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.

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 ________

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.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Growing Value-Added Economies Act”.

May 9, 2018 (1:50 p.m.)
Section 231(b) of the (7 U.S.C. 1632a(b)) is amended—

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

(2) by striking paragraph (7); and

(3) by inserting after paragraph (6) the following new paragraphs:

“(7) PEER REVIEW.—

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

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

“(i) producers; and

“(ii) experts from colleges and universities, State and local agencies, private non-profit organizations, industry, and related institutions.

“(C) CONFIDENTIALITY.—The Secretary shall ensure that the identity of a member of a
panel established under subparagraph (A) is, to the maximum extent practicable, confidential.

“(D) CONFLICTS OF INTEREST.—The Secretary shall ensure that no person with a conflicts of interest may be assigned to be a member of a panel established under subparagraph (A).

“(8) OUTREACH AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary shall develop and implement an outreach and technical assistance strategy, including entering into cooperative agreements with private nonprofit entities, cooperative extension, State and local units of government, to—

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

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

“(9) PROGRAM EVALUATION.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall provide for the periodic evaluation of the program that measures the impact of the program and the impact of projects in achieving the purposes of the program.

“(B) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—The Secretary may enter into cooperative agree-
ments with private nonprofit entities, cooperative extension, State and local units of government for the purpose of the program evaluation required under subparagraph (A).

“(10) FUNDING.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Of the funds of the Commodity Credit Corporation, the Secretary shall make available to carry out this subsection $20,000,000, to remain available until expended, for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023.

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

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

“(i) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall reserve 10 percent of the amounts made available for each fiscal year under this paragraph to fund projects that benefit producers described in clauses (ii),
(iii), and (iv) of paragraph (6)(A) or that
best contribute to creating or increasing
marketing opportunities for such pro-
ducers.

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

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

“(D) ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES AND
PROGRAM EVALUATION.—Not more than 5 per-
cent of the total amount made available to
carry out this subsection for a fiscal year may
be used for administrative expenses, program
evaluation, outreach, and technical assistance.”.