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(Original Signature of Member)

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. _____

To amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to create permanent payments within the environmental quality incentives program for soil health practices and carbon sequestration monitoring, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. SALINAS introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to create permanent payments within the environmental quality incentives program for soil health practices and carbon sequestration monitoring, 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 “Healthy Soils Healthy
5 Climate Act of 2023”.

1 **SEC. 2. AMENDMENTS TO THE FOOD SECURITY ACT OF**
2 **1985.**

3 (a) INCREASED PAYMENTS FOR HIGH-PRIORITY
4 PRACTICES.—Section 1240B(d)(7)(A) of the Food Secu-
5 rity Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3839aa–2(d)(7)(A)) is amend-
6 ed—

7 (1) in clause (iii), by striking “or” at the end;

8 (2) in clause (iv), by striking the period at the
9 end and inserting “; or”; and

10 (3) by adding at the end the following:

11 “(v) increases soil organic carbon lev-
12 els.”.

13 (b) INCENTIVE PAYMENTS FOR SOIL HEALTH PRAC-
14 TICES AND CARBON SEQUESTRATION MONITORING.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—Section 1240B of the Food
16 Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3839aa–2) is
17 amended by adding at the end the following:

18 “(k) INCENTIVE PAYMENTS FOR SOIL HEALTH
19 PRACTICES AND CARBON SEQUESTRATION MONI-
20 TORING.—

21 “(1) PROVISION OF PAYMENTS.—The Secretary
22 shall provide incentive payments under this sub-
23 section to producers to adopt practices designed to
24 increase soil organic carbon levels.

1 “(2) REQUIREMENTS.—In providing the incen-
2 tive payments under paragraph (1), the Secretary
3 shall establish—

4 “(A) payments to provide an incentive for
5 the use of practices across a variety of geo-
6 graphic regions;

7 “(B) regionally appropriate protocols for
8 measuring soil organic carbon levels and soil
9 microbiology levels before and after treatment
10 under this subsection to measure gains in soil
11 health as a result of the practices; and

12 “(C) protocols and record keeping stand-
13 ards for in-field sampling to ensure consistency
14 and the development of new carbon and eco-
15 system services markets.

16 “(3) PRIORITY.—In providing incentive pay-
17 ments under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall give
18 priority to providing the payments to—

19 “(A) small producers, as determined by the
20 Secretary;

21 “(B) producers in rural areas, as deter-
22 mined by the Secretary; and

23 “(C) socially disadvantaged farmers, as de-
24 termined by the Secretary.

25 “(4) STUDY; REPORT TO CONGRESS.—

1 “(A) STUDY.—Not later than 2 years after
2 the date of enactment of this subsection, and
3 every 2 years thereafter, the Secretary shall
4 conduct a study regarding changes in soil
5 health and soil organic carbon levels as a result
6 of the practices used under this subsection.

7 “(B) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later
8 than 2 years after the date of enactment of this
9 subsection, and every 2 years thereafter, the
10 Secretary shall submit to Congress a report de-
11 scribing and analyzing the results of the study
12 conducted under subparagraph (A).

13 “(C) INCLUSION.—The report under sub-
14 paragraph (B) shall include an analysis of—

15 “(i) the effect of various practices on
16 soil organic carbon levels;

17 “(ii) the extent to which the lessons
18 learned in carrying out this subsection can
19 be transferred to other geographic regions;

20 “(iii) further data required to sub-
21 stantiate the connection between soil or-
22 ganic carbon levels and crop yield and re-
23 siliency, if applicable;

24 “(iv) the effect of multiple practices
25 on soil organic carbon levels;

1 “(v) potential barriers to data collec-
2 tion across a variety of geographic regions;
3 and

4 “(vi) carbon permanence and loss of
5 any sequestered carbon, based on weather,
6 management, and other relevant factors,
7 and the depth of sequestered carbon.”.

