House provision. (Section 7511)

(43) Grazinglands Research Laboratory

The House bill amends section 7502 to extend the authority for 10 years beginning on the date of enactment of the Act. (Section 7512)

The Senate amendment amends section 7502 to extend the authority until September 30, 2018. (Section 7511)

The Conference substitute adopts the House provision. (Section 7512)

(44) Budget submission and funding

The House bill requires information regarding each research program carried out by the ARS or ERS for which annual appropriations are requested in the annual budget submission of the President and each competitive program carried out by the NIFA for which annual appropriations are requested in the annual budget submission of the President, requires additional information for each funding request for a covered program to be submitted to Congress each year together with the annual budget submission of the President, prohibits the President from carrying out any program under certain authorities during the fiscal year unless the President submits the information required and described for a fiscal year and requires an annual report to Congress. (Section 7512)

The Senate amendment requires information regarding each research program carried out by the ARS or ERS for which annual appropriations are requested in the

annual budget submission of the President and each competitive program carried out by the NIFA for which annual appropriations are requested in the annual budget submission of the President, requires additional information for each funding request for a covered program to be submitted to Congress each year together with the annual budget submission of the President, and requires an annual report to Congress. (Section 7512)

The Conference substitute adopts the House provision. (Section 7513)

The Managers are aware of the need for the statutory priorities for the various agricultural research, education and extension programs to be written with sufficient flexibility so that the Administrators of the USDA research agencies can respond quickly and efficiently to emerging problems and opportunities. Further, recent changes in Congressional appropriations procedures have only enhanced USDA's flexibility in administering these programs. The Managers are nevertheless cognizant of the need for taxpayer funds to be used in a transparent and accountable manner.

Given the spending discretion that USDA has gained in recent years, it is incumbent upon the Department to manage the research, education and extension programs in a most transparent manner. This transparency assures Congress and stakeholders of the integrity of these programs.

In the past year, the Managers have expressed concerns about funding allocations under various research, education, and extension programs to the senior leadership of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). These fruitful discussions with NIFA leadership resulted in several commitments to address the underlying concerns of the Managers as well as to enhance the information available in future budget submissions.

In order to increase the ability of Congress to appropriately oversee funding allocations, the conference substitute seeks to codify the commitments that have been made by NIFA leadership in order to provide transparency and accountability with regard to the research, extension and education budget. It is the intent of the Managers that USDA provide increasingly detailed spending plans to Congress in advance of the development of annual appropriations measures so that Congress and interested constituencies can weigh the merits of these allocations against evolving priorities, and as a representative body, Congress can approve or disapprove of the proposed allocations.

The Managers believe that receipt of the information requested in this section will be beneficial to the long-term goal of expanding resources available for agricultural research, extension and education. The Managers believe that enhanced transparency in the budgeting process can only increase awareness and broad-based support for these critical programs.

It is likewise the intent of the Managers that the process of submitting information concerning the budget outline would be an iterative process and that the research agencies would consult with the Congressional authorizing committees and appropriating subcommittees to ensure clarity of the budget request. To this end, the conference substitute specifically authorizes the research agencies to submit corrections and clarifications in a reasonable period of time to fulfill the requirements of this section.

The Managers are aware that the ARS is shifting its funding priorities from core work in areas impacting crop protection and livestock production to environmental stewardship. The Managers are concerned that this action is short-sighted, especially in light of the fact that many plant disease issues may be magnified under varying weather conditions, and this is especially the case in the work on fusarium head blight in wheat and barley.

The Managers are aware of budgetary constraints throughout the Department; nevertheless, the Managers question the priority setting process on how funds are allocated with regard to aquaculture. In particular, the Managers are aware of the continuing threat of predators to aquaculture operations and encourage the Secretary to continue to fund these important livestock protection programs.

The Managers recognize that historical funding levels for equine sciences have been limited and encourage the Secretary to consider increasing resources allocated to research priorities for equine health in the Department's annual budget submission.

The Managers recognize that historical funding levels for rangeland and prairie grass research has been limited and encourage the Secretary to consider increasing resources allocated to research priorities for rangeland and prairie grass research, including tall-grass and other native vegetation.

