



House Agriculture Committee Advances 2026 Farm Bill

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On March 5, the House Agriculture Committee voted to advance [H.R. 7567](#), the *Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026* — commonly known as the Farm Bill — by a bipartisan vote of 34-17. This reflects a concrete step toward the first full Farm Bill reauthorization since 2018. While it is not yet law, passage out of Committee signals where House Republicans, and a meaningful bloc of Democrats, are prepared to land on major agricultural, energy, nutrition, forestry, and rural development policy questions.

This is not just a procedural vote, it is a policy signal. The 2026 Farm Bill shows how critical programs within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) may be reshaped for the next decade. Clients who engage will be better positioned to adapt, influence outcomes, and mitigate risk as the Farm Bill moves toward the House floor and eventual Senate negotiations. If you have any questions about the Farm Bill, or if you are interested in learning more about how the proposed legislation may affect your business or operations, please contact the firm's Government Advocacy and Public Policy practice.

OVERVIEW

On February 13, House Agriculture Committee Chairman Glenn Thompson (R-PA-15) introduced [H.R. 7567](#), legislation to reauthorize Farm Bill programs through fiscal year 2031. This bill closely mirrors legislation the Committee [advanced in 2024](#), except that it accounts for the nutrition and agricultural commodity programs that were addressed in [H.R. 1](#), the *One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) of 2025*.

In May 2024, the Committee approved the 2024 version of the bill with support from four Committee Democrats, but the legislation was not considered by the full House of Representatives.

This week's markup of H.R. 7567 featured bipartisan support for several amendments, but also ignited fierce debate on provisions preempting state laws that regulate pesticide labeling and livestock production practices. Committee Democrats unsuccessfully advocated for amendments to remove the federal preemption language from the bill text and undo the changes made to nutrition programs in the OBBBA.

Additionally, Committee Democrats attempted to introduce an amendment to authorize the [year-round sale of E-15](#) through the 2026 Farm Bill. The amendment was ruled "out of order" by Committee Republicans on jurisdictional grounds.

H.R. 7567 was ultimately supported by all Republicans and seven Democrats on the Committee: Representatives Jim Costa (D-CA-21), Sharice Davids (D-KS-3),

Don Davis (D-NC-1), Gabe Vasquez (D-NM-2), Adam Gray (D-CA-13), Kristen McDonald Rivet (D-MI-8), and Josh Riley (D-NY-19).

Ahead of the markup, Committee Ranking Member Angie Craig (D-MN-2) released a [statement](#) opposing H.R. 7567. Though the 2026 version attained more Democratic support than the 2024 version of the legislation, Ranking Member Craig still believes that H.R. 7567 “does not meet the moment.”

NEXT STEPS FOR FARM BILL REAUTHORIZATION

While the movement of legislation in the House of Representatives represents a major development, the reauthorization process for the Farm Bill lacks a clear timeline.

Many House Republicans are eager to pass a new Farm Bill, but Democratic leadership opposition to language in the House bill that they view as “poison pill” provisions and the nutrition program reforms approved through the OBBBA will lead to a complicated outlook.

On the Senate side, Senator John Boozman (R-AR), who serves as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, has committed to ensuring that his version of the Farm Bill attains at least 60 votes on the Senate floor. As of now, it is not clear when Senator Boozman will release his version of the Farm Bill.

SUMMARY OF HOUSE COMMITTEE-APPROVED BILL

The USDA programs authorized by this omnibus legislation are divided into twelve titles. Below is a summary of key provisions in the Conservation (Title II), Nutrition (Title IV), Rural Development (Title VI), Forestry (Title VIII), and Energy (Title IX) titles of H.R. 7567.

Key Proposals for the Conservation Title

Title II of the Farm Bill authorizes several programs that help landowners and agricultural producers address a variety of natural resource management concerns like soil health, water quantity and quality, and wildlife habitat. Prominent programs include the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), and the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

Forest Conservation Easement Program

A major change to this title in H.R. 7567 is the establishment of the Forest Conservation Easement Program (FCEP), which would offer a voluntary entity-held easement option for private forestland. The FCEP would replace the Healthy Forests Reserve Program.

