



## Native Farm Bill Coalition praises 2018 Farm Bill Conference Report, urges swift passage

*A historic number of provisions included in the 2018 Farm Bill Conference Report will directly benefit Indian Country, acknowledge tribal sovereignty and ensure parity for tribal governments and Native producers across many USDA programs and authorities*

The Native Farm Bill Coalition is very pleased to see that dozens of provisions which its member tribes and tribal organizations sought were included in the final Farm Bill conference bill, which is set for an up or down vote over the next few days by both chambers of Congress.

The House-Senate **Conference Report on the 2018 Farm Bill**, unveiled last night, reflects the bipartisan commitment of the Congress to include many important provisions and programs for Native American tribes and producers. The tribal provisions support tribal sovereignty and governmental parity and will enable tribal producers to make greatly expanded use of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's programs and authorities. The compromise bill supports the renaissance of healthy food systems in Indian Country and makes significant investments in food and agriculture production, infrastructure, and economic development for tribes and tribal producers.

The Coalition would like to thank the Farm Bill Conference Committee and its leaders, Senate Agriculture Chairman Pat Roberts (R-KS), Senate Ranking Member Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), House Agriculture Chairman Mike Conaway (R-TX), and House Ranking Member Collin Peterson (D-MN), for their bipartisan efforts. The Coalition also extends its appreciation to House and Senate Agriculture Committee staff who have spent countless hours in meetings and drafting language with tribal leaders over the past two years as they gave shape to the 2018 Farm Bill.

Of the many provisions included in the final 2018 Farm Bill, the following are especially noteworthy for Indian Country:

- **Conservation: Parity and Support for Tribal Producers**
  - Requires the Secretary of Agriculture to enter into alternative funding agreements with tribes and tribal producers in both the EQIP and CSP programs

- **Nutrition: *Supporting Tribal Self-Governance and Management of FDPIR***
  - Includes a new \$5 million demonstration project authorizing tribes to purchase food for the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations under “638” tribal self-determination contracts
  - Adjusts the FDPIR matching requirements and funding limitations to reduce the burden of administering FDPIR so that economically disadvantaged tribes may reach more households in need of assistance
    - 20 percent tribal match; waiver of match to enable full USDA funding required for tribes with economic hardships; and ability to use other federal funding to reach the match requirement
  - Allows for two-year carryover funding for FDPIR
  - Adds “regionally-grown” to the traditional foods provision purchase provision for FDPIR
  
- **Forestry: *Self-Governance and Parity for Healthy Forestry Management***
  - Establishes a Tribal Self-Governance Demonstration Project for management of Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management lands adjacent to Indian lands under the Tribal Forest Protection Act
  - Makes tribal governments eligible to exercise Good Neighbor Authority for forestry management agreements with states and USDA
  
- **Rural Development: *Building Infrastructure and Economic Development Opportunities***
  - Provides refinancing authority for some Rural Development programs currently within the Substantially Underserved Trust Areas (SUTA) designation
  - Tribal priority, inclusion, and access to broadband programs, including the community connect program, to build infrastructure and economic development opportunities in Indian Country
  - Creates a permanent tribal technical service and assistance office across all USDA Rural Development funding authorities
  - Reauthorizes and expands eligibility of tribal consortia and Alaska Native Villages for a water system infrastructure program
  - Maintains funding Tribal College and University Essential Community Facilities program
  
- **Research: *Inclusion and Parity for Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs)***
  - Adds 1994 TCUs as eligible for the McIntire-Stennis Forestry program capacity funding
  - Reauthorization of support for TCUs, adding two tribal colleges previously excluded and creating parity for access to Children, Youth and Families at Risk (CYFAR) and the Federally Recognized Tribes Extension Program (FRTEP)
  - Creates a Native American student scholarship fund for tribal students who attend land grant universities and colleges
  
- **Trade: *Increased Opportunities and Access to Overseas Markets***
  - Increases opportunities for tribes and tribal producers to participate in international U.S. trade delegations

- **Horticulture/Specialty Crops: *Support for Traditional and Local Foods***
  - Makes tribes eligible to participate in Local Agriculture Market Program to help tribes grow, process and market Native foods
- **Commodity Title: *Support for Tribal Producers***
  - Adds tribes and tribal organizations as specifically eligible under the livestock disaster programs
- **Credit: *Improving Access to Credit for Tribal Producers***
  - Requires a GAO Study on access to credit issues in Indian Country
- **Miscellaneous Title: *Upholding the Trust Responsibility***
  - Maintains the Office of Tribal Relations within the Office of the Secretary to report directly to the Secretary of Agriculture
  - Establishes a new Tribal Advisory Committee through the Office of Tribal Relations to provide advice to the Secretary on tribal related issues and policies
  - Legalizes hemp farming and authorizes new state and tribal plans to self-regulate, develop, and expand hemp production; also provides technical assistance to tribes and requires that states permit a tribe to transport across a state hemp that is lawfully produced under this Act
  - Provides additional tribal government and producers eligibility and permanent baseline funding for the combined Farming Opportunities Training and Outreach (FOTO) program for beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers
  - Codifies and expands Tribal Promise Zone program authority in order to bring greater focus to federal investments in tribal communities in ways that stimulate local economic development
  - Makes tribes eligible to participate in new National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program
- **Additional Tribal-Specific Provisions Supporting Parity and Inclusion for Tribes and Tribal Producers**
  - Authorizes micro-loans for local foods in food insecure areas and makes tribes eligible

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