

CHAIRMAN GLENN “GT” THOMPSON
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION
FEBRUARY 12, 2025

Good morning, Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and Members of the Committee. Thank you for inviting Ranking Member Craig and me to share the Committee on Agriculture’s bipartisan, proposed budget for the 119th Congress. As Chairman, I commit to ensuring the Committee maintains its storied history as an effective and financially responsible body.

During the 118th Congress the Committee on Agriculture conducted expansive oversight of farm bill programs through hearings in Washington, DC, field listening sessions across the country, and countless stakeholder and member engagements. This work culminated in the introduction and Committee passage of H.R. 8467, the Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2024. The funding increases authorized by the Committee on Administration and adopted by the House for the 118th Congress were vital in supporting the substantial staff, travel, and administrative needs of the Committee in carrying out this work. While Congress was unable to enact a comprehensive farm bill reauthorization during the last Congress, a 1-year extension was enacted in order for us to complete our work. Our Committee has planned an equally extensive workload to ensure a five-year farm bill—one that meets the needs of our producers and our nation’s entire agricultural value chain—is enacted.

As many of you know, Farm Bills require a tremendous effort. Ongoing and evolving impacts related to supply chains, instability abroad, trade, and fluctuations in commodity prices and input costs further complicate our work. Highly qualified personnel are imperative to our preparation and execution of hearings, listening sessions, roundtables, program audits and accounting, legislative drafting, and economic modeling and forecasting. As we have shown, the reauthorization process also requires extensive travel on a bipartisan basis, including farm bill listening sessions across the country, among other activities outside of D.C.

Additionally, there are multiple reauthorizations and legislative priorities outside of the Farm Bill; including, but not limited to, budget reconciliation instructions, Commodity Futures Trading Commission reauthorization, Grain Standards Act reauthorization, development of legislation related to digital assets, and oversight of USDA’s delivery of over \$30 billion in economic and disaster assistance. Each of these responsibilities require talented staff and extensive travel outside of Washington, D.C. to hear from the individuals impacted by every decision we make, from farm to nutrition, research to rural development.

As shared in the Committee’s questionnaire, we are seeking a 5 percent increase for staff salaries and related activities. These additional resources will allow both the Majority and

Minority to attract, maintain, and reward staff, something of extreme importance to both of us. The institutional knowledge of the Committee and its Members relies heavily on the expertise, education, and diversity of the staff serving it.

Despite recent increases, Committee budgets have not kept pace with outsized inflation. This continues to plague our ability to attract and retain highly specialized employees.

We certainly have a lofty agenda ahead and will work tirelessly to enact that agenda with tenacity and fiscal responsibility. We appreciate your consideration of this request, and I am happy to answer any questions.