

AMENDMENT TO RULES COMMITTEE PRINT
119-22
OFFERED BY MR. PANETTA OF CALIFORNIA

At the end of subtitle B of title X, add the following:

1 **SEC. ____ . OPPORTUNITIES IN ORGANIC PROGRAM.**

2 Section 10606 of the Farm Security and Rural In-
3 vestment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 6523) is amended—

4 (1) in the section heading, by striking “**NA-**
5 **TIONAL ORGANIC CERTIFICATION COST-**
6 **SHARE**” and inserting “**OPPORTUNITIES IN OR-**
7 **GANIC**”;

8 (2) by striking subsection (b);

9 (3) by redesignating subsections (c) and (d) as
10 subsections (e) and (f), respectively;

11 (4) in subsection (a), by striking the subsection
12 designation and heading and all that follows through
13 “Secretary of Agriculture” and inserting the fol-
14 lowing:

15 “(b) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary”;

16 (5) by inserting before subsection (b) (as so re-
17 designated) the following:

18 “(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

1 “(1) CERTIFIED ORGANIC FARM; CERTIFIED
2 ORGANIC HANDLING OPERATION.—The terms ‘cer-
3 tified organic farm’ and ‘certified organic handling
4 operation’ have the meanings given those terms in
5 section 2103 of the Organic Foods Production Act
6 of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 6502).

7 “(2) ELIGIBLE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION.—
8 The term ‘eligible nonprofit organization’ means a
9 nonprofit organization (as defined in section 1619(b)
10 of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade
11 Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 5801(b))) that primarily
12 serves at least 1 of the following:

13 “(A) Socially disadvantaged farmers and
14 ranchers.

15 “(B) Organic producers and handlers.

16 “(C) 1 or more vulnerable agricultural re-
17 gions, such as farms near schools, childcare
18 providers, residential areas, or sensitive eco-
19 systems.

20 “(D) 1 or more under-resourced agricul-
21 tural regions.

22 “(E) Smaller nonprofit organizations (as
23 so defined) that primarily serve the entities or
24 regions described in subparagraph (A), (B),
25 (C), or (D).

1 “(3) NATIONAL ORGANIC PRODUCTION PRO-
2 GRAM.—The term ‘national organic production pro-
3 gram’ means the national organic production pro-
4 gram established under the Organic Foods Produc-
5 tion Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 6501 et seq.).

6 “(4) ORGANIC.—The term ‘organic’ has the
7 meaning given the term in section 205.2 of title 7,
8 Code of Federal Regulations (or a successor regula-
9 tion).

10 “(5) PROGRAM.—The term ‘program’ means
11 the Opportunities in Organic program established
12 under subsection (b).

13 “(6) SECRETARY.—The term ‘Secretary’ means
14 the Secretary of Agriculture.

15 “(7) SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED FARMER OR
16 RANCHER; SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED GROUP.—The
17 terms ‘socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher’ and
18 ‘socially disadvantaged group’ have the meanings
19 given those terms in section 2501(a) of the Food,
20 Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7
21 U.S.C. 2279(a)).

22 “(8) TRANSITION TO ORGANIC.—The term
23 ‘transition to organic’ means the steps required to
24 become a certified organic farm.”;

25 (6) in subsection (b) (as so redesignated)—

1 (A) by striking “a national organic certifi-
2 cation cost-share program to assist” and insert-
3 ing the following: “a program, to be known as
4 the ‘Opportunities in Organic program’—
5 “(1) to assist”;

6 (B) in paragraph (1) (as so designated), by
7 striking “program established” and all that fol-
8 lows through the period at the end and insert-
9 ing “program; and”; and

10 (C) by adding at the end the following:

11 “(2) to provide support and technical assistance
12 for transition to organic and organic management.”;

13 (7) by inserting after subsection (b) (as so re-
14 designated) the following:

15 “(c) FEDERAL ORGANIC CERTIFICATION COST-
16 SHARE.—

17 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraphs (2)
18 and (3), the Secretary shall pay under this sub-
19 section the costs incurred by a producer or handler
20 in obtaining certification under the national organic
21 production program, as certified to and approved by
22 the Secretary.

