

119TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 6969

To amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to establish a program that provides payments to producers for carrying out conservation practices in selected eligible watersheds, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 7, 2026

Mr. RILEY of New York (for himself and Mr. LAWLER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture

A BILL

To amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to establish a program that provides payments to producers for carrying out conservation practices in selected eligible watersheds, 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 “Rural Investment for
5 Producers and the Environment (RIPE) Act of 2026”.

1 **SEC. 2. DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM.**

2 Chapter 5 of subtitle D of title XII of the Food Secu-
3 rity Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3839bb et seq.) is amended
4 by inserting after section 1240M the following:

5 **“SEC. 1240N. DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM.**

6 “(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

7 “(1) ELIGIBLE WATERSHED.—The term ‘eligi-
8 ble watershed’ means a watershed with significant
9 agricultural production, as determined by the Sec-
10 retary, that is located in a State or a United States
11 Territory.

12 “(2) PROGRAM.—The term ‘program’ means
13 the program established under subsection (b).

14 “(3) SELECTED PRACTICE.—The term ‘selected
15 practice’ means a practice that has one or more en-
16 vironmental benefit, including—

17 “(A) improved water quality and quantity,
18 soil health, air quality, climate resiliency, and
19 biodiversity;

20 “(B) increased agricultural yields;

21 “(C) restored or enhanced wildlife habitat;
22 and

23 “(D) any other environmental benefit, as
24 determined by the Secretary.

25 “(b) DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM.—

1 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall estab-
2 lish a program under which the Secretary enters
3 into a contract with a producer to implement a se-
4 lected practice on an eligible watershed, selected in
5 accordance with paragraph (2), for the purpose of
6 demonstrating the effects of implementing such se-
7 lected practice.

8 “(2) ELIGIBLE WATERSHED.—

9 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subpara-
10 graph (B), not later than one year after the
11 date of enactment of this section, the Secretary
12 shall, in carrying out the program, select—

13 “(i) not more than 2 eligible water-
14 sheds in a State or territory; and

15 “(ii) not more than 30 eligible water-
16 sheds total.

17 “(B) WATERSHEDS FOR TRIBAL LANDS.—

18 In selecting an eligible watershed under sub-
19 paragraph (A), the Secretary shall not include
20 an eligible watershed that serves Tribal lands
21 towards the limitation described in clause (i) of
22 such subparagraph.

23 “(c) CONTRACT TERMS.—

24 “(1) PAYMENT.—In entering into a contract
25 with a producer under the program, the Secretary

1 shall provide direct payments to the producer for
2 adopting and implementing a selected practice on an
3 eligible watershed selected under subsection (b)(2).

4 “(2) TERM.—A contract under this subsection
5 shall be for a term of not less than 3 years and not
6 more than 5 years.

7 “(3) REQUIREMENTS.—Under a contract en-
8 tered into under subsection (b), the Secretary
9 shall—

10 “(A) provide to program participants the
11 opportunity to enhance or adopt additional ex-
12 isting conservation practices to improve envi-
13 ronmental outcomes given the best available
14 and accessible technology and practices, as ap-
15 propriate for the size and type of operation;

16 “(B) not prohibit a producer under the
17 program from participating in, and receiving
18 compensation from, an environmental services
19 market; and

20 “(C) to the extent practical, use perform-
21 ance-based metrics and tools to—

22 “(i) assess outcomes of implementing
23 selected practices; and

1 “(ii) support the payment amounts
2 that are determined pursuant to subsection
3 (d).

4 “(d) PAYMENTS TO PRODUCERS.—

5 “(1) PAYMENT AMOUNTS.—In determining
6 amounts for payments pursuant to subsection (c),
7 the Secretary shall establish an amount on a per
8 acre and per animal unit basis each year that re-
9 flects—

10 “(A) the cost of adopting, installing, com-
11 pleting, managing, and improving a selected
12 practice;

13 “(B) income foregone by the producer, if
14 applicable, to address—

15 “(i) increased economic risk;

16 “(ii) loss in revenue due to reductions
17 in yield; and

18 “(iii) economic losses during transi-
19 tion to new practices;

20 “(C) compensation to ensure long-term
21 continued management, maintenance, and im-
22 provement of the selected practice; and

23 “(D) the environmental benefit, any green-
24 house gas emissions reductions, and carbon se-

1 questration derived from implementing the se-
2 lected practice.

3 “(2) REVIEW OF PAYMENT AMOUNT.—Not later
4 than 1 year after the date of enactment of the Rural
5 Investment for Producers and the Environment
6 (RIPE) Act, and annually thereafter, the Secretary
7 shall, after a producer adopts selected practices pur-
8 suant to the contract entered into under subsection
9 (b), review, and adjust if determined necessary, pay-
10 ment amounts provided under subsection (c) with re-
11 spect to accounting for agricultural producer costs,
12 associated technology, and any other factors as de-
13 termined by the Secretary.

14 “(3) SPECIAL RATE FOR CERTAIN FARMERS
15 AND RANCHERS.—In the case of a producer that is
16 a limited resource or socially disadvantaged farmer
17 or rancher, the Secretary shall increase the amount
18 that would otherwise be provided to a producer
19 under this subsection to 15 percent above the other-
20 wise applicable rate.

21 “(e) DUTIES OF SECRETARY.—Not later than 1 year
22 after the date of enactment of the Rural Investment for
23 Producers and the Environment (RIPE) Act, the Sec-
24 retary shall, to the maximum extent practical—

1 “(1) implement a simple application and accept-
2 ance process, administered by the Natural Resources
3 Conservation Service, to approve applications, sub-
4 ject to the availability of funding, submitted by pro-
5 ducers;

6 “(2) ensure 10 percent of funds are reserved
7 for contracts with producers who are limited re-
8 source or socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers
9 through targeted outreach and education;

10 “(3) establish a minimum contract payment for
11 contracts entered into with producers as an incentive
12 to increase accessibility to the program;

13 “(4) provide technical assistance to the applica-
14 ble producer, that has entered into a contract under
15 this section, for implementing and developing a com-
16 prehensive conservation plan for any acres of land or
17 animal units related to the eligible watershed se-
18 lected by the Secretary under subsection (b)(2) that
19 takes effect between the second year of the applica-
20 ble contract and the end date of such contract; and

21 “(5) authorize technical assistance to be pro-
22 vided by—

23 “(A) State or local government, including
24 conservation districts;

1 “(B) third-party providers, including agri-
2 cultural producer associations;

3 “(C) commercial entities, including farmer
4 cooperatives; and

5 “(D) nonprofit entities with technical ex-
6 pertise.

7 “(f) REPORTS.—Not later than December 30, and
8 annually thereafter, the Secretary shall submit a report
9 to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
10 of the Senate and the Committee on Agriculture of the
11 House of Representatives summarizing the accomplish-
12 ments of the program, including the number of operations,
13 acres and animal units enrolled, the accrued environ-
14 mental benefits, the additional and net greenhouse gas
15 benefits accrued, participant demographics, and limita-
16 tions to adoption, especially within the animal feeding in-
17 dustry.

18 “(g) FUNDING.—Of the funds from the Commodity
19 Credit Corporation, the following funds shall be made
20 available until expended:

21 “(1) \$1,000,000 for fiscal year 2026, for the
22 purpose of establishing program regulations, policy,
23 and administrative procedures.

1 “(2) \$150,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2027
2 through 2029.”.

○