



Chairman Hal Rogers

House Committee on Appropriations

**Subcommittee Markup – FY 2017 Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA, and Related Agencies
Appropriations Bill
April 13, 2016
Opening Statement As Prepared**

I thank the Chairman for yielding, and I congratulate him on bringing the Fiscal Year 2017 appropriations bill for the Department of Agriculture, the FDA, and other related agencies before the subcommittee today. Chairman Aderholt, Ranking Member Farr, and staff on both sides have worked tirelessly on this important piece of legislation.

The Fiscal Year 2017 Agriculture bill includes discretionary appropriations of \$21.3 billion. The subcommittee has struck a delicate balance, achieving thoughtful savings while retaining or increasing necessary funding for important agricultural and food programs. The bill addresses the current and future challenges of agricultural research, increases support for programs that combat animal and plant disease, and increases support for food safety and medical product safety. The bill also includes legislative provisions to help weed out waste, fraud, and abuse in nutrition programs to help make sure every taxpayer dollar is spent efficiently.

Rural communities are vital to the US economy. Because this committee understands the essential role that USDA plays in improving rural economies, this legislation funds initiatives within Rural Development at \$2.884 billion – a 30 percent increase since fiscal year 2013. This funding level allows USDA to continue programs vital to the preservation of and empowerment of rural America, like the 502 direct loan program that supports low-income families in achieving their dream of safe, affordable homeownership. Continued support for the Water and Waste program will allow rural communities to properly treat waste water, as well as provide safe, clean drinking water. Furthermore, the Electric and Telecommunications program makes sure that loans are available to help build and maintain infrastructure that is critical for economic development in these areas. With strong programs like these, as well as the Business and Industry Loan program, rural communities can continue to work with USDA to build stronger regional economies.

In addition, on the heels of the successful National Rx Drug Abuse and Heroin Summit earlier this month in Atlanta, this bill continues to prioritize efforts at the FDA to combat the scourge of prescription drug abuse. For years, the Committee has encouraged the FDA to utilize the full breadth of its regulatory authority to address this challenge, and this bill is no exception. FDA's recent regulatory changes related to scheduling and labeling of opioids are positive developments, as are efforts to encourage the development of abuse-deterrent formulations and new evidence-based medication-assisted therapies. However, this legislation cautions FDA that treatment is not a "one size fits all" enterprise and that every patient's treatment regimen should be tailored by his or her doctor to his or her unique needs. I know we all look forward to working with the new Commissioner to build on these recent developments in order to save lives.

I want to commend Chairman Aderholt for putting together a good bill, and I urge the subcommittee to report this bill to the full Committee. Thank you and I yield back.

#####