

**Statement Of Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.),  
On The Fiscal Year 2022 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration  
and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill  
Wednesday, August 4, 2021**

The Agriculture bill that we consider today continues Congress's strong investments in dairy farms, organic and diversified producers, and the maple sugar sector, all of which are foundational to Vermont's rural economy. The bill increases funding for innovation and diversification in the dairy sector, which will directly impact the viability of Vermont's small-scale dairy farms. It also increases funding for organic programs, including the highest funding level in history for the National Organic Program, to continue its critical stewardship of the organic label and the farming practices that form the base of its consumer trust. Most importantly, the Committee recognizes the urgent threat that climate change poses to farm families and rural communities and makes critical investments in climate resilience, adaptation, and mitigation throughout this bill.

I want to especially note a new initiative included in this year's Agriculture bill, which also happens to support many of the federal government's rural development efforts. New this year is an opportunity to advance the kinds of partnerships that in rural states like Vermont make all the difference when a crisis strikes – like a hurricane or blizzard – or when unexpected challenges befall the community – as in the face of a global pandemic. Investments through rural development in forming and cementing those partnerships will have a real and lasting impact in rural communities.

I thank Senator Baldwin, the Subcommittee chair, and Senator Hoeven, the Ranking Republican, for their steadfast work on this critically important bill, and their staffs for their hard work in negotiating this legislation.

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