The Managers recognize the importance of nationally coordinated, regionally managed canola research and education programs. In awarding grants for these activities, the Managers encourage the Secretary to seek input from stakeholders and give priority consideration to proposals that address research needs in production areas with the greatest potential to expand as well as those where canola production is established and needs to be maintained.

The Managers would like to encourage the Secretary to fund competitive research into the fundamental issues of stabilizing food prices to enhance food security in the U.S. and globally. One area of interest is an examination of the economic factors leading to increased food security in the U.S. The Managers are also interested in how financial markets and the expansion of the bioenergy industry globally has impacted global food prices.

(45) Research and education grants for the study of antibiotic-resistant bacteria

The House bill reauthorizes appropriations through 2018. (Section 7514)

The Senate amendment contains no comparable provision.

The Conference substitute adopts the Senate provision.

(46) Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network

The House bill repeals Section 7522. (Section 7515)

The Senate amendment contains no comparable provision.

The Conference substitute adopts the Senate provision.

(47) Seed distribution

The House bill repeals Section 7523. (Section 7516)

The Senate amendment contains no comparable provision.

The Conference substitute adopts the House provision. (Section 7514)

(48) Sun Grant Program

The House bill authorizes the Secretary to coordinate among appropriate Federal agencies, authorizes grants to be used towards integrated, multistate research, extension and education programs on technology development and implementation repeals Funding allocations for specific programs, amends requirements for the plan for research activities to be funded to address bioproducts and priorities of appropriate Federal agencies and reauthorizes the program. (Section 7518)

The Senate amendment authorizes the Secretary to coordinate among appropriate Federal agencies, authorizes grants to be used towards integrated, multistate research, extension and education programs on technology development and implementation repeals Funding allocations for specific programs, amends requirements for the plan for research activities to be funded to address bioproducts and priorities of appropriate Federal agencies, reauthorizes the program, and authorizes grants to a Sun Grant Center for each region. (Section 7514)

The Conference substitute adopts the Senate provision. (Section 7516)

The Conference substitute directs the Secretary to utilize and leverage the investment, resources, and capacities of the current regional Sun Grant Program Centers and Sub-center to continue their leadership and management of the regional Sun Grant competitive grants program.

The Conference substitute reauthorizes, consolidates, and amends the Sun Grant Program to expand input from other appropriate federal agencies, authorize bio products, eliminate authorization for gasification research and make the program competitive. The Managers recognize the leadership and work of the Sun Grant Centers in each region and intends that the revisions to the program to make it competitive do not reduce the effectiveness of the overall program. The Managers also recognize the importance of the collaborative nature of the Sun Grant Centers and is requiring that applicants represent consortia of universities with prior experience working collaboratively to pursue the intent of the program. The Managers recognize the importance of demonstrated experience in working with multiple federal agencies and in awarding and managing funding provided through competitive grants to land grant institutions and institutions partnering with land grant institutions. Accordingly, the Secretary is encouraged to competitively select a single association of universities that will implement the Sun Grant Program for the duration of this farm bill authorization. This association of universities should be made up of a university from each of the sun grant regions and sub region that will serve as the Sun Grant Center or Sub center for that region or sub region. In making the competitive selection, the Secretary should consider giving preference to an association of universities that has demonstrated experience in managing regional competitive grant programs for research and education programs that support the development of bioenergy, biomass feedstocks, and biobased products. Finally, the Managers recognize the value and importance of committed use of peer review principles and other research best practices in the selection, management, and dissemination of research projects.

(49) Study and report on food deserts

The House bill repeals Section 7527. (Section 7519)

The Senate amendment contains no comparable provision.

The Conference substitute adopts the House provision. (Section 7517)

(50) Agricultural and rural transportation research and education

The House bill repeals Section 7529. (Section 7520)

The Senate amendment contains no comparable provision.

The Conference substitute adopts the House provision. (Section 7518)

SUBTITLE – F

(51) Agreements with nonprofit organizations for National Arboretum

The House bill authorizes the Secretary to negotiate agreements with nonprofit organizations that support the purpose of the National Arboretum and use the proceeds of the organizations towards operation and maintenance of the facilities. In addition, a nonprofit organization that entered into such agreement may recognize donors if such recognition is approved by the Secretary. (Section 7601)

The Senate amendment contains no comparable provision.