Federal Assistance for State and Tribal Soil Health Programs

H.R. 7567 would establish a financial assistance program for States and Tribes that are implementing soil health programs. The assistance provided through this program would consist of annual matching grants that may not exceed \$5 million, or 50% of the cost of implementing the State soil health program, and 75% of the cost of implementing the Tribal soil health program.

Program Access and Conservation Innovation

Other notable changes in the conservation title include provisions that would prioritize public engagement and transparency regarding updates to USDA's conservation standards and the creation of an Office of Conservation Innovation within USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Key Proposals for the Nutrition Title

Title IV of the Farm Bill authorizes USDA's food assistance programs, like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (i.e., "food stamps").

Declaration of Policy

The nutrition title in H.R. 7567 includes a "declaration of policy" that prioritizes the implementation of SNAP to provide access to food for "*an active, healthy life that supports the prevention of*" diet-related chronic disease, disability, premature death, unsustainable health care costs, and undermining of military readiness.

State Agency Staffing Flexibility and Oversight

The legislation would provide staffing flexibility for State agencies implementing the SNAP program. It would allow such agencies to hire contractors when the State agency cannot process SNAP applications in a timely manner due to a variety of challenges, like health emergencies (e.g., pandemics), temporary staffing shortages, and natural disasters. However, a State agency that utilizes this authority would be required to notify USDA, and subsequently, the notification would be made public.

Additionally, the bill would require USDA to closely monitor and report on "all identified payment errors" under SNAP and submit a written report to Congress that examines the causes of State variation in SNAP program administrative costs and provides recommendations on how to improve oversight of administrative costs in the program.

Prioritization of Domestically Produced Foods in School Lunches

H.R. 7567 would direct USDA to require school food authorities to strongly prioritize the purchase of domestic products and commodities for school

meals, apart from domestically unavailable products and commodities. The same provision would also require USDA to prohibit school food authorities from purchasing raw or processed poultry products or seafood imported into the United States from China or Russia.

Commodity Supplemental Food Program Demonstration Project for Tribal Organizations

The legislation would establish a Commodity Supplemental Food Program Demonstration Project for Tribal Organizations (as defined in Section 3 of the *Food and Nutrition Act of 2008*), subject to the availability of appropriations, under which one or more Tribal organizations may enter into “*self-determination contracts to purchase agricultural commodities under the food distribution program for the Indian reservation of that Tribal organization.*”

Dietary Guidelines for Americans

H.R. 7567 would codify reforms to the implementation of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs), based on the Trump administration’s recent actions on the DGAs.

Key Proposals for the Rural Development Title

Title VI of the Farm Bill authorizes programs administered by USDA’s Rural Development agency. Rural Development programs primarily focus on supporting the well-being of underserved and unserved communities in rural America.

Rural Broadband Programs

The bill would amend the *Rural Electrification Act of 1936* to incorporate the ReConnect Program, naming it the “*ReConnect Rural Broadband Program.*” In the implementation of this program, the legislation directs USDA to prioritize applications for projects that provide broadband service to unserved rural communities that do not have any residential broadband service of at least “(i) a 25-Mbps downstream transmission capacity; and (ii) a 3-Mbps upstream transmission capacity.” Additionally, USDA would be required to prioritize projects that benefit communities with a population of less than 10,000 people or “*in geographically underserved and distressed areas.*”

The legislation would also create the “*Innovative Broadband Advancement Program,*” through which USDA would provide grants and/or loans for the development of technologies or methods that would substantially decrease the cost of broadband development and provide significantly faster broadband speeds than are currently available in a rural community.

H.R. 7567 would also amend eligibility under the Community Connect Grant Program by redefining an “eligible service area” as one in which

broadband service capacity is less than a 25-Mbps (currently 10-Mbps) downstream transmission capacity and 3-Mbps (currently 1-Mbps) upstream transmission capacity.

Community Facilities, Telemedicine and Distance Learning, and Childcare

H.R. 7567 would reauthorize the Community Facilities programs and the Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grants, and directs USDA to prioritize mental, behavioral, and maternal health projects in their implementation.

The measure also directs USDA to establish the “*Expanding Childcare in Rural America Initiative.*”

Water Infrastructure Programs

The bill includes language that would reauthorize a variety of water infrastructure programs, including grants to support water systems in rural communities and Alaska Native villages and the Emergency Community Water Assistance Grants program. It also establishes the “*Rural Water and Wastewater Circuit Rider Program*” and zero to low interest loans for distressed water systems.

