

OPENING STATEMENT

CHAIR, CONGRESSMAN SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR. (GA02)

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD &
DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES**

WED. JUN., 15, 2022, AT 2:30PM

The subcommittee will come to order.

[Gavel]

Welcome to Chair DeLauro, Ranking Member Granger, Ranking Member Harris, and the Subcommittee Members who are here in person and those participating by secure video teleconference.

Before I move to my opening statement, I'd like to offer a brief explanation of how this markup will work.

As I mentioned, some Members have opted to use secure video teleconferencing which will allow them to participate remotely.

For those on video conference, once you start speaking, there will be a slight delay before you are displayed on the main screen. Speaking into the microphone activates the camera, displaying the speaker on the main screen. Do not stop your remarks if you do not immediately

see the screen switch. If the screen does not change after several seconds, please make sure you are not muted.

To minimize background noise and ensure the correct speaker is being displayed, we ask that Members who are participating by video remain on mute unless you have sought recognition.

In terms of the speaking order, we will follow our traditional order, beginning with the Chair and Ranking Member of the subcommittee, then the Chair and Ranking Member of the full committee, and then any other Members who may wish to speak.

Finally, we have set up an e-mail address to which Members can send anything they wish to submit in writing at any of our hearings or markups, including documents to be inserted in the record by unanimous consent, amendments, motions, other unanimous consent requests, and so on. That e-mail address has been provided to your staff.

I would remind all Members that they must verbally request unanimous consent out loud, as well as sending the document or written unanimous consent request to the e-mail address.

Before us is the Chairman's mark for the fiscal year 2023 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. The bill and the accompanying

report have been a huge undertaking in a short amount of time, and I am incredibly proud of the work we've done.

Let me take a moment to express my gratitude for the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee, Dr. Harris. I continue to enjoy the opportunity to work with you to produce a strong bill.

Today, we are considering a bill which touches the lives of every single American. We all eat the food, rely on the medicine and medical devices, and use the fibers and materials made possible and kept safe by this bill. This bill's investments in our rural communities as well as the institutions that develop our agricultural sector and safeguard our medicine and food are vital to our country's well-being.

This year our subcommittee held 5 hearings, including one with USDA Secretary Vilsack and another with FDA Commissioner Califf. We also held a hearing on the infant formula crisis in which we heard from four witnesses on how the crisis is impacting families and local grocery stores.

Our fiscal year 2023 allocation is \$27.2 billion, compared to the fiscal year 2022 enacted level of \$25.125 billion – an 8.3 percent increase.

This bill continues to invest in key agency-wide priorities, including investments to ensure equitable participation in USDA programs, address the impacts of climate change, and enhance staff and leadership offices at USDA.

Supporting our rural communities remains a top priority. In total, the bill provides more than \$4.2 billion in budget authority for Rural Development programs to fund critical infrastructure, such as water and wastewater systems, and rural housing needs. The bill invests more than \$545 million for rural broadband expansion, including \$450 million for the ReConnect program. The bill creates two new lending programs for hard-to-reach communities. The first offers a 1% interest rate on water and waste disposal loan projects in distressed areas, making these desperately needed improvements more financially viable for distressed communities. The second program is designed to improve home lending opportunities for Native American Tribes where, traditionally, lending has been difficult and complex. These efforts will further maximize Rural Development programs within the communities they are intended to serve.

The bill also provides over \$3.1 billion for farm and conservation programs. This includes \$61 million to resolve ownership and succession of farmland issues, also known as the “heirs’ property” issue, which predominately affects black farmers and has led to the loss of millions of acres of privately held farmland.

The bill provides a historic level of funding for agricultural research, including \$500 million for The Agriculture and Food Research Initiative, which is the highest level ever. And I am proud of the investments we make in our 1890 and 1994 land grant universities, and Hispanic serving institutions – all of which are significantly over their 2022 levels.

The bill continues our steadfast commitment to our country’s long tradition of humanitarian assistance by including \$1.8 billion for Food for Peace grants and \$265 million for the McGovern-Dole program. Both are historic highs.

The bill fully funds the SNAP, Child Nutrition, and WIC programs to meet expected participation in FY 2023. The bill also provides additional protections for SNAP recipients by providing a “such sums”

appropriations for the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2023 to ensure SNAP does not run out of money.

In this bill, we provide \$3.66 billion for the Food and Drug Administration. Within this total, there are several important investments, including increases to address the opioid crisis, and for ALS treatments, foreign unannounced inspections, and the Office of Minority Health. The bill provides \$7 million in support of the Administration's Cancer Moonshot and fully funds the request for work on chemicals in human food.

And finally - the Community Project Funding requests. The bill provides funding for 134 projects, totaling over \$192 million.

I ask for your support of this bill.

I want to thank my personal staff, Kenneth Cutts and Tynesha Boomer, and the subcommittee staff, Martha Foley, Diem-Linh Jones, Perry Yates, Joe Layman, Justin Masucci, Dallas Selle, and Yana Zamora, and Pam Miller on the minority staff for their extraordinary work on the bill.

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With that, I now recognize the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee, Dr. Harris. Dr. Harris, I yield for any remarks you'd like to make.

[wait for Dr. Harris]

Thank you, Dr. Harris. At this time, I'm delighted to yield such time as she may utilize, to the Chair of the Committee, Ms. DeLauro, for any opening remarks she may have.

[wait for Ms. DeLauro]

Thank you, Madam Chair. At this time, I'd like to yield to the Ranking Member of the Committee, Ms. Granger, for any remarks she may have.

[wait for Ms. Granger]

Thank you, Ms. Granger.

Are there any other members who wish to be recognized?

[pause and recognize members who wish to speak]

Hearing none, let me ask if any member would like to have an amendment they wish to offer.

[pause]

If not, I recognize Ms. Pingree for a motion.

[Rep. Pingree: "Mr. Chairman, I move to report the bill favorably to the full Committee."]

The question is on the motion. All those in favor say 'AYE,' all those opposed 'NO.'

In the opinion of the Chair the 'AYE's' have it, and the motion is agreed to.

I ask unanimous consent that staff be permitted to make technical and conforming changes to the measure that was just approved.

As a reminder to members, please leave all copies of the bill and report in the room.

Without objection, the meeting is adjourned.

[Gavel]

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