



APPROPRIATIONS ALERT

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AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATIONS – CONFERENCE REPORT

A 14-PERCENT SPENDING INCREASE

H.R. 2997

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The conference report on Agriculture appropriations increases discretionary spending by 14 percent (\$2.8 billion) compared with the 2009 enacted (scored) level. The measure, H.R. 2997, provides \$23.3 billion in new fiscal year 2010 budget authority [BA], and \$17.7 billion in outlays. This follows an addition of \$26.5 billion in 2009 for the programs funded in this bill in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

The legislation – formally the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies appropriations bill – also includes \$99.6 billion in mandatory budget authority (including spending from previously enacted legislation), and \$89.1 billion in outlays, for various direct spending programs, including food stamps, child nutrition, and crop insurance.

The conference report mainly provides funding for all Department of Agriculture programs and activities (except for the Forest Service), including agriculture research, food and nutrition assistance, rural housing and development. It also funds the Food and Drug Administration and the Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

Compliance with the Budget Resolution

Discretionary BA in the bill exceeds the 302(b) allocation by \$404 million provided to the subcommittee in the most recently filed set of House suballocations (H-Report 111-238, 30 July 2009). The bill therefore does not technically comply with section 302(f) of the Congressional Budget Act, which prohibits consideration of appropriations measures that exceed the appropriate subcommittee’s 302(b) allocation. This violation was, however, waived by the rule governing floor consideration of the conference report.

The bill contains no new emergency spending, advance appropriations, cap adjustments, or funding for the global war against terrorism. It does include \$762 million in fiscal year 2010 BA savings from various changes in mandatory programs. These include reductions of \$270 million from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, \$65 million from the watershed rehabilitation program, and \$148 million from the child nutrition’s commodity support program. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that, over the 2010-19 period, the net budgetary reductions from these changes in authorizing law would total \$474 million in BA and \$357 million in outlays.

These provisions are referred to as Changes in Mandatory Programs [CHIMPs]. Scoring rules require any changes made to mandatory programs in an appropriations bill – both savings and spending – be charged to the Appropriations Committee. While the Appropriations Committee gets credit for \$762 million in savings this year, it is not charged with the outyear costs of these changes.

Highlights of H.R. 2997 include the following:

- **Department of Agriculture.** The bill provides the Department a total of \$117.3 billion in mandatory and discretionary funding. Of this amount, approximately \$21 billion is discretionary BA for the Department. This includes \$7.6 billion for the Food and Nutrition Service (an increase of 4.7 percent from the 2009 enacted level); \$2.1 billion for the Foreign Agriculture Service (39.7 percent); \$1.3 billion for the Agricultural Research Service (5.4 percent); \$2.1 billion for the Farm Service Agency (26.8 percent); \$1.9 billion for the various Rural Housing Service programs (7.9 percent); and \$1 billion for Food Safety and Inspection (4.8 percent).
- **Commodity Futures Trading Commission [CFTC].** The CFTC receives \$169 million in discretionary BA, an increase of \$23 million, or 15.8 percent, over the 2009 enacted level.