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(Original Signature of Member)

115TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

**H. R.**

To amend the Agricultural Risk Protection Act of 2000 to require peer review for value-added agricultural product market development grants, and for other purposes.

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IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico (for himself, Mr. FORTENBERRY, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, and Ms. PINGREE) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

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**A BILL**

To amend the Agricultural Risk Protection Act of 2000 to require peer review for value-added agricultural product market development grants, 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 “Growing Value-Added  
5 Economies Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. VALUE-ADDED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT MARKET**  
2 **DEVELOPMENT GRANTS.**

3 Section 231(b) of the (7 U.S.C. 1632a(b)) is amend-  
4 ed—

5 (1) in paragraph (1), by striking “paragraph  
6 (7)” and inserting “paragraph (10)”;

7 (2) by striking paragraph (7); and

8 (3) by inserting after paragraph (6) the fol-  
9 lowing new paragraphs:

10 “(7) PEER REVIEW.—

11 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall  
12 establish independent external review panels  
13 comprised of members with relevant expertise  
14 who are not employees of the Department to re-  
15 view and evaluate each eligible application  
16 based on merit and relevance.

17 “(B) MEMBERS OF REVIEW PANEL.—  
18 Members assigned to a panel established under  
19 subparagraph (A) may include—

20 “(i) producers; and

21 “(ii) experts from colleges and univer-  
22 sities, State and local agencies, private  
23 non-profit organizations, industry, and re-  
24 lated institutions.

25 “(C) CONFIDENTIALITY.—The Secretary  
26 shall ensure that the identity of a member of a

1 panel established under subparagraph (A) is, to  
2 the maximum extent practicable, confidential.

3 “(D) CONFLICTS OF INTEREST.—The Sec-  
4 retary shall ensure that no person with a con-  
5 flicts of interest may be assigned to be a mem-  
6 ber of a panel established under subparagraph  
7 (A).

8 “(8) OUTREACH AND TECHNICAL ASSIST-  
9 ANCE.—The Secretary shall develop and implement  
10 an outreach and technical assistance strategy, in-  
11 cluding entering into cooperative agreements with  
12 private nonprofit entities, cooperative extension,  
13 State and local units of government, to—

14 “(A) further the purposes of the program  
15 established under this section; and

16 “(B) ensure that underserved States and  
17 communities are served by the program.

18 “(9) PROGRAM EVALUATION.—

19 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall  
20 provide for the periodic evaluation of the pro-  
21 gram that measures the impact of the program  
22 and the impact of projects in achieving the pur-  
23 poses of the program.

24 “(B) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—The  
25 Secretary may enter into cooperative agree-

1           ments with private nonprofit entities, coopera-  
2           tive extension, State and local units of govern-  
3           ment for the purpose of the program evaluation  
4           required under subparagraph (A).

5           “(10) FUNDING.—

6                   “(A) IN GENERAL.—Of the funds of the  
7           Commodity Credit Corporation, the Secretary  
8           shall make available to carry out this subsection  
9           \$20,000,000, to remain available until ex-  
10          pended, for each of fiscal years 2019 through  
11          2023.

12                   “(B) DISCRETIONARY FUNDING.—There is  
13          authorized to be appropriated to carry out this  
14          subsection \$40,000,000 for each of fiscal years  
15          2008 through 2023.

16                   “(C) RESERVATION OF FUNDS FOR  
17          PROJECTS TO BENEFIT BEGINNING FARMERS  
18          OR RANCHERS, SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED  
19          FARMERS OR RANCHERS, AND MID-TIER VALUE  
20          CHAINS.—

21                   “(i) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary  
22          shall reserve 10 percent of the amounts  
23          made available for each fiscal year under  
24          this paragraph to fund projects that ben-  
25          efit producers described in clauses (ii),

1 (iii), and (iv) of paragraph (6)(A) or that  
2 best contribute to creating or increasing  
3 marketing opportunities for such pro-  
4 ducers.

5 “(ii) MID-TIER VALUE CHAINS.—The  
6 Secretary shall reserve 10 percent of the  
7 amounts made available for each fiscal  
8 year under this paragraph to fund applica-  
9 tions of eligible entities described in para-  
10 graph (1) that propose to develop mid-tier  
11 value chains.

12 “(iii) UNOBLIGATED AMOUNTS.—Any  
13 amounts in the reserves for a fiscal year  
14 established under clauses (i) and (ii) that  
15 are not obligated after the completion of  
16 the peer review process for such fiscal year  
17 shall be available to the Secretary to make  
18 grants under this subsection to eligible en-  
19 tities in any State, as determined by the  
20 Secretary.

21 “(D) ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES AND  
22 PROGRAM EVALUATION.—Not more than 5 per-  
23 cent of the total amount made available to  
24 carry out this subsection for a fiscal year may

1 be used for administrative expenses, program  
2 evaluation, outreach, and technical assistance.”.