23 “(2) MAXIMUM AMOUNT.—Except as provided
24 in paragraph (3), the maximum amount of a pay-

1 ment made to a producer or handler under this sub-
2 section shall be \$1,500.

3 “(3) ENSURING AFFORDABILITY.—Notwith-
4 standing paragraph (2), the Secretary may make
5 payments that exceed the maximum amount under
6 that paragraph to ensure that organic certification
7 costs are not a barrier to organic production, includ-
8 ing payment to a producer or handler who is—

9 “(A) located in a region with dispropor-
10 tionately high certification costs, as determined
11 by the Secretary; or

12 “(B) a member of a socially disadvantaged
13 group.

14 “(d) SUPPORT FOR TRANSITION TO ORGANIC AND
15 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—

16 “(1) TRANSITION AND RESILIENCE FUNDING.—

17 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall
18 award funding to eligible nonprofit organiza-
19 tions—

20 “(i) to build capacity to support tran-
21 sition to organic in accordance with sub-
22 paragraph (B); and

23 “(ii) to support transition to organic
24 in accordance with subparagraphs (C) and
25 (D).

1 “(B) ACTIVITIES TO BUILD CAPACITY.—

2 An eligible nonprofit organization that is
3 awarded funding under this subparagraph may
4 use the funding for staffing, materials, activi-
5 ties, and partnerships (including partnerships
6 with eligible nonprofit organizations described
7 in subsection (a)(2)(E)) that support transition
8 to organic and resilience of certified organic
9 farms, including—

10 “(i) the recruitment of producers to
11 begin transition to organic;

12 “(ii) translation and communication
13 support, including development of mate-
14 rials to increase understanding of the prac-
15 tices and processes required to become cer-
16 tified as organic;

17 “(iii) assistance with applications,
18 compliance, recordkeeping, and other as-
19 pects of the organic certification process
20 and the transition to organic;

21 “(iv) financial, business, natural re-
22 source conservation, and farm planning;

23 “(v) support for fair contracting;

24 “(vi) technical assistance with organic
25 management practices, such as soil health,

1 nutrient management, pest management,
2 and other practices, as determined appro-
3 priate by the Secretary;

4 “(vii) by providing training on organic
5 certification requirements and organic
6 management to agricultural advisors and
7 consultants, including agronomists, crop
8 advisors, pest control advisors, extension
9 agents, farm consultants, and other tech-
10 nical service providers, and agricultural in-
11 dustry entities, such as seed dealers, equip-
12 ment suppliers, and input suppliers;

13 “(viii) by facilitating paid mentor-
14 mentee relationships between organic pro-
15 ducers and producers in transition to or-
16 ganic, including stipends for all partici-
17 pants and training to support effective
18 mentorship;

19 “(ix) by assisting producers with ac-
20 cessing resources and funding for pro-
21 grams associated with organic manage-
22 ment, including conservation programs,
23 risk management tools, and organic sup-
24 port and research programs;

1 “(x) by establishing or expanding co-
2 operatives, organic grower groups, certified
3 organic processing, storage, refrigeration,
4 freezer, and distribution facilities and
5 equipment, food hubs, food security pro-
6 grams, additional programs under the In-
7 digenous Food Sovereignty Initiative of the
8 Department of Agriculture, organic-compli-
9 ant composting services, and other regional
10 foodshed and supply chain infrastructure,
11 such as infrastructure for granaries and
12 meat processing;

13 “(xi) on-farm research, including
14 monitoring biodiversity, monitoring air and
15 water quality, measuring changes in soil
16 organic carbon and indicators of soil
17 health, developing regionally adapted seeds
18 and breeds, and carrying out trials and
19 documenting the effectiveness of holistic
20 approaches to pest, weed, and disease con-
21 trol;

