



COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

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SUMMARY: 2008 AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION APPROPRIATIONS FULL COMMITTEE MARKUP

This bill reinvests in rural America, protects public health, improves nutrition for more Americans, transforms our energy future, supporting conservation, invests in research, and strengthens oversight.

Reinvesting in Rural America:

- **Community Facilities:** Provides significant increases to grants and loans to rural areas for critical community facilities, such as health care, educational, public safety and day care facilities.
- **Technology Access:** Provides for distance learning and telemedicine grants, and restores the broadband grant program to help rural areas address limited educational and medical resources.
- **Housing:** Supports affordable loans for low and moderate-income families in rural areas, with no increase in fees, and substantially increases affordable loans and grants for farm worker housing.
- **Clean Water:** Provides \$500 million for rural water and waste disposal grants and \$1 billion for water and waste direct loans, a 14 percent increase over 2007.

Protecting Public Health: Prevents cuts to the Food and Drug Administration's field operations and provides additional funding for key activities including processing generic drug applications, drug safety reviews and monitoring prescription drug advertisements. The bill also tackles food safety, fully funding the Food Safety and Inspection Service at USDA, shifting funds to fill vacancies in federal meat inspector positions and investing in research, and funds a transformation of FDA food safety regulations.

Improving Nutrition: Provides nutrition to our country's most vulnerable populations by investing in the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), and supports programs to teach children better eating habits.

Transforming Our Energy Future: Nearly doubles funding for renewable energy loans and grants to businesses to grow our economy, create new jobs, lower energy prices, and reduce global warming.

Supporting Conservation: Restores many of the programs the President would have eliminated.

Investing in Research: Provides critical support for ARS and CSREES programs to maintain our edge in areas such as crop development, competitiveness, international trade, nutrition research, food safety and responsiveness to incoming threats.

Bill Total	Discretionary
2007 Enacted:	\$17.812 billion
President's request:	\$17.830 billion
Committee Mark:	\$18.817 billion

KEY INVESTMENTS

Reinvesting in Rural America

Rural Housing Loans: \$212.2 million, \$176.3 million above the President's request, to fund \$5.1 billion in affordable loans to provide housing to low-income families in rural areas, with no increase in fees. The President's budget had eliminated direct loans and shifted funding to guaranteed loans, increasing fees, making these loans more expensive and less accessible for low-income families. This will provide approximately 38,000 single family homeownership opportunities.

Homeownership for Rural Families: \$40 million, \$6.3 million above 2007 and \$30.5 million above the President's request, for grants to allow low-income families in rural areas to build their own houses. The ultimate goal is to double the number of participant families, from the 2002 level by 2010.

Housing for Farm Laborers: \$46.6 million, \$14.5 million above 2007 and \$36.8 million above the President's request, to fund \$75 million in affordable loans and grants for housing for farm laborers, nearly doubling the 2007 target of financing or constructing approximately 2000 units.

Rural Community Advancement Programs: \$728.8 million, \$158.3 million above the President's request, to support:

- **Community Facilities:** \$55.7 million, \$31.2 million above the President's request, for grants and loans to rural areas for critical community facilities, such as health care, educational, public safety and day care facilities.
- **Clean Water:** \$573.1 million, \$70.3 million above the President's request and \$18.1 million above 2007, for loans and grants for water and waste disposal systems, supporting \$1 billion in loans. In 2006, 985 applicants needing \$2.3 billion had their grant requests turned down.
- **Business Loans and Grants:** \$100 million, \$56.8 million above the President's request and \$15.6 million above 2007, for economic development in rural communities.

Technology Access: \$52.8 million, \$14.2 million above 2007 and \$28 million above the President's request, for grants for distance learning, telemedicine, and broadband development in rural areas. This increase provides funding to double the broadband grant program and a 41 percent increase in distance learning and telemedicine grants to assist rural schools, learning centers, and rural communities in gaining access to improved educational resources, and assist hospitals and health care centers in gaining access to improved medical resources.

