

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8527

To establish a Good Steward Cover Crop Program, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 27, 2022

Mr. CASTEN (for himself and Mrs. AXNE) introduced the following bill; which
was referred to the Committee on Agriculture

A BILL

To establish a Good Steward Cover Crop Program, and for
other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Conservation Oppor-
5 tunity and Voluntary Environment Resilience Program
6 Act” or the “COVER Act”.

7 **SEC. 2. GOOD STEWARD COVER CROP PROGRAM.**

8 Subtitle A of the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7
9 U.S.C. 1501 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end
10 the following:

1 **“SEC. 525. GOOD STEWARD COVER CROP PROGRAM.**

2 “(a) IN GENERAL.—Beginning with crop year 2023,
3 the Secretary shall carry out a program (to be known as
4 the ‘Good Steward Cover Crop Program’) to provide addi-
5 tional premium subsidies to producers for each acre—

6 “(1) on which qualifying cover crops are plant-
7 ed during a crop year; and

8 “(2) for which the producers—

9 “(A) during such crop year—

10 “(i) plant crops other than the quali-
11 fying cover crops; and

12 “(ii) purchase insurance under a cov-
13 ered insurance program with respect to
14 such planted crops; and

15 “(B) file a report of acreage form to the
16 Secretary with respect to such crop year.

17 “(b) PREMIUM SUBSIDY AMOUNT.—

18 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided para-
19 graph (2), an additional premium subsidy to a pro-
20 ducer under subsection (a) shall be—

21 “(A) calculated on a common land unit or
22 equivalent or more precise basis; and

23 “(B) be in an amount equal to—

24 “(i) \$5, multiplied by

25 “(ii) the number of acres of the pro-
26 ducer described in such subsection.

1 “(2) LIMITATION.—An additional premium sub-
 2 sidy under paragraph (1) shall not exceed the
 3 amount of the premium owed by the producer with
 4 respect to the acres described in subsection (a).

5 “(3) RULE WITH RESPECT TO A PRODUCER-
 6 SHARE.—For purposes of the limitation under para-
 7 graph (2), an additional premium subsidy shall be
 8 modified to reflect the individual producer share of
 9 such acres.

10 “(c) OUTREACH WITH RESPECT TO PROGRAM.—

11 “(1) COORDINATION WITH FSA AND NRCS.—
 12 The Secretary shall, in coordination with the Admin-
 13 istrator of the Farm Service Agency and the Chief
 14 of the Natural Resources Conservation Service,
 15 carry out outreach to producers, including under-
 16 served producers, to provide information with re-
 17 spect to—

18 “(A) the program under this section, in-
 19 cluding eligibility for the program and the addi-
 20 tional premium subsidies under the program;
 21 and

22 “(B) qualifying cover crops.

23 “(2) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR OUT-
 24 REACH.—The Secretary shall enter into one or more
 25 cooperative agreements with organizations capable of

1 assisting with outreach with respect to the program
2 under this section to—

3 “(A) carry out such outreach; and

4 “(B) coordinate with soil and water con-
5 servation districts to encourage the adoption of
6 qualifying cover crop practices.

7 “(d) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date
8 of the enactment of this section, and annually thereafter,
9 the Secretary shall, in coordination with the Administrator
10 of the Risk Management Agency, the Administrator of the
11 Farm Service Agency, and the Chief of the Natural Re-
12 sources Conservation Service, submit to Congress a report
13 that includes—

14 “(1) a summary of the activities carried out
15 under this section, including—

16 “(A) the number and amount of premium
17 subsidies provided to producers under this sec-
18 tion;

19 “(B) the number of acres of cover crops
20 planted for which a premium subsidy was re-
21 ceived; and

22 “(C) the outreach carried out under sub-
23 section (c); and

1 “(2) recommendations to increase the number
2 of producers that qualify for the additional premium
3 subsidies under the program under this section.

4 “(e) FUNDING.—

5 “(1) MANDATORY FUNDING.—Of the funds of
6 the Corporation, the Secretary shall use such sums
7 as are necessary to carry out this section.

8 “(2) RESERVATION FOR TECHNICAL ASSIST-
9 ANCE, OUTREACH, AND PROGRAM SUPPORT.—Of the
10 amounts made available under paragraph (1) for a
11 fiscal year, the Secretary shall reserve \$5,000,000 to
12 carry out technical assistance, outreach, and pro-
13 gram support with respect to the program under this
14 section.

15 “(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

16 “(1) COVERED INSURANCE PROGRAM.—The
17 term ‘covered insurance program’ means a plan of
18 insurance offered by the Corporation, as determined
19 by the Secretary.

20 “(2) QUALIFYING COVER CROP.—The term
21 ‘qualifying cover crop’ means cereals or other
22 grasses, legumes, brassicas, non-legume broadleaves,
23 or any combination thereof that are planted for con-
24 servation purposes in accordance with—

1 “(A) Natural Resources Conservation
2 Service guidance; and

3 “(B) additional expert guidance, as deter-
4 mined by the Secretary.

5 “(3) UNDERSERVED PRODUCER.—The term
6 ‘underserved producer’ has the meaning given the
7 term in section 508(a)(7)(A)(ii).”.

8 **SEC. 3. SOIL HEALTH PILOT PROGRAM.**

9 Section 523 of the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7
10 U.S.C. 1523) is amended by adding at the end the fol-
11 lowing:

12 “(j) SOIL HEALTH PILOT PROGRAM.—

13 “(1) IN GENERAL.—In addition to any other
14 authority of the Corporation, the Corporation shall
15 establish and carry out a pilot program under which
16 a producer who uses innovative soil health practices
17 may receive additional premium subsidies on
18 multiperil crop insurance, as determined by the Cor-
19 poration.

20 “(2) TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—The additional
21 premium subsidies offered under the soil health pilot
22 program under this subsection shall—

23 “(A) be offered through reinsurance ar-
24 rangements with private insurance companies;

25 “(B) be actuarially sound; and

1 “(C) require the payment of premiums and
2 administrative fees by a producer obtaining the
3 insurance.

4 “(3) LOCATION.—The Corporation shall con-
5 duct the soil health pilot program under this sub-
6 section in a number of counties that is determined
7 by the Corporation to be adequate to provide a com-
8 prehensive evaluation of the feasibility, effectiveness,
9 and demand among producers for the risk manage-
10 ment tools evaluated in the pilot program.

11 “(4) DURATION.—The Corporation shall com-
12 mence the soil health pilot program under this sub-
13 section as soon as practicable after the date of the
14 enactment of this subsection.”.

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