22 “(xii) recruiting and training organic
23 certification staff and inspectors, with an
24 emphasis on expanding opportunities for
25 socially disadvantaged farmers and ranch-

1 ers and increasing diversity in the certifi-
2 cation process;

3 “(xiii) increasing access to land for
4 socially disadvantaged farmers and ranch-
5 ers and small and mid-sized farms and
6 ranches and promoting long-term organic
7 management (such as purchasing land for
8 incubator projects, promoting and sup-
9 porting lease-to-own contracts, resolving
10 heirs property issues, and establishing
11 easements that facilitate long-term organic
12 stewardship);

13 “(xiv) supporting tenant farmers, in-
14 cluding through leasing options that serve
15 tenants and landlords long term;

16 “(xv) hosting or supporting regional
17 conventions, conferences, farmer-led train-
18 ing sessions and programs, field days,
19 teach-ins, and other educational opportuni-
20 ties focused on organic production; and

21 “(xvi) establishing infrastructure for
22 interfarmer skill sharing and exchanges,
23 including virtual forums.

24 “(C) PRODUCER TRANSITION AND RESIL-
25 IENCE FUNDING.—

1 “(i) IN GENERAL.—An eligible non-
2 profit organization that is awarded funding
3 under this subparagraph may use the
4 funding to provide transition and resilience
5 funding to existing organic operations, so-
6 cially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers,
7 or small or mid-sized farms or ranches.

8 “(ii) TERM.—

9 “(I) IN GENERAL.—Funding pro-
10 vided under this subparagraph shall
11 be for a term of 4 years.

12 “(II) 1-TIME FUNDING.—The
13 Secretary may not renew funding pro-
14 vided to a recipient under this sub-
15 paragraph.

16 “(iii) USE OF FUNDS.—Funding
17 awarded under clause (i) may be used to
18 offset the costs of and reduce barriers to
19 becoming or expanding a certified organic
20 farm, including—

21 “(I) creating or expanding an or-
22 ganic system plan (as defined in sec-
23 tion 205.2 of title 7, Code of Federal
24 Regulations (as in effect on the date

1 of enactment of the Opportunities in
2 Organic Act)), including—

3 “(aa) completing organic
4 certification documents, planning,
5 and recordkeeping; and

6 “(bb) developing a conserva-
7 tion plan to address all natural
8 resources, including soil health;

9 “(II) adopting, improving, or ex-
10 panding organic management, includ-
11 ing—

12 “(aa) eliminating the use of
13 synthetic pesticides, synthetic fer-
14 tilizers, or antibiotics;

15 “(bb) the implementation of
16 cover cropping, crop rotation, or
17 rotational grazing;

18 “(cc) the production and use
19 of compost and manure (includ-
20 ing purchasing tools, supplies, or
21 storage);

22 “(dd) sourcing or producing
23 organic seed and feed;

1 “(ee) hedgerow and eco-
2 system enhancement planting
3 and design;

4 “(ff) purchasing supplies for
5 intercropping and polycropping
6 or other specialized equipment
7 for use in organic management;
8 and

9 “(gg) supporting beneficial
10 predators, pollinator habitats,
11 erosion prevention, or watershed
12 restoration;

13 “(III) paying for costs associated
14 with processing, storage, and distribu-
15 tion equipment and facilities;

16 “(IV) carrying out on-farm re-
17 search to monitor and document the
18 impacts of transition to organic, in-
19 cluding in partnership with an institu-
20 tion of higher education or another
21 entity;

22 “(V) soil testing;

23 “(VI) debt relief to improve ac-
24 cess to capital and financial stability;

1 “(VII) forming a cooperative or
2 farmer-to-farmer network;

3 “(VIII) providing training to be-
4 come an organic inspector to expand
5 revenue and regional inspection capac-
6 ity;

