



Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen

House Committee on Appropriations

Department of Agriculture FY 2018 Budget Hearing
Secretary Sonny Perdue
May 24, 2017
Opening Statement As Prepared

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the time and I want to welcome Secretary Sonny Perdue to the Appropriations Committee. We look forward to your testimony and hearing your frank and candid views on the many issues.

Today's hearing is an important part of the oversight duties of this Committee. Now that we have formally received the Administration's budget request, the Committee will undertake a thorough analysis. We will go through each and every budget line, question every witness and demand credible spending justifications and only then will we make *our own* determinations on the best use of tax-dollars.

We intend to put forward a complete set of appropriations bills that adequately fund important programs while working to reduce or eliminate waste and duplication.

I will work with the Chairman and Ranking Member to move rapidly in coming weeks and months to complete the fiscal year 2018 Appropriations bills.

Again, today's hearing is a part of the process we follow to determine the best use of taxpayer's dollars. After all, the "power of the purse" lies in this building - it is the Constitutional duty of Congress to make spending decisions on behalf of the people we represent at home.

As you may be aware, New Jersey's nickname is the "Garden State." In addition to our producing some of the nation's finest tomatoes, corn, cranberries, and other produce, my district in northern New Jersey is home to farms and farmers markets, which provide quality, locally sourced, ingredients for my constituents.

I look forward to hearing how USDA will continue to promote the work done by our farmers, like those in New Jersey and those across the country, to meet the increasing global food demand.

In conclusion, I welcome Secretary Perdue. I look forward to hearing from you and working with you in the months ahead.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

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