The Conference substitute adopts the House provision with an amendment. The amendment authorizes the Secretary to negotiate concessions and agreements for the National Arboretum with nonprofit scientific or educational organizations and nonprofit organizations that entered into a concession or agreement to recognize donors. (Section 7602)

(52) Cotton Disease Research Report

The House bill requires the Secretary to submit to Congress a Cotton Disease Research Report. (Section 7602)

The Senate amendment contains no comparable provision.

The Conference substitute adopts the House provision. (Section 7604)

(53) Acceptance of facility for Agricultural Research Service

The House bill authorizes the Secretary to allow a non-Federal entity to construct a facility for use and on land owned by the Agricultural Research Service under certain conditions. (Section 7603)

The Senate amendment contains no comparable provision.

The Conference substitute adopts the Senate provision.

(54) Technical Corrections

The House bill makes miscellaneous technical corrections. (Section 7604)

The Senate amendment contains no comparable provision.

The Conference substitute adopts the House provision. (Section 7605)

(55) Legitimacy of industrial hemp research

The House bill authorizes research using industrial hemp at an institution of higher education if the growing or cultivating of industrial hemp is allowed under the laws of the State where the institution of higher education is located and the research occurs. Industrial hemp is defined. (Section 7605)

The Senate amendment contains no comparable provision.

The Conference substitute adopts the House provision with an amendment. The amendment authorizes an institution of higher education or State department of agriculture to grow or cultivate industrial hemp for research purposes if the laws of the State permit its growth and cultivation. (Section 7606)

(56) Foundation for food and agriculture research

The Senate amendment authorizes a foundation for food and agriculture research, a new nonprofit corporation designed to supplement USDA's basic and applied research

activities. On Oct. 1, 2013, of the funds of the Commodity Credit Corporation, the Secretary shall transfer to the Foundation \$200,000,000 to remain available until expended. (Section 7601)

The House bill contains no comparable provision.

The Conference substitute adopts the Senate provision with an amendment. The amendment authorizes a foundation for food and agricultural research designed to supplement USDA's basic and applied research activities and \$200,000,000 of Commodity Credit Corporation funding to the Foundation to remain available until expended. (Section 7601)

The Managers recognize the significant need for agricultural research and the challenge to find funding in the current fiscal environment. As such the conference substitute creates a new non-profit foundation, the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research, to leverage private funding, matched with federal dollars, to support public agricultural research. This approach will foster continued innovation in agricultural research.

The increased productivity and boost in crop yields experienced by American farmers can be attributed to research investments made 30 to 50 years ago. Federal investment in public agricultural research has been trending downward at a time when the demands of a growing population require that American agriculture research again take a leading role in pushing forward food production. USDA, the National Academy of Sciences, the National Science Foundation and agricultural research stakeholders will play an integral role in establishing the Foundation.

The Managers do not intend for the Foundation to be duplicative of current funding or research efforts, but rather to foster public-private partnerships among the agricultural research community, including federal agencies, academia, non-profit organizations, corporations and individual donors to identify and prioritize the most pressing needs facing agriculture. It is the Managers view that the Foundation will complement the work of USDA basic and applied research activities and further advance USDA's research mission. Furthermore, the Managers do not intend in any way for the Foundation's funding to offset or allow for a reduction in the appropriated dollars that go to agricultural research.

(57) Agricultural and food law research, legal tools and information

The Senate amendment authorizes the Secretary, acting through the National Agricultural Library, to support the dissemination of agricultural and food law research, legal tools and information by entering into cooperative agreements with institutions of higher education. The Secretary may not use more than \$5,000,000 of the amounts made available to the national Agricultural Library. (Section 7602)

The House bill contains no comparable provision.

The Conference substitute adopts the Senate provision with an amendment. The amendment directs the Secretary, through the National Agricultural Library, to support the dissemination of agricultural and food law research, legal tools and information by entering into cooperative agreements with institutions of higher education and authorizes \$5,000,000 in appropriations for fiscal year 2014 and each year thereafter. (Section 7603)

The Managers recognize that farms, ranches, and forests in the United States are impacted by a complex and rapidly evolving web of competition and international, Federal, State, and local laws, including regulations. The agricultural community of the

United States, including farmers, ranchers, foresters, attorneys, policymakers, and extension personnel, need access to agricultural and food law research and information provided by objective, scholarly, and neutral sources.