7 “(IX) overcoming barriers to
8 land access, including payments to se-
9 cure longer leases and costs associated
10 with accessing land that has not been
11 treated with materials prohibited for
12 use on a certified organic farm or
13 transitioning land to organic manage-
14 ment;

15 “(X) paying for labor costs, in-
16 cluding costs associated with improve-
17 ments to workplace safety, compensa-
18 tion, professional development, and
19 staff training on transition to organic
20 implementation;

21 “(XI) improving food safety
22 practices and obtaining related certifi-
23 cations;

1 “(XII) providing or participating
2 in organic agriculture educational op-
3 portunities;

4 “(XIII) providing compensation
5 for foregone income during transition
6 to organic due to short-term changes
7 in yield and limited market options;

8 “(XIV) construction or improve-
9 ment of housing for apprentices,
10 trainees, or volunteers or other on-
11 farm infrastructure; and

12 “(XV) financial, business, and
13 farm planning.

14 “(iv) ORGANIC SYSTEM PLAN.—As a
15 condition of receiving funding under this
16 subparagraph to carry out any of the ac-
17 tivities described in subclauses (II) through
18 (XV) of clause (iii), an organic operation,
19 socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher,
20 or small or mid-sized farm or ranch shall
21 be required to develop an organic system
22 plan described in subclause (I) of that
23 clause.

24 “(D) ORGANIC SUPPLY CHAIN FUNDING.—

1 “(i) IN GENERAL.—An eligible non-
2 profit organization that is awarded funding
3 under this subparagraph may use the
4 funding to support organic supply chain
5 development, including by providing the
6 funding to other entities to support organic
7 supply chain development.

8 “(ii) USE OF FUNDS.—Funding
9 awarded under clause (i)—

10 “(I) may be used to strengthen
11 organic capacity or expand access to
12 certified organic handling operations,
13 including—

14 “(aa) constructing, expand-
15 ing, or improving access to a cer-
16 tified organic handling operation;

17 “(bb) purchasing farm
18 equipment, value added supplies,
19 and other materials that improve
20 market access; and

21 “(cc) pursuing organic cer-
22 tification for an existing handling
23 operation; and

24 “(II) shall be used to strengthen
25 opportunities in organic capacity for

1 socially disadvantaged farmers or
2 ranchers, small or mid-sized farms or
3 ranches, vulnerable agricultural re-
4 gions (such as farms near schools,
5 childcare providers, residential areas,
6 and sensitive ecosystems), or under-
7 resourced agricultural regions.

8 “(E) COMMUNICATIONS; MEETINGS.—An
9 eligible nonprofit organization that receives
10 funding under subparagraph (B), (C), or (D)
11 shall—

12 “(i) communicate not less frequently
13 than once per quarter with each other enti-
14 ty awarded funding pursuant to those sub-
15 paragraphs—

16 “(I) to monitor progress with re-
17 spect to transition to organic and or-
18 ganic supply chain development;

19 “(II) to address improvements
20 and impacts of the transition to or-
21 ganic, including observed changes in
22 biodiversity, soil health, pests, weeds,
23 and disease occurrence, crop yield,
24 and resilience;

1 “(III) to address challenges asso-
2 ciated with transition to organic;

3 “(IV) to consider market oppor-
4 tunities and the adoption of additional
5 practices; and

6 “(V) to explore opportunities for
7 coordinated farm team meetings with
8 staff from relevant agencies and orga-
9 nizations to streamline agricultural
10 assistance and improve farm viability
11 while increasing adoption of on-farm
12 conservation practices; and

13 “(ii) meet not less frequently than an-
14 nually for each year for which funding is
15 provided with staff of the Department of
16 Agriculture (as determined by the Sec-
17 retary) to discuss program participation
18 and impacts, demographics and scale of
19 participants, transition to organic success
20 rates, market opportunities, research re-
21 sults, and challenges identified in the tran-
22 sition to organic.

