

Chairman Hal Rogers
House Committee on Appropriations
FY 2014 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
Appropriations Bill
Full Committee Mark Up
June 13, 2013
Opening Statement As Prepared

Welcome back. Thank you again for all your hard work yesterday on the Defense bill – three down, nine to go. I'm sure you will all put the same care and attentiveness into today's work as well.

We're here today to consider the Fiscal Year 2014 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill.

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I want to thank you both for your joint efforts in crafting this bill. I know you may not always see eye-to-eye, but the end result of your work is a good bill that adequately funds critical agricultural and economic programs. I know your entire Subcommittee is committed to strong oversight and careful shepherding of tax dollars, and I thank you all for that dedication.

As Chairman Aderholt said, this bill provides \$19.5 billion in discretionary funding. This is a cut of just over \$1 billion from last year's enacted level, and just over half a billion from the President's request. This funding is consistent with the current level caused by the automatic sequestration cuts.

This bill is certainly an important one, so I'm glad we are able to consider it today. We may not always realize it, but we rely on American farmers and ranchers heavily each day – every time we open the refrigerator, or go to the grocery store, or make a home-cooked meal for our families, we are reaping the fruits of their labor.

From keeping our food and drug supply the safest in the world, to supporting our farmers and ranchers who create millions of American jobs, to helping our most vulnerable families put meals on the table, the funding in this bill is critical to our nation's economy.

This legislation advances our nation's agriculture production, promotion, and research – including animal and plant health, research on crop diseases and water quality, and meaningful conservation measures. Mandatory food inspection activities that protect the health of Americans are maintained. The bill also encourages the economic growth and vitality of our rural communities, balancing the playing field in local, rural housing markets and bolstering rural infrastructure and business.

This bill provides ample funding for the FDA's efforts to ensure a safe and secure drug and medical device supply. The prescription drug epidemic is a scourge on our nation, and this bill

provides the resources the FDA needs to fight back, like establishing standards for abuse-deterrent drugs.

But, as we have done and will do with each and every bill this year, we made some serious cuts to the programs in this bill to reduce spending, eliminate waste, and lower our debt. Within this bill, lower-priority programs or programs that can withstand certain reductions have been trimmed so that we could maintain other programs of greater national importance.

While this Committee has done all it can to ensure the responsible, reduced use of discretionary tax dollars, we are unable to control the required level of mandatory spending included in this bill – which makes up 86 percent of the total funding. This is simply unsustainable in the long term.

What we *have* done is worked to ensure those mandatory dollars are being spent carefully, with the taxpayer in mind.

So we've included strong oversight and monitoring requirements to ensure the proper use of these funds – such as rules to help rein in food costs, a ban on fraudulent vendors, and a prohibition on ads with foreign governments.

This bill is a good bill that balances fiscal restraint with the necessity to provide a safe and sustainable food and drug supply, and to support our neediest families with access to nutrition programs. I urge the Committee to pass this bill today. Thank you.

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