

**AMENDMENT TO H.R. 2, AS REPORTED  
OFFERED BY MR. FASO OF NEW YORK**

At the end of subtitle D of title II, add the following:

**1 SEC. 2407. SOIL AND WATER RESOURCES CONSERVATION.**

2 The Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of  
3 1977 (16 U.S.C. 2001 et seq.) is amended—

4 (1) in section 5(e), by striking “and December  
5 31, 2015” and inserting “December 31, 2015, and  
6 December 31, 2022”;

7 (2) in section 6(d), by striking “, respectively”  
8 and inserting “, and a program update shall be com-  
9 pleted by December 31, 2023”;

10 (3) in section 7—

11 (A) in subsection (a), by striking “and  
12 2016” and inserting “, 2016, and 2022”; and

13 (B) in subsection (b), in the matter pre-  
14 ceding paragraph (1), by striking “and 2017”  
15 and inserting “, 2017, and 2023”;

16 (4) in section 10, by striking “2018” and in-  
17 serting “2023”;

18 (5) by redesignating sections 8 through 10 as  
19 sections 9 though 11, respectively; and

1 (6) by inserting after section 7 the following:

2 **“SEC. 8. CONSERVATION PROGRAMS ASSESSMENT.**

3 “(a) IN GENERAL.—In coordination with the ap-  
4 praisal of soil, water, and related resources and with the  
5 national soil and water conservation program established  
6 under this Act, the Secretary may carry out a conservation  
7 effects assessment project to quantify the environmental  
8 and economic effects of conservation practices, develop the  
9 science base for managing the agricultural landscape for  
10 environmental quality and sustainable productive capacity,  
11 and improve the efficacy of conservation practices and pro-  
12 grams by evaluating conservation effects.

13 “(b) SCOPE.—The project under this subsection may  
14 be carried out at national, regional, and watershed scales,  
15 and may include cropland, grazing lands, wetlands, for-  
16 ests, and such other lands as the Secretary may determine  
17 appropriate.

18 “(c) ACTIVITIES.—The project under this subsection  
19 may include research, literature reviews and bibliog-  
20 raphies, modeling, assessment, monitoring and data collec-  
21 tion, outreach, extension education, and such other activi-  
22 ties as the Secretary may determine appropriate.

1 **“SEC. 9. GOALS AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS FOR CON-**  
2 **SERVATION PROGRAMS.**

3 “(a) NATURAL RESOURCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL  
4 OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES.—

5 “(1) IN GENERAL.—In coordination with the  
6 appraisal of soil, water, and related resources, the  
7 soil and water conservation program, and the con-  
8 servation effects assessment project established by  
9 this Act, the Secretary shall identify, and periodi-  
10 cally revise, specific natural resource and environ-  
11 mental objectives and anticipated conservation out-  
12 comes and results, by resource concern, for the con-  
13 servation programs established under subtitles D  
14 and H of title XII of the Food Security Act of 1985  
15 and the landscape conservation initiatives developed  
16 by the Secretary.

17 “(2) ASSESSMENTS.—To help measure out-  
18 comes and results, the Secretary shall, to the max-  
19 imum extent practicable, make assessments of  
20 changes in the status and conditions of natural re-  
21 sources and the environment that result from the  
22 application of conservation activities supported di-  
23 rectly by such conservation programs and initiatives.

24 “(3) MONITORING AND PROGRAM EVALUA-  
25 TION.—The Secretary shall establish a coordinated  
26 monitoring and evaluation process for programs and

1 initiatives to assess progress toward the identified  
2 objectives, to gather information to improve program  
3 and initiative implementation in accordance with de-  
4 sired program and initiative outcomes and results,  
5 and to assess the need for modifications to program  
6 or initiative rules or statutes.

7 “(b) MONITORING AND PROGRAM EVALUATION.—

8 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall estab-  
9 lish a comprehensive monitoring and program eval-  
10 uation process to assess progress in reaching natural  
11 resource and environmental objectives identified in  
12 accordance with subsection (a) and the contribution  
13 of individual programs and initiatives, as well as the  
14 programs and initiatives collectively, to that  
15 progress.

16 “(2) IMPLEMENTATION.—In implementing the  
17 monitoring and program evaluation process under  
18 paragraph (1), the Secretary may consider and in-  
19 corporate resource concern inventories, quality cri-  
20 teria, conservation practices and enhancements, and  
21 such other information as the Secretary determines  
22 relevant for applying the monitoring and program  
23 evaluation process across each of the major land  
24 uses identified by the Secretary.

1           “(3) MONITORING AND EVALUATION PROC-  
2           ESS.—

3           “(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than two  
4           years after the date of enactment of this sec-  
5           tion, the Secretary shall issue a design for the  
6           comprehensive monitoring and evaluation proc-  
7           ess, a schedule for implementing the process,  
8           and a plan for coordinating the process with the  
9           national soil and water conservation program  
10          and conservation effects assessment project es-  
11          tablished under this Act.

12          “(B) METHODOLOGY.—The design for the  
13          monitoring and evaluation process shall—

14                 “(i) include detailed information con-  
15                 cerning the requisite frequency of the mon-  
16                 itoring process at the field, water body,  
17                 habitat, or other level and the manner in  
18                 which the data will be aggregated at the  
19                 landscape or watershed level, county or  
20                 local level, State level, national level, and  
21                 any other level the Secretary determines  
22                 necessary; and

23                 “(ii) take into account the cumulative  
24                 nature of conservation over time, the inter-  
25                 actions and sequencing effects between

1 conservation activities, the differing times  
2 for conservation effects to be realized, and  
3 other related measurement challenges.