Technical Assistance and Program Access

The bill would direct USDA, within one year after enactment, to prioritize the deployment of technical assistance for geographically underserved and distressed areas to improve access to Rural Development programs.

Additionally, the legislation would establish the “*Rural Development Innovation Center,*” which would be tasked with identifying inefficiencies, redundancies, and barriers to access in Rural Development programs, in consultation with public and private stakeholders.

Key Proposals for the Forestry Title

Title VIII of the Farm Bill authorizes a variety of programs that are primarily administered by the U.S. Forest Service to promote active forest management and stewardship, as well as wildfire prevention measures.

ESA Consultations Under the Cottonwood Decision

H.R. 7567 includes a provision to amend the *Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974* and the *Federal Land Policy Management Act of 1976* (FLPMA) to provide that the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management are not required to reinstate consultation under Section 7(a)(2) of the *Endangered Species Act* (ESA) on an approved land management plan when: (1) a species is listed as “threatened” or “endangered”; (2) critical habitat is designated; or (3) new information

concerning a threatened or endangered species or critical habitat becomes available pursuant to the ESA.

This provision would nullify a contrary holding in the 2015 ruling by the Ninth Circuit of the U.S. Court of Appeals in *Cottonwood Environmental Law Center v. U.S. Forest Service*, No. 13-35624 (9th Cir. 2015).

Stewardship End Result Contract Projects

The bill would extend the maximum length of stewardship end result contracts from 10 to 20 years. Through those stewardship contracts, the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management can partner with private entities to achieve land management goals and meet local community needs. Land management priorities include treatments to improve, maintain, or restore forest or rangeland health; restore or maintain water quality; improve fish and wildlife habitat; and reduce hazardous fuels that pose risks to communities and ecosystem values.

Forest Inventory and Analysis Program

The legislation would modernize the Forest Inventory and Analysis Program by requiring tracking of forest carbon, providing standardized definitions and additional data collection methods, and requiring regular studies, as well as updates to the strategic plan.

Wood Innovation Grant Program

H.R. 7567 would expand access to the Wood Innovations Grant Program by reducing the match requirement from 100% to 50%, diversifying the types of eligible projects, and authorizing the use of grant funding for transportation costs.

Biochar Application Demonstration Projects

The bill would direct USDA, the Department of the Interior, and the Department of Energy (DOE) to establish a program to “*carry out demonstration projects to support the development and commercialization of biochar*” within two years after enactment.

Key Proposals for the Energy Title

Title IX of the Farm Bill authorizes several renewable energy and biofuels-focused programs administered by USDA’s Rural Development agency, specifically geared toward providing economic opportunities to agricultural producers and businesses conducting projects in rural areas.

Sustainable Aviation Fuel

H.R. 7567 would amend the definition of “advanced biofuel” under the *Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002* to include sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) derived from renewable biomass. The bill would also

direct USDA to establish a department-wide strategy to advance SAF production in the United States.

Additionally, the legislation would extend discretionary funding for the Bioenergy Program for Advanced Biofuels (i.e., the Advanced Biofuel Payment Program). SAF-related projects would be eligible under the updated definition of “advanced biofuel.”

Rural Energy for America Program

The Rural Energy for America Program provides guaranteed loan financing and grant funding to agricultural producers and rural, small businesses for renewable energy systems or to make energy efficiency improvements. Projects funded by this program must be located in rural areas with populations of 50,000 residents or less.

The bill would amend eligibility under the Rural Energy for America Program by including a “project diversity” provision that directs USDA to *“ensure that, to the extent practicable, there is diversity in the types of projects approved for grants or loan guarantees to ensure that as wide a range as possible of technologies, products, and approaches are assisted.”*

Agrivoltaics

The legislation would direct USDA and DOE to conduct a study on the impacts of solar panel installations and operations on soil health, water resources, wildlife, and vegetation. It would also direct USDA to limit the use of federal funding for solar energy projects on “covered farmland” and prohibit the use of such funding for a project that procures solar energy components that are produced, manufactured, or assembled in a “foreign entity of concern.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on the Farm Bill, please contact [Carlos Flores](#) or any member of the firm’s [Government Advocacy and Public Policy](#) practice.