23 “(2) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—

24 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall
25 increase regional resources to support organic

1 management, including technical assistance,
2 outreach, supply chain coordination, and activi-
3 ties described in subparagraph (B), through ex-
4 panded organic-related capacity and partner-
5 ships at—

6 “(i) the Department of Agriculture,
7 including within the Agricultural Mar-
8 keting Service, the Farm Service Agency,
9 the Natural Resources Conservation Serv-
10 ice, the Risk Management Agency, the of-
11 fices under the Undersecretary of Rural
12 Development, the Food and Nutrition
13 Service, and climate hubs, with an empha-
14 sis on local and regional offices;

15 “(ii) universities and educational insti-
16 tutions, with an emphasis on institutions
17 serving socially disadvantaged farmers and
18 ranchers;

19 “(iii) the cooperative extension pro-
20 grams of the Secretary, including the Fed-
21 erally Recognized Tribes Extension Pro-
22 gram;

23 “(iv) State, regional, and Tribal de-
24 partments of agriculture; and

25 “(v) eligible nonprofit organizations.

1 “(B) AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES.—Activities
2 carried out through the entities described in
3 subparagraph (A) shall include—

4 “(i) regional education sessions on or-
5 ganic management;

6 “(ii) the development of regionally tai-
7 lored resources, technical assistance pro-
8 grams, and teaching farms for organic pro-
9 ducers and producers in transition to or-
10 ganic, including tools to promote and fa-
11 cilitate participation of socially disadvan-
12 taged farmers and ranchers and small and
13 mid-sized farms and ranches in organic
14 and complementary support programs;

15 “(iii) ongoing outreach to and needs
16 assessment of producers in transition to
17 organic to identify barriers to organic pro-
18 duction and mechanisms to address those
19 barriers;

20 “(iv) the identification of priority lo-
21 cations to promote transition to organic,
22 including near schools and childcare pro-
23 viders, residential areas, and sensitive eco-
24 systems;

1 “(v) organic supply chain and infra-
2 structure development;

3 “(vi) the expansion of organic and
4 local supply chains and market opportuni-
5 ties, including establishing channels for
6 producers to offer products to institutional
7 buyers and supporting purchases through
8 nutrition programs; and

9 “(vii) advancing food waste reduction
10 strategies that support producer income
11 and soil health, including—

12 “(I) closed-loop programs that
13 connect community composting and
14 food scrap collection operations with
15 farms; and

16 “(II) coordination to maximize
17 use of farm products, composting, and
18 waste reduction.”;

19 (8) in subsection (e) (as so redesignated)—

20 (A) by striking “including the number”
21 and inserting the following: “including—
22 “(1) the number”;

23 (B) in paragraph (1) (as so designated), by
24 striking the period at the end and inserting a
25 semicolon; and

1 (C) by adding at the end the following:

2 “(2) the demographics, acreage, and sales of
3 producer participants that received support under
4 the program, aggregated by region;

5 “(3) the number of producers and handlers
6 that—

7 “(A) received support from the program in
8 the previous fiscal year;

9 “(B) began transition to organic; and

10 “(C) achieved new organic certification;

11 “(4) any barriers to achieving organic certifi-
12 cation;

13 “(5) the transition to organic activities carried
14 out by eligible nonprofit organizations and the
15 metrics used to evaluate the success of those activi-
16 ties;

17 “(6) research findings and best practices to
18 support transition to organic;

19 “(7) changes in organic-relevant capacity at
20 public institutions of higher education and eligible
21 nonprofit organizations; and

22 “(8) changes in availability of organic-relevant
23 technical assistance.”; and

1 (9) in subsection (f)(1) (as so redesignated), by
2 striking subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C) and insert-
3 ing the following:

4 “(A) \$50,000,000 for each of fiscal years
5 2027 and 2028;

6 “(B) \$80,000,000 for fiscal year 2029; and

7 “(C) \$100,000,000 for each of fiscal years
8 2030 and 2031.”.