4 “(C) PUBLIC RESEARCH.—Notwith-  
5 standing any other provision of law, in order to  
6 facilitate implementation of the monitoring and  
7 evaluation process, the Secretary shall make  
8 available conservation activity and program  
9 data to cooperators and researchers engaged in  
10 public research and evaluation activities to im-  
11 prove conservation outcomes under this sub-  
12 section, provided that—

13 “(i) adequate assurances are provided  
14 to the Secretary that any resulting re-  
15 search or information will be made publicly  
16 available and in a form that protects per-  
17 sonally identifiable information; and

18 “(ii) the National Technical Com-  
19 mittee finds that any such research is like-  
20 ly to generate information that furthers  
21 the purpose of this section.

22 “(4) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—The Sec-  
23 retary may implement the monitoring evaluation  
24 process in part through cooperative or contribution  
25 agreements with Federal, State, and local agencies,

1 universities and colleges, nongovernmental organiza-  
2 tions with requisite expertise, as determined by the  
3 Secretary in consultation with the National Tech-  
4 nical Committee.

5 “(5) NATIONAL TECHNICAL COMMITTEE.—

6 “(A) COMPOSITION.—The monitoring and  
7 evaluation process shall be administered by the  
8 Natural Resources Conservation Service with  
9 assistance from a national technical committee  
10 appointed by the Secretary and composed of in-  
11 dividuals with relevant technical and scientific  
12 expertise representing—

13 “(i) the Agricultural Research Service  
14 of the Department of Agriculture;

15 “(ii) the Economic Research Service  
16 of the Department of Agriculture;

17 “(iii) the Farm Service Agency of the  
18 Department of Agriculture;

19 “(iv) the Forest Service;

20 “(v) the National Institute for Food  
21 and Agriculture;

22 “(vi) the United States Geological  
23 Survey;

24 “(vii) State and tribal agencies;

1                   “(viii) land grant university natural  
2                   resource research programs;

3                   “(ix) nongovernmental organizations  
4                   with expertise in the full array of conserva-  
5                   tion issues and measurement and evalua-  
6                   tion of conservation outcomes; and

7                   “(x) such other agencies, institutions,  
8                   or organizations as the Secretary may de-  
9                   termine appropriate.

10                  “(B) FACA EXEMPTION.—The national  
11                  technical committee shall be exempt from the  
12                  Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C.  
13                  App.).

14                  “(C) TRANSPARENCY.—The Secretary  
15                  shall ensure the proceedings and recommenda-  
16                  tions of the national technical committee are  
17                  available to the public.

18                  “(6) VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION.—In carrying  
19                  out this subsection, the Secretary shall ensure that  
20                  any on-farm monitoring activities that may be in-  
21                  cluded as part of the monitoring and program eval-  
22                  uation process are voluntary on the part of the pro-  
23                  ducer, and may include appropriate compensation,  
24                  as determined by the Secretary.

1           “(7) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

2           There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out  
3           this subsection, for each fiscal year, the amount that  
4           is equal to one percent of the total annual funding  
5           from the funds of the Commodity Credit Corpora-  
6           tion made available in the preceding fiscal year for  
7           the conservation programs established under sub-  
8           titles D and H of title XII of the Food Security Act  
9           of 1985, excluding the conservation reserve program.

10          “(c) REPORTING.—

11           “(1) REPORT ON OBJECTIVES AND METHODS.—

12           Beginning in the fiscal year that is 3 years after the  
13           date of enactment of this subsection, and periodi-  
14           cally thereafter, as determined by the Secretary, the  
15           Secretary shall submit to Congress, and make pub-  
16           licly available, a report that includes—

17                   “(A) a description of conservation outcome  
18                   objectives that are, to the maximum extent  
19                   practicable, quantitative, measurable, and time-  
20                   bound for each program established under sub-  
21                   title D or H of the Food Security Act of 1985  
22                   and the landscape conservation initiatives devel-  
23                   oped by the Secretary;

24                   “(B) a description of the approaches, tools,  
25                   and methods used to measure or model the con-

1           servation outcomes and results and to estimate  
2           the cost-effectiveness of each such program; and

3           “(C) guidance to the conservation project  
4           partners working to implement conservation  
5           programs within a landscape-level project that  
6           provides a description of the approaches, tools,  
7           and methods the partners might consider using  
8           to measure and model the conservation out-  
9           comes and results of their projects.

10          “(2) REPORT ON OUTCOMES.—In conjunction  
11          with each of the reports to Congress pursuant to  
12          section 7, the Secretary shall submit to Congress,  
13          and make publicly available, a report that includes—

14                 “(A) an assessment of progress made to-  
15                 wards achieving conservation program objec-  
16                 tives and anticipated outcomes and results for  
17                 each conservation program established under  
18                 subtitle D or H of title XII of the Food Secu-  
19                 rity Act of 1985, as well as for such programs  
20                 collectively, and the landscape conservation ini-  
21                 tiatives developed by the Secretary;

22                 “(B) an evaluation of the cost-effectiveness  
23                 of each such conservation program and initia-  
24                 tive; and

1           “(C) recommendations, in light of the as-  
2           sessment and evaluation, to improve program  
3           implementation and improve the scientific and  
4           economic tools (including any new or revised  
5           conservation practices, conservation enhance-  
6           ments, or conservation planning tools) used to  
7           achieve stated natural resource conservation  
8           and environmental objectives.

9           “(3) COORDINATION.—The Secretary may co-  
10          ordinate the reports required under paragraphs (1)  
11          and (2) with any reports developed as part of the  
12          conservation effects assessment project authorized  
13          by section 8, whenever such coordination is feasible  
14          and warranted, as determined by the Secretary.”.

