

**Opening Statement of Agriculture Committee Ranking Member David Scott
Hearing on 118th Congress Committee Funding Resolutions before the House
Committee on Administration**

February 28, 2023

Chairman Steil (“Stile”) and Ranking Member Morelle (MORE-ellie), thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to present, with my good friend and Chairman, GT Thompson, the House Committee on Agriculture’s funding request for the 118th Congress.

I stand with my colleague to request a 10% increase in funding. Our funding level would be closer to \$7.5 million if we had increases based on inflation since 2007 instead we are a \$1 million behind that and that means that we are running our committee on less money than we were 20 years ago, despite increased costs across the board.

As we look to start drafting the farm bill, funding for staff as well as potential Committee travel will be vital to allowing us to hear from constituents at listening sessions in the field, sending staff to meetings with various constituency groups, and ensuring that we have enough top quality staff to work with our farmers in the countryside.

I can not overstate the importance of getting a farm bill done this year, which will require an all hands on deck approach for our committee. In terms of educating new members and personal office staff, I have 11 freshman on my side that will need detailed information provided to them to ensure they understand the importance of a strong agricultural safety net, and getting the actual drafting done.

We are always competing with private sector salaries in terms of keeping our staff, but on the Democratic side, I am also facing competition from the Biden Administration as well as the Senate Agriculture Committee who want to hire away our wonderful Agriculture Committee staff.

Being able to adequately compensate our staff will help with our efforts to keep existing staff. It is also vital to have any chance to recruit new staff from the private sector, who are all generally paid at a higher level than what we can afford in the House.

I and my predecessor strove to diversify our staff and will continue to strive to have our staff reflect the diversity of America.

I am pleased that the Agriculture Committee continues to operate on a bipartisan basis in our operations and split our resources by 2/3 to 1/3 as has historically been done. We share have a bipartisan Clerk, Financial Administrator, and IT Staff.

Our farmers have been through many pandemic and conflict related supply chain issues and they need to know that Congress supports them. Colleagues we have a very good opportunity to show that support and have a high quality bipartisan farm bill if given the necessary increase in funding to ensure we have the tools to get it completed on time, and provide necessary stability to our farmers and ranchers to keep feeding America.