

Strengthening Local Processing Act Summary

Sponsored by Representative Chellie Pingree and Representative Jeff Fortenberry

The Strengthening Local Processing Act provides small plants with the funds needed to grow and expand, and supports a scale-appropriate approach to small scale slaughter and processing. The bill sections include:

Section 2. Scale Appropriate Guidance and Assistance from FSIS

Requires the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) to establish a searchable database of all the peer-reviewed, publicly-available validation studies for Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) plans for small and very small plants; create and make available to small and very small plants models of HACCP plans for multiple types of small plants, including but not limited to a HACCP plans for slaughter plants and processing only plants, and based on the different types of products processed by plants; and create and publish guidance for public comment and input on how to get your HACCP plan approved.

Section 3. Expanding State Inspection

Increases the amount of cost share USDA will pay for a state Meat and Poultry Inspection Program from 50% to 65% of the total program costs.

Section 4. Expanding Cooperative Interstate Shipment

Requires FSIS to conduct outreach to states with state inspection programs that are not part of the Cooperative Interstate Shipment (CIS) program, and requires FSIS to submit a report to the House and Senate Agriculture Committees each year detailing the activities and the results of the outreach conducted. Increases the amount of cost share USDA will pay for from 60% to 80% of the total program costs. Changes the small plant eligibility size from plants with more than 25 employees to plants with more than 50 employees.

Section 5. Small Plant Grant Program

Creates a new grant program to provide reimbursement grants to help federally inspected, state inspected, and exempt small and very small plants expand infrastructure to increase harvest and processing capacity, including support for existing plants and new small scale meat slaughter and processing plants, and adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic and future market needs beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. Limits grants to not more than \$100,000 for 90 percent of eligible costs and up to \$500,000 for 75 percent eligible costs. Cost-share requirements will be waived for Fiscal Year 2021 grants. Provides \$10 million a year in mandatory funding and \$15 million in discretionary funding.

Section 6. Small Processor Training, Education, and Technical Assistance Grants

Creates Meat Processing Training Program Grants for experts and small and very small plants to assist and train small plant operators, small plant employees, and the next generation of meat processors and butchers. Provides \$10 million a year in discretionary funding.

The following organizations endorse the Strengthening Local Processing Act:

The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, The American Association of Meat Processors, The Niche Meat Processors Assistance Network, American Grassfed Association, United States Cattlemen's Association, The National Bison Association, and The Center for Rural Affairs.