

119TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

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To amend the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 to establish an Office of Small Farms, and for other purposes.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

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Mr. BOOKER introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

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**A BILL**

To amend the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 to establish an Office of Small Farms, 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 “Office of Small Farms  
5       Establishment Act of 2026”.

6 **SEC. 2. OFFICE OF SMALL FARMS.**

7       (a) IN GENERAL.—Subtitle B of the Department of  
8       Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6931  
9       et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

1   **“SEC. 229. OFFICE OF SMALL FARMS.**2       “(a) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:3           “(1) **SMALL FARM, RANCH, OR FOREST OPER-**  
4           **ATION.**—The term ‘small farm, ranch, or forest op-  
5           eration’ means a farm, ranch, or forest operation  
6           that—

7           “(A)(i) is less than 180 acres; or

8           “(ii) meets another acreage-based defini-  
9           tion of ‘small’, as determined by the Secretary,  
10           that takes into consideration—11           “(I) the State or region in which the  
12           farm, ranch, or forest operation is located;13           “(II) the production system of the  
14           farm, ranch, or forest operation; or

15           “(III) both; and

16           “(B) has an annual gross cash farm in-  
17           come of less than \$350,000.18           “(2) **STATE OFFICE.**—The term ‘State office’  
19           means—

20           “(A) a State office of—

21           “(i) the Farm Service Agency;

22           “(ii) the Natural Resources Conserva-  
23           tion Service; or24           “(iii) the rural development mission  
25           area; or

1                   “(B) a regional office of the Risk Manage-  
2                   ment Agency.

3                   “(b) ESTABLISHMENT.—

4                   “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall estab-  
5                   lish within the farm production and conservation  
6                   mission area the Office of Small Farms.

7                   “(2) DIRECTOR.—

8                   “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall  
9                   appoint a Director of the Office of Small Farms  
10                   (referred to in this section as the ‘Director’).

11                   “(B) FPAC.—A senior official within the  
12                   farm production and conservation mission area  
13                   may be appointed to serve as the Director.

14                   “(c) DUTIES.—The Director shall—

15                   “(1) coordinate efforts to improve support for  
16                   small farms, ranches, and forest operations across  
17                   all Department agencies and offices;

18                   “(2) review Department programs and policies  
19                   and identify statutory, regulatory, and administra-  
20                   tive provisions, policies, and guidance that disadvan-  
21                   tage small farm, ranch, or forest operation participa-  
22                   tion, and recommend changes to ensure that those  
23                   programs and policies adequately serve small farms,  
24                   ranches, and forest operations;

1               “(3) develop recommendations for new initia-  
2       tives, including financing mechanisms and technical  
3       assistance opportunities, to specifically serve small  
4       farms, ranches, and forest operations relating to  
5       production, conservation, business planning, land ac-  
6       cess, and other issues, as determined by the Sec-  
7       retary;

8               “(4) make recommendations to Department  
9       agencies and offices and other Federal agencies on  
10      tracking small farm, ranch, or forest operation data,  
11      including demographics and program participation  
12      rates;

13               “(5) propose research agendas on topics that  
14      are of special interest to small farms, ranches, and  
15      forest operations;

16               “(6) provide or coordinate technical assistance  
17      through the Department or through cooperative  
18      agreements with other entities to operators of small  
19      farms, ranches, and forest operations to assist those  
20      operators—

21               “(A) to access the full complement of  
22      available Department grant, cost-share, and  
23      loan programs;

24               “(B) to implement activities using assist-  
25      ance received under those programs; and

1                     “(C) with farmland preservation, including  
2                     through succession planning;

3                     “(7) implement a program directly or through  
4                     cooperative agreements with other entities to provide  
5                     grants of not more than \$25,000 to operators of  
6                     small farms, ranches, and forest operations for—

7                         “(A) equipment and infrastructure repairs  
8                     and upgrades;

9                         “(B) uninsured losses;

10                         “(C) business planning and market devel-  
11                     opment assistance;

12                         “(D) conservation practice adoption;

13                         “(E) down payments for land acquisition;

14                     and

15                         “(F) such other purposes as the Secretary  
16                     determines to be appropriate;

17                     “(8) operate a hotline through which operators  
18                     of small farms, ranches, and forest operations can  
19                     anonymously report problems that the operators en-  
20                     counter in attempts to access Department programs;

21                     “(9) collaborate with other Federal agencies  
22                     and State agencies on how to effectively reach and  
23                     serve small farms, ranches, and forest operations;

24                     and

1           “(10) determine whether to approve a plan sub-  
2        mitted by a State small farms coordinator under  
3        subsection (e)(3)(A)(ii).

4        “(d) LIAISONS.—

5           “(1) APPOINTMENT.—The following officials  
6        shall appoint, from among the officers and employ-  
7        ees under the respective official, a liaison to the Of-  
8        fice of Small Farms:

9           “(A) The Chief of the Natural Resources  
10      Conservation Service.