Protecting Public Health

Food Safety and Inspection Service: \$930.1 million, \$38 million above 2007 and matching the President's request, addressing vacancies in federal meat inspector positions.

Food and Drug Administration: \$1.69 billion, \$128.5 million above 2007 and \$62 million above the President's request, including increases to begin a transformation of food safety regulation, improve drug safety, monitor prescription drug advertisements and review generic drug applications.

Improving Nutrition

Commodity Supplemental Food Program: \$150 million, \$43 million above 2007 and eliminated in the President's request, for food aid for women, infants, children, and the elderly. In 2007, program participation averaged 485,614 monthly. This amount would allow five new states to participate in the program and expand participation in existing states.

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC): \$5.6 billion, \$415.6 million above 2007 and \$233.4 million above the President's request, including \$145 million to restore the President's proposed cuts to grants that help states administer the program. 8.38 million Americans are expected to participate in the program next year.

Nutrition: \$957.7 million, \$45.5 million above 2007 and \$69.7 million over the President's request, for nutrition programs, including the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (\$68.5 million), Fresh Fruit and Vegetable and Simplified Summer Food programs (\$26 million) to all states to provide nutritious foods to children in low-income families, and specialty crop grants to encourage more fruit and vegetable consumption (\$10 million).

Transforming our Energy Future

Renewable Energy: \$1.2 billion, \$955.3 million above 2007 and \$810.4 million above the President's request, for bio-energy and renewable energy research and development, including loans and grants in rural areas.

- **Wind Energy:** \$500 million is included in the Rural Electrification and Telecommunications Loans Program for new wind energy projects.
- **Business and Industry Loans:** \$350 million is targeted for biomass and renewable energy projects funded through the Guaranteed Business and Industry loan program.

Supporting Conservation

Conservation Programs: \$979.4 million, \$127.6 million above 2007 and \$154.7 million above the President's request, for conservation efforts and community development. This bill restores many of the programs slated for major reductions in the president's request, including the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative, Resource Conservation and Development, and the watershed programs which are funded \$75 million – more than double last year's levels.

Investing in Research

Animal and Plant Health: \$874.6 million, \$28.4 million above 2007 and \$70.9 million below the President's request, to fund programs that protect American agriculture against animal and plant diseases, such as avian influenza.

Oversight and Enforcement

Crop Insurance Integrity: \$11.2 million, \$5.4 million above 2007 and matching the President's request, for a system to detect potential waste, fraud and abuse in crop insurance and farm loan programs, and an additional \$1 million for Inspector General oversight in this area.

Ensuring Livestock Competition: \$22.8 million, \$2 million above 2007 and matching the President's request, to enforce the Packers and Stockyards Act to assure fair competition and fair trade practices, safeguard farmers and ranchers, protect consumers and protect members of the livestock, meat, and poultry industries from unfair, deceptive, unjustly discriminatory and monopolistic practices. These funds provide for new agents and other professionals to strengthen enforcement and promote voluntary compliance.

Enforcement Efforts at the Commodity Futures Trading Commission: \$102.6 million, \$4.6 million above 2007 for additional staff to enforce the agencies regulations.

IMPORTANT POLICY ITEMS

Animal Identification: Does not provide new funding for the program because USDA cannot justify money already appropriated. Drastic action is required as this program is far too important to be allowed to continue to flounder. The agency is directed to develop a detailed plan with measurable goals.

Conflicts of Interest on FDA Advisory Committees: Bars FDA from granting waivers for conflicts of interest rules to voting members of FDA advisory committees.

Food Stamp Benefits: Excludes special pay for military personnel deployed to designated combat areas when determining food stamp eligibility. The Food Stamp Program is provided at \$39.8 billion, an increase of \$1.7 billion over 2007 to meet increased participation. Rejects the Administration's proposal to restrict eligibility for food stamps by excluding needy families who are receiving certain other services.

Imported Poultry Products from China: Prohibits USDA from establishing or implementing a rule allowing poultry products from China into the U.S.

Country of Origin Labeling: Sets a timeline for USDA to implement country of origin labeling.