8 (2) FUNDING.—Section 1240B(f) of the Food
9 Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3839aa–2(f)) is
10 amended by adding at the end the following:

11 “(3) INCENTIVE PAYMENTS FOR SOIL HEALTH
12 PRACTICES AND CARBON SEQUESTRATION MONI-
13 TORING.—For each fiscal year for which funds are
14 made available under section 1241(a)(3)(A), of the
15 funds made available for payments under the pro-
16 gram, \$100,000,000 shall be used to provide incen-
17 tive payments under subsection (k).”.

18 (c) PRIORITY FOR SOIL HEALTH AND CARBON SE-
19 QUESTRATION.—Section 1240B of the Food Security Act
20 of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3839aa–2) (as amended by subsection
21 (b)(1)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

22 “(1) PRIORITY FOR SOIL HEALTH AND CARBON SE-
23 QUESTRATION.—

24 “(1) IN GENERAL.—To the maximum extent
25 feasible, the Secretary shall manage the program to

1 promote practices that enhance soil health and in-
2 crease soil organic carbon levels.

3 “(2) SOIL HEALTH AND CARBON SEQUESTRA-
4 TION ON ELIGIBLE LAND.—The Secretary shall—

5 “(A) develop ranking and scoring criteria
6 under the program that prioritize soil health
7 practices that score highest in soil carbon se-
8 questration on eligible land; and

9 “(B) develop a soil organic carbon con-
10 servation activity plan under the program to
11 measure and monitor sequestration and mitiga-
12 tion improvement levels from the practices de-
13 scribed in subparagraph (A), such as cover
14 crops, crop rotation, and improved soil manage-
15 ment.”.

16 (d) STREAMLINING AND COORDINATION.—Section
17 1240B of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C.
18 3839aa–2) (as amended by subsection (c)) is amended by
19 adding at the end the following:

20 “(m) STREAMLINING AND COORDINATION.—To the
21 maximum extent feasible, the Secretary shall provide for
22 streamlined and coordinated procedures for the program
23 and the conservation stewardship program under sub-
24 chapter B, including applications, contracting, conserva-

1 tion planning, conservation practices, and related adminis-
2 trative procedures.”.

3 (e) ON-FARM CONSERVATION INNOVATION TRIALS.—
4 Section 1240H(c) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16
5 U.S.C. 3839aa–8(c)) is amended—

6 (1) in paragraph (2), in the matter preceding
7 subparagraph (A), by striking “2031” and inserting
8 “2023, and \$100,000,000 of the funds made avail-
9 able to carry out this subchapter for each of fiscal
10 years 2024 through 2031”; and

11 (2) in paragraph (7), in the matter preceding
12 subparagraph (A), by inserting “including not less
13 than 50 percent of the funds made available to carry
14 out this subsection for each of fiscal years 2024
15 through 2031,” after “subsection,”.

16 (f) SOIL HEALTH AND CARBON SCIENCE RESEARCH
17 PROGRAM AT AGRICULTURE RESEARCH STATIONS.—The
18 Secretary of Agriculture shall establish a program—

19 (1) to provide grants to land-grant colleges and
20 universities to conduct research relating to soil
21 health and carbon science, including—

22 (A) the effect of various practices on soil
23 organic carbon levels;

1 (B) the extent to which the lessons learned
2 from the effects described in subparagraph (A)
3 can be transferred to other geographic regions;

4 (C) the connection between soil organic
5 carbon levels and crop yield and resiliency;

6 (D) the effect of multiple practices on soil
7 organic carbon levels;

8 (E) potential barriers to soil health and
9 carbon data collection across a variety of geo-
10 graphic regions; and

11 (F) carbon permanence and loss of soil-se-
12 questered carbon, based on weather, manage-
13 ment, and other relevant factors, and the depth
14 of sequestered carbon by different practices;
15 and

16 (2) to conduct research relating to soil health
17 and carbon science at agriculture research stations
18 of the Department of Agriculture.