11           “(B) The Administrator of the Farm Serv-  
12      ice Agency.

13           “(C) The Administrator of the Risk Man-  
14      agement Agency.

15           “(D) The Under Secretary of Agriculture  
16      for Rural Development.

17           “(E) The Director of the National Insti-  
18      tute of Food and Agriculture.

19           “(F) The Administrator of the Agricultural  
20      Marketing Service.

21           “(G) The Administrator of the Economic  
22      Research Service.

23           “(H) The Administrator of the National  
24      Agricultural Statistics Service.

1                   “(I) The Director of the Office of Partner-  
2                   ships and Public Engagement.

3                   “(J) The heads of such other agencies, of-  
4                   fices, and advisory groups as the Secretary de-  
5                   termines to be appropriate, including—

6                   “(i) the Office of Urban Agriculture  
7                   and Innovative Production; and  
8                   “(ii) the Office of Tribal Relations.

9                   “(2) DUTIES.—Each liaison appointed under  
10                   paragraph (1) shall—

11                   “(A) coordinate with the Office of Small  
12                   Farms and the other liaisons appointed under  
13                   that paragraph to develop and implement new  
14                   strategies for outreach to and education for  
15                   small farms, ranches, and forest operations;  
16                   and

17                   “(B) coordinate within the agency, office,  
18                   mission area, or advisory group of the liaison  
19                   on issues and outreach relating to small farms,  
20                   ranches, and forest operations.

21                   “(e) STATE SMALL FARMS COORDINATORS.—

22                   “(1) IN GENERAL.—

23                   “(A) DESIGNATION.—

24                   “(i) IN GENERAL.—The Director, in  
25                   consultation with State food and agri-

1 culture councils and directors of State of-  
2 fices, shall designate in each State a State  
3 small farms coordinator from among the  
4 employees of State offices.

13                   “(B) REQUIREMENTS.—To be designated  
14                   as a State small farms coordinator, an employee  
15                   shall—

22                   “(2) TRAINING.—The Secretary shall develop a  
23                   training plan to provide to each State small farms  
24                   coordinator knowledge of programs and services  
25                   available from the Department for small farms,

1       ranches, and forest operations, taking into consider-  
2       ation the needs of all types of production methods.

3       “(3) DUTIES.—

4           “(A) IN GENERAL.—A State small farms  
5           coordinator—

6               “(i) shall coordinate technical assist-  
7               ance at the State level to assist small  
8               farms, ranches, and forest operations in  
9               accessing programs of the Department;

10              “(ii) shall develop and submit to the  
11              Director for approval a State plan to im-  
12              prove the coordination, delivery, and effi-  
13              cacy of programs of the Department to  
14              small farms, ranches, and forest oper-  
15              ations, taking into consideration the needs  
16              of all types of production methods, at each  
17              county and area office in the State;

18              “(iii) shall oversee implementation of  
19              an approved State plan described in clause  
20              (ii);

21              “(iv) may facilitate interagency and  
22              interdepartmental collaboration on issues  
23              relating to small farms, ranches, and forest  
24              operations at the State or regional level;

1                     “(v) shall work with outreach coordi-  
2                     nators in the State offices to ensure appro-  
3                     priate information about technical assist-  
4                     ance is available at outreach events and ac-  
5                     tivities;

6                     “(vi) shall coordinate partnerships  
7                     and joint outreach efforts with other orga-  
8                     nizations and government agencies serving  
9                     small farms, ranches, and forest oper-  
10                    ations; and

11                    “(vii) may provide grants under sub-  
12                    section (c)(7), in accordance with criteria  
13                    established by the Director.

14                    “(B) INDIVIDUAL DUTIES.—Not less than  
15                    50 percent of the duties of an employee des-  
16                    ignated to be a State small farms coordinator  
17                    shall be the duties described in subparagraph  
18                    (A) or other duties relating to small farms,  
19                    ranches, and forest operations.

20                    “(f) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Annually, the Sec-  
21                    retary shall submit to the Committee on Agriculture of  
22                    the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agri-  
23                    culture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate a report  
24                    describing—

1               “(1) the efforts of the Secretary to enhance  
2               participation by small farms, ranches, and forest op-  
3               erations in agricultural programs; and

4               “(2) the results achieved to enhance such par-  
5               ticipation for each such agricultural program.

6               “(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There  
7               are authorized to be appropriated for each of fiscal years  
8               2027 through 2031—

9               “(1) \$15,000,000 for the administration of the  
10               Office of Small Farms; and

11               “(2) \$10,000,000 to provide technical assist-  
12               ance and grants authorized by this section.”.

13               (b) TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.—The Department of  
14               Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 is amended by re-  
15               designating the first section 225 (7 U.S.C. 6925) (relating  
16               to the Food Access Liaison) as section 224A.

17               (c) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 296(b) of  
18               the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of  
19               1994 (7 U.S.C. 7014(b)) is amended by adding at the end  
20               the following:

21               “(11) The authority of the Secretary to carry  
22               out section 229.”.