

1 of 1972 (7 U.S.C. 2661–2669) is amended by adding at
2 the end the following:

3 **“SEC. 509. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR HEIRS PROP-**
4 **ERTY RESOLUTION THROUGH DIRECT PUB-**
5 **LIC INTEREST LEGAL SERVICES.**

6 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall enter into
7 cooperative agreements with eligible entities to provide
8 legal or accounting services to underserved heirs, at no
9 cost to the underserved heirs, to assist in resolving undi-
10 vided ownership interests on farmland or forest land, or
11 land transitioning to farmland or forest land, that has
12 multiple owners. Such a cooperative agreement must be
13 for any of the following purposes:

14 “(1) To assist with transitioning land to agri-
15 cultural production.

16 “(2) To maintain land in agricultural produc-
17 tion.

18 “(3) To increase access to programs adminis-
19 tered by the Secretary through the resolution of real
20 property claims in order to allow real property own-
21 ers to meet land ownership eligibility requirements
22 for participation in a program administered by the
23 Secretary.

24 “(b) ADMINISTRATION OF COOPERATIVE AGREE-
25 MENTS.—

1 “(1) DURATION.—

2 “(A) IN GENERAL.—A cooperative agree-
3 ment under subsection (a) shall be in effect for
4 not more than 4 years, subject to subparagraph
5 (B).

6 “(B) SPECIAL RULE.—The Secretary may
7 extend a cooperative agreement or re-enter into
8 a cooperative agreement with the same or a dif-
9 ferent eligible entity to provide continued serv-
10 ices for heirs if—

11 “(i) property ownership is not resolved
12 within the initial term of the original coop-
13 erative agreement; and

14 “(ii) the entity certifies that the entity
15 understands that the cooperative agree-
16 ment is not guaranteed to be funded for
17 more than 4 years after the commence-
18 ment of the original cooperative agreement.

19 “(2) MANAGEMENT OF PERFORMANCE.—

20 “(A) ANNUAL REPORTS.—An eligible enti-
21 ty must provide annual reports to the Secretary
22 summarizing the progress made during each fis-
23 cal year towards achieving the goals of the co-
24 operative agreement for the heirs for whom

1 services are provided under the cooperative
2 agreement.

3 “(B) INFORMATION AND DATA.—The Sec-
4 retary may require an eligible entity to provide
5 the Secretary with such information or data as
6 the Secretary deems necessary to determine
7 that the eligible entity is making acceptable
8 progress. The data may not include personally
9 identifiable information.

10 “(C) EFFECT OF FAILURE TO DEM-
11 ONSTRATE SUCCESS.—If an eligible entity pro-
12 viding services under such a cooperative agree-
13 ment does not demonstrate success, as deter-
14 mined by the Secretary, in resolving or reason-
15 ably attempting to resolve the property claims
16 of an heir, the Secretary may terminate the
17 agreement.

18 “(3) IMPLEMENTATION.—The Secretary may
19 utilize requests for public input or the formal rule-
20 making process to effectuate this section. At a min-
21 imum, the Secretary shall make publicly available
22 the criteria for selecting an eligible entity to enter
23 into an agreