119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. _____

To authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to carry out activities to reduce food loss and waste, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. COONS (for himself and Mr. MORAN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to carry out activities to reduce food loss and waste, 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 ''New Opportunities for Technological Innovation, Mitigation, and Education To Overcome Waste Act'' or the ''NO TIME TO Waste Act''.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term ''Administrator'' means the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

(2) COMMISSIONER.—The term ''Commissioner'' means the Commissioner of Food and Drugs.

(3) FOOD.—The term ''food'' means any raw, cooked, processed, or prepared substance, ice, beverage, or ingredient used or intended for use in whole or in part for human consumption.

(4) FOOD LOSS.—The term ''food loss'' means, with respect to food, that the food does not reach a consumer as a result of an issue in the production, storage, processing, or distribution phase.

(5) FOOD RECOVERY.—The term ''food recovery'' means the collection of wholesome food that would otherwise go to waste and the redistribution of that food to feed people.

(6) FOOD SPOILAGE.—The term ''food spoilage'' means a process or change that renders a food product undesirable or unacceptable for human consumption.

(7) FOOD WASTE.—The term ''food waste'' means, with respect to food, that the food is intended for human consumption but is unconsumed

by humans for any reason at the retail or consumption phase.

(8) LIAISON.—The term ''Liaison'' means the Food Loss and Waste Reduction Liaison established under section 224 of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6924).

(9) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of Agriculture.

(10) UPCYCLED FOOD PRODUCT.—The term ''upcycled food product'' means a product that—

(A) is created from surplus food, unmarketable food, or edible or inedible food byproducts; and

(B) is made with ingredients that—

(i) otherwise would not have gone to human consumption;

(ii) are sourced and produced using supply chains for which upstream data can be verified and validated for accuracy; and

(iii) have a positive impact on the environment.

SEC. 3. OFFICE OF FOOD LOSS AND WASTE.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall establish in the Department of Agriculture an Office of Food Loss and Waste (referred to in this section as the ''Office'').

(b) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Office shall be responsible for—

(1) supporting the role and responsibilities of the Liaison;

(2) comprehensive research on methods to quantify on-farm food loss and supply chain food loss;

(3) research on new technologies to reduce food loss and food waste;

(4) quantifying the impact of food waste reduction policies on greenhouse gas emissions reductions;

(5) submitting to Congress and making publicly available reports describing the progress of the United States in advancing toward or achieving the goal of reducing food loss and food waste by 50 percent, compared to 2016 levels, by 2030;

(6) publishing reports to Congress and to the public for the purpose of engaging with educational campaigns relating to food loss and food waste;

(7) carrying out the grant program under subsection (d);

(8) contributing to an assessment relating to how food loss and food waste affects climate change, food and nutrition security, and public health;

(9) creating and distributing tools, resources, and publications—

(A) to support efforts and measures to reduce and prevent food loss and food waste; and

(B) to contribute to increased education relating to food loss and food waste for private entities, nonprofit and community-based organizations, and individuals;

(10) tracking and assessing programs across Federal agencies to advance research relating to food loss and food waste;

(11) analyzing food loss and food waste policy data and establishing and disseminating model policies for municipal, local, State, territorial, and Tribal governments that are proven to reduce food loss or food waste;

(12) recommending new regulations, investments, or policies to the Liaison and the Secretary to address new identified gaps on preventing and reducing food loss and food waste; and

(13) carrying out such other activities as the Secretary or the Liaison determine to be appropriate.

(c) PARTNERSHIPS.—In carrying out the responsibilities described in subsection (b), the Secretary, in con-

sultation with other Federal agencies, the Liaison, and the Office, shall establish partnerships with regional partner institutions to plan, conduct, and arrange for public research, data, education, and recommendations relating to food loss and food waste prevention and reduction and food recovery issues locally, regionally, and nationally.

(d) GRANT PROGRAM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Office shall establish a grant program to support collecting data on existing State and local food loss and food waste policies.

(2) ELIGIBILITY.—An entity eligible to receive a grant under paragraph (1) is—

(A) a municipal, local, State, or Tribal government;

(B) a partnership of 1 or more governments described in subparagraph (A) and 1 or more nonprofit organizations; or

(C) a partnership of 2 or more—

(i) governments described in subparagraph (A); or

(ii) nonprofit organizations.

(3) COLLABORATION.—An entity that receives a grant under paragraph (1) may collaborate with 1 or more nonprofit, private, or other organizations in carrying out activities using the grant funds.

(4) PROJECT REQUIREMENTS.—A data collection project carried out using a grant under paragraph (1) shall—

(A) be carried out for not longer than 3 years; and

(B) include the provision of data collected under the project to the Office.

(5) DATA REQUIREMENTS.—Data collected under a project carried out using a grant under paragraph (1) shall provide rigorous evidence of the impact of food loss and food waste policies, which may include—

(A) estimates of the quantity of the reduction of food loss and food waste after the implementation of a policy;

(B) where relevant, estimates of the quantity of food loss and food waste in a similar community that is not subject to the policy; and

(C) the economic benefits and impacts realized from food that is recovered, upcycled, reused, or recycled.

(6) MATCHING REQUIREMENT.—An entity that receives a grant under paragraph (1) shall provide funds, in-kind contributions, or a combination of both from sources other than funds provided

through the grant in an amount equal to not less than 10 percent of the amount of the grant, which may include private funding or other sources of revenue, as determined by the Secretary.

(7) MODEL POLICIES.—After the Office receives the data collected under the grant program under this paragraph, the Office shall analyze the data and establish model policies for municipal, local, State, and Tribal governments that are proven to reduce food waste.

(e) AUTHORIZATIONS OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Office $1,500,000 for each of fiscal years 2026 through 2030.

(2) GRANT PROGRAM.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out the grant program under subsection (d) $2,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2026 through 2030.

(B) ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.—Of the amount appropriated under subparagraph (A), the Secretary may retain not more than 4 percent to pay administrative costs incurred by the Secretary in carrying out subsection (d).

SEC. 4. IMPROVING COORDINATION TO PREVENT AND REDUCE FOOD LOSS AND WASTE.

(a) REGIONAL COORDINATORS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish in the Department of Agriculture regional coordinators.

(2) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The regional coordinators established under paragraph (1) shall be responsible for—

(A) partnering with food producers, food processors, distributors, and food recovery organizations and acting as regional points of contact to facilitate real-time food recovery;

(B) understanding and developing the capacity needed for ongoing food recovery;

(C) providing technical support to food recovery organizations to improve the ability of the food recovery organizations to pick up surplus food, process that food, and deliver that food to populations or communities; and

(D) engaging with Department of Agriculture regional food business centers to identify opportunities for synergy and alignment with those centers.

(3) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry out this subsection $1,000,000.

(b) FOOD RECOVERY AND DISTRIBUTION INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT AND COORDINATION BLOCK GRANTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in coordination with the Office of Food Loss and Waste established under section 3, shall establish as part of the program under section 203D(d) of the Emergency Food Assistance Act of 1983 (7 U.S.C. 7507(d)) a program to award annual block grants to States and Indian Tribes to carry out projects to develop and support food recovery infrastructure and innovative food distribution models.

(2) DISTRIBUTION.—A State shall distribute a block grant received under paragraph (1) to applicable food recovery organizations and local governments to address any gaps in food recovery infrastructure, including—

(A) storage and capacity of processing infrastructure equipment and facilities;

(B) temperature-controlled food distribution infrastructure;

(C) technological solutions supporting food recovery, such as real-time updates to connect organizations that have surplus food with organizations that distribute surplus food; and

(D) support of salaries, wages, and benefits for food recovery organizations.

(3) COORDINATION.—In establishing the program under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall coordinate with other Department of Agriculture agencies and programs, including—

(A) the Agricultural Marketing Service;

(B) the Emergency Food Assistance Program Reach and Resiliency Grants; and

(C) such other agencies and programs as the Secretary determines to be appropriate.

(4) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this subsection $2,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2026 through 2030.

SEC. 5. STRENGTHENING GOVERNMENT APPROACH TO FOOD LOSS AND WASTE.

(a) INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION ON FOOD LOSS AND WASTE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in collaboration with the Administrator and the Commissioner,

shall collaborate to carry out the agreement relative to cooperation and coordination on food loss and waste signed by those officials on December 17, 2020.

(2) REPORTS.—Every year, the Secretary, acting through the Liaison and the Office of Food Loss and Waste established under section 3, in consultation with the Administrator and the Commissioner, shall submit to Congress and make publicly available a report describing the progress of the Secretary in carrying out the agreement described in paragraph (1).

(3) INTERAGENCY ENGAGEMENT.—Pursuant to paragraph (1), the Secretary, the Administrator, and the Commissioner shall engage with the heads of other Federal departments and agencies, including the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Education, the Secretary of Transportation, the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Administrator of General Services, and such other Federal departments and agencies as the Secretary, the Administrator, and the Commissioner determine to be appropriate, to expand work on food loss and food waste.

(4) CONSULTATION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall consult with, and receive advice from, representatives described in subparagraph (B) relating to—

(i) programming and policy issues relating to understanding existing and future challenges relating to food loss and food waste;

(ii) acquiring the latest data relating to food loss and food waste;

(iii) the latest innovative solutions relating to food loss and food waste from leading experts; and

(iv) sharing and developing procurement best practices that will assist the heads of Federal departments and agencies described in paragraph (3) in—

(I) preventing food loss and waste;

(II) reducing food loss and food waste;

(III) leading by example in addressing issues relating to food loss and food waste; and

(IV) engaging contractors in reducing food loss and food waste in the operations of the contractors.

(B) REPRESENTATIVES.—The representatives referred to in subparagraph (A) are representatives of—

(i) the private sector;

(ii) agricultural producers;

(iii) food industry members, such as food safety trainers, food aggregators and processors, food safety professionals, retailers, and food service entities;

(iv) nonprofit organizations;

(v) food recovery organizations of varying sizes; and

(vi) any other sector, as determined by the Secretary.

(C) REPRESENTATION OF SMALLER PRODUCERS AND FOOD INSECURE COMMUNITIES.—In consulting and receiving advice under subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall ensure participation by smaller producers and organizations from communities most impacted by food and nutrition insecurity and food loss and food waste issues.

(D) FORMS OF CONSULTATION.—The Secretary may consult and receive advice under subparagraph (A) through—

(i) a meeting through which input is sought, such as a workshop, town hall meeting, or listening session;

(ii) a meeting described in clause (i) with an existing group formed by representatives described in subparagraph (B); and

(iii) such other means as the Secretary determines to be appropriate.

(E) INTERAGENCY MEETINGS.—The Secretary shall host quarterly meetings with the Administrator, the Commissioner, and the heads of other Federal agencies for the purpose of sharing communications relating to consultation and advice received under subparagraph (A) with those officials regularly.

(F) FACA EXEMPTION.—Chapter 10 of title 5, United States Code (commonly referred to as the ''Federal Advisory Committee Act''), shall not apply to any group formed for purposes of consultation or providing advice under this paragraph.

(5) CONTINUATION OF EFFECT.—Nothing in the subsection shall be affected by the expiration of the agreement described in paragraph (1).

(6) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry out this subsection $1,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2026 through 2030.

(b) FEDERAL CONTRACTORS.—Section 4 of the Federal Food Donation Act of 2008 (42 U.S.C. 1792) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''180 days'' and all that follows through ''the Federal'' and inserting ''180 days after the date of enactment of the New Opportunities for Technological Innovation, Mitigation, and Education To Overcome Waste Act , the Federal'';

(B) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking ''encourages'' and inserting ''requires''; and

(ii) by striking ''and'' after the semicolon;

(C) in paragraph (2), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(D) by adding at the end the following:

"(3) requires the contractor to submit to the applicable executive agency a report describing—

"(A) efforts and actions to prevent and reduce food loss and food waste (as those terms are defined in section 2 of the New Opportunities for Technological Innovation, Mitigation, and Education To Overcome Waste Act);

"(B) food waste (as so defined) through activities carried out under the contract; and

"(C) food donated as described in paragraph (1)."; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

"(c) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—Every 2 years, each executive agency shall submit to Congress reports describing the matters reported to the executive agency under subsection (a)(3).".

(c) STRENGTHENING FOOD LOSS AND WASTE RESEARCH AT THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.—

(1) CRITICAL AGRICULTURE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION.—In awarding grants under the critical agriculture research and extension crosscutting program area priority established by the Secretary under subsection (b) of the Competitive, Special, and Facilities Research Grant Act (7 U.S.C. 3157(b)),

the Secretary shall give priority to grants to address food loss and food waste.

(2) INTER-DISCIPLINARY ENGAGEMENT IN ANIMAL SYSTEMS.—In awarding grants under the interdisciplinary engagement in animal systems cross-cutting program area priority established by the Secretary under subsection (b) of the Competitive, Special, and Facilities Research Grant Act (7 U.S.C. 3157(b)), the Secretary shall give priority to grants to address food loss and food waste.

(3) ANIMAL NUTRITION, GROWTH, AND LACTATION.—In awarding grants under the animal nutrition, growth, and lactation emphasis area program established by the Secretary under subsection (b) of the Competitive, Special, and Facilities Research Grant Act (7 U.S.C. 3157(b)), the Secretary shall give priority to grants—

(A) to reduce losses due to production inefficiencies, including on-farm milk loss; and

(B) to use wholesome uneaten food and food processing byproducts from the human food system as feed ingredients.

SEC. 6. COMPOSTING AND FOOD WASTE REDUCTION PROGRAM.

Section 222(d)(2) of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6923(d)(2)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''local or municipal governments'' and inserting ''State, local, municipal, or Tribal governments'';

(2) in subparagraph (C), by adding at the end the following:

''(iv) GUIDANCE.—The Secretary shall publish guidance for applying for pilot projects under this paragraph for applicants that lack resources to obtain technical assistance in preparing an application to assist those applicants in preparing an application, particularly to carry out a pilot project for the reduction of food loss and food waste (as those terms are defined in section 2 of the New Opportunities for Technological Innovation, Mitigation, and Education To Overcome Waste Act) through means other than composting.

''(v) PERIOD FOR SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS.—The Secretary shall accept submissions of applications for pilot

projects under this paragraph for a duration sufficient to ensure that smaller and rural communities are able to submit applications, as determined by the Secretary.''; and

(3) in subparagraph (D), by inserting ''(which may include private funding or other sources of revenue, as determined by the Secretary)'' after ''funds provided through the grant''.

SEC. 7. PROMOTING THE FORMATION OF PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS ON FOOD LOSS AND WASTE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, acting through the Office of Food Loss and Waste established under section 3, in collaboration with the Administrator, shall establish a program to award grants to eligible governments described in subsection (b) to incentivize the establishment of public-private partnerships that commit to reducing food loss and food waste in accordance with the goal of the Secretary and the Administrator to reduce food loss and food waste by 50 percent by 2030.

(b) ELIGIBLE GOVERNMENTS.—A entity eligible to receive a grant under subsection (a) is a State, municipal, local, or Tribal government.

(c) PARTNERSHIPS.—An eligible government described in subsection (b) that receives a grant under sub-

section (a) shall use the grant to establish a partnership with the following entities:

(1) 1 or more nonprofit organizations.

(2) 1 or more private entities from any of the following sectors:

(A) Grocery and specialty food.

(B) Hospitality.

(C) Restaurants.

(D) Supercenters.

(E) Hospitals.

(F) Nursing homes.

(G) Adult care facilities.

(H) Any other sector that the Secretary determines to be appropriate.

(d) REQUIREMENTS.—A partnership established under subsection (c) shall—

(1) commit to reducing food loss and food waste in accordance with the goal described in subsection (a);

(2) provide—

(A) a framework for cooperative action relating to food loss and food waste;

(B) a forum for leadership and the sharing of information on best practices relating to food loss and food waste; and

(C) a list of the highest priorities on issues relating to food loss and food waste;

(3) establish a methodology for measurement of reductions in food loss and food waste, with the support of a technical team of individuals from 1 or more organizations in the partnership;

(4) collect data and prepare reports for the purposes of—

(A) establishing a baseline of food loss and food waste appropriate for the scope of the collaboration for which the grant was awarded;

(B) monitoring progress in reducing food loss and food waste;

(C) identifying particular areas relating to food loss and food waste that need attention; and

(D) highlighting successes in reducing food loss and food waste that can be replicated;

(5) establish 1 or more working groups to facilitate dialogue and dissemination of insights and best practices relating to food loss and food waste; and

(6) make publicly available an annual report describing the activities of the partnership.

(e) MATCHING REQUIREMENT.—An eligible government described in subsection (b) that receives a grant

under subsection (a) shall provide funds, in-kind contributions, or a combination of both from sources other than funds provided through the grant in an amount equal to not less than 50 percent of the amount of the grant, which may include private funding or other sources of revenue, as determined by the Secretary.

(f) COORDINATION.—A partnership established under subsection (c) shall coordinate with regional coordinators established under section 4(a), as the partnership determines to be appropriate.

(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $2,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2026 through 2030.

SEC. 8. FOOD LOSS AND WASTE EDUCATION AND AWARENESS CAMPAIGN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in consultation with the Administrator, shall initiate a national food waste education and public awareness campaign (referred to in this section as the ''campaign'') through—

(1) the Liaison; and

(2) the Office of Food Loss and Waste established under section 3.

(b) REQUIREMENTS.—The campaign shall, at a minimum—

(1) illustrate how much food goes to waste in the United States and households across the United States;

(2) highlight methods for preserving and storing foods;

(3) provide consumers tips to identify whether food is still safe and edible, regardless of any ''BEST If Used By'' or the ''USE By'' date on the label or food packaging indicating quality and freshness;

(4) teach consumers the differences between food freshness and food safety;

(5) teach consumers how to compost food scraps;

(6) develop educational materials usable by several different channels, including for specific industry sectors (including retail, food service, and consumer packaged goods), local governments, schools, community and faith-based organizations, and other appropriate channels;

(7) educate consumers on food products made with food waste, including upcycled food products, or that use innovative technology to prevent food loss and food waste;

(8) include interactive elements; and

(9) inform about intersectional issues of food loss and food waste, including public health, food insecurity, and climate change.

(c) PRIORITIES.—In carrying out the campaign, the Secretary shall prioritize—

(1) initial research to determine a means to segment populations to target;

(2) identify, using the means determined under paragraph (1), population segments to target;

(3) understanding how to best target those identified population segments; and

(4) determining which strategies are most effective in changing consumer behaviors.

(d) DUAL FRAMEWORK CAMPAIGN.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall carry out the campaign through—

(A) community engagement, which allows information to be delivered through locally trusted sources, with locally tailored solutions and partners (such as for donation or compost options); and

(B) national messaging appropriate for raising awareness of—

(i) nationally applicable issues (such as the meaning of ''best by'' date labels,

tips for meal planning, or businesses that manufacture products using ingredients that would otherwise go to waste, including upcycled food products); and

(ii) such other issues as the Secretary determines to be appropriate.

(2) PILOT PROJECTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall—

(i) for the purpose of testing methods and materials for carrying out the campaign through community engagement under paragraph (1)(A), carry out pilot projects in communities selected by the Secretary; and

(ii) assess the results of those pilot projects, including through waste audits or other quantitative measurements.

(B) REQUIREMENTS.—In carrying out pilot projects under subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall—

(i) ensure equity and diversity of representation;

(ii) incorporate elements of behavioral science to inform which aspects of the campaign will be effective; and

(iii) in coordination with State, local, or municipal governments, inform consumers in a community of solutions, food products, or initiatives that are available to help prevent or reduce food waste.

(e) WASTE AUDITS.—The Secretary shall conduct audits to gather data relating to the impact of the campaign in communities targeted by the campaign for the purpose of informing future efforts under the campaign, including by comparing outcomes in communities targeted by the campaign to outcomes in communities not targeted by the campaign.

(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $2,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2026 through 2030.