



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

July 30, 2009
(Senate)

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY

H.R. 2997 — Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2010

(Sen. Inouye, D-Hawaii)

The Administration strongly supports Senate passage of H.R. 2997, with the Committee-reported text of S. 1406, making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2010.

A strong, vibrant rural America is central to the Nation's future. The bill, as reported by the Committee, makes important investments in infrastructure so economic progress does not bypass rural communities. The legislation also provides the resources necessary to keep food and medicines safe and reliable. It provides critical support for farmers to continue the Nation's leading role in feeding the world. In addition, this legislation addresses chronic problems facing Americans, including poverty, nutrition, and housing.

Moreover, the legislation responds to the President's call for investments in programs that work while ending programs that do not. This legislation gives priority to merit-based funding in critical infrastructure programs. The Administration urges the Congress to continue to apply high standards to funding decisions so taxpayer money is spent efficiently and effectively.

The Administration would like to take this opportunity to share additional views regarding the Committee's version of the bill.

Administration Priorities

Expand Broadband Access. The Administration appreciates the Committee supporting the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) broadband program at the requested funding level to help meet the President's goal of increasing access to broadband nationwide.

Rural Revitalization. The Administration urges the Congress to provide the requested increase of \$70 million for rural revitalization grants. The Committee includes none of the requested increases to improve rural education or for the rural Quality of Life Program.

Renewable Energy, Small Business, and Food Safety. The Administration appreciates that USDA's renewable energy, small business programs, and food safety programs are funded at the requested level.

Efficiencies and Cost-Saving Proposals. The Administration encourages the Congress to support the President's initiatives to terminate or reduce programs that have outlived their usefulness, fund narrowly focused activities, or duplicate existing programs, such as public broadcast grants to help

the digital conversion. The FY 2010 Budget proposed to support public broadcasting through the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) and eliminate the duplicative USDA Public Broadcast Grants program. The Administration urges the Congress to accept this termination since digital conversion is largely complete and CPB has funding that can be used to complete any remaining conversion needs.

Food Safety and Inspection Service

The Administration is concerned with section 744 of the bill which deals with food safety issues. The Administration would like to work with the Congress to address the issues raised by the Committee in a manner that would protect the Nation's food supply and be consistent with international trade obligations.

Food and Nutrition Service

The Administration is pleased with the Committee's support for strengthening nutrition assistance programs by including funding for food banks, community-based food providers, fully funding WIC, and by supporting a pilot initiative to help increase elderly participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

Farm Service Agency

The Administration appreciates the funding provided for the Farm Service Agency's Information Technology Modernization, which will allow the agency to continue modernizing its antiquated information technology systems.

Rural Development

The Administration appreciates that the majority of Rural Development programs are funded at the President's requested levels. However, funding for the Rental Assistance Grants falls \$111 million short of the estimate needed to renew the expiring rental assistance contracts expected in FY 2010.

Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

The Administration appreciates that the Committee provides the requested increase to strengthen FDA's efforts to make food and medical products safer. The requested funding will allow FDA to work with domestic and foreign industries to develop new control measures for all levels of the supply chain, improve and increase risk-based inspections, and respond more effectively with rapid and targeted product tracing when problems do occur.

Investing in the Basic Sciences and Agricultural Research

The Administration appreciates the Committee's support for the President's goal of investing in the basic agricultural sciences. The Administration appreciates the Committee's strong support for the National Institute for Food and Agriculture's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative for competitively awarded extramural research grants.

USDA Cyber Security Initiative

The Administration appreciates the Committee providing full funding for the Department-wide cyber security initiative. These funds are needed to address critical vulnerabilities that threaten the integrity of the USDA network and the security and privacy of Departmental systems and information.

Constitutional Concerns

Consistent with the Executive Branch's long-standing views regarding section 713, the Administration notes that section 713 raises constitutional concerns under the Recommendations Clause and should be eliminated.

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