

The Organic Agriculture Research Act

H.R. 2436 / S. 2404

Sponsored by Representative Pingree (D-ME), Representative Newhouse (R-WA), Representative Panetta (D-CA), Senator Casey (D-PA), and Senator Collins (R-ME)

Summary

This bill works to increase funding for the Organic Research and Extension Initiative (OREI) and extends authorization for the program, which expires in September of this year, until 2023. While H.R. 2436 calls for an increase to funding to \$50 million for each year from 2018 – 2023, S. 2404 gradually works to increase this funding by \$5 million per year to eventually reach \$50 million in 2023.

Background and Bill Information

OREI was created in the 2002 Farm Bill to address the needs of the increasingly popular organic sector. Even though the billion-dollar industry has exhibited steady growth for the past decade, public investment in the sector has stalled at about \$20 million. In order to keep up with demand, we need public research dollars to address challenges that the sector faces. Currently, less than .05 percent of total Farm Bill spending goes to organic research.

This bill works to:

- Ensure that the program continues, as the sector continues to boom
- Ensure that the program receives “baseline” funding of \$50 million so that it acts as a permanent fixture in the Farm Bill research title
- Capitalize on the 20 to 1 return on investment in research to ensure that the organic sector continues to grow
- Help organic operations throughout the country, regardless of geographic location