



# **Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen**

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## *House Committee on Appropriations*

### **FY 2018 Agriculture Appropriations Bill Full Committee Markup July 12, 2017 Opening Statement As Prepared**

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Thank you to both the Chairman and the Ranking Member, as well as the members of the Subcommittee and their incredibly hard-working staff for your work on this bill.

A safe and accessible food and drug supply is critical to the health of both our economy and the American people. This bill provides \$20 billion in discretionary funding to ensure that ours continues to be the best in the world.

This begins with support for the American farmers and ranchers who grow our food – through agricultural research, protection of our animal and plant health, important farm and conservation programs, and rural development.

This bill funds important research and efforts to fight devastating crop diseases and bolster agricultural production – like important cranberry and blueberry research in my home state of New Jersey, the Garden State.

In addition to these important agricultural support and research programs, the bill also provides a total of \$2.6 billion for rural development. These programs help grow our economy by developing critical rural infrastructure, providing important business and industry loans to help small businesses thrive in rural markets, and balancing out rural housing markets.

The safety of our food, drug, and medical device supply is a priority in this bill. It includes \$1.038 billion for food safety and inspection programs to keep safe, health food on American tables.

For the Food and Drug Administration – which is the gold standard when it comes to protecting our public health – the bill provides \$2.8 billion in discretionary funding. This funding will continue the modernization of food safety programs and streamline the approval process for new, innovative drug therapies and medical devices so that we can make sure these are safe for the general population and maintain our role as the medicine chest of the world.

The bill also includes several policy and oversight provisions to remove or rein in burdensome over-regulation that harms U.S. food producers and impede growth in industries important to our economy.

The bill includes discretionary funding, as well as mandatory funding as required by law, for food and nutrition programs like WIC, SNAP and school lunch programs. These funding levels ensure that all those in need will continue to receive this important nutrition assistance.

I'm pleased that the bill finds savings where possible within these programs and roots out excess, fraud, and abuse that waste taxpayer dollars. This includes stronger congressional oversight over the administrative activities for this programs.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate my gratitude to the Chairman, his Subcommittee, and the staff for their fine work on this bill. We can all be proud to vote 'yes' on this bill today, and so I urge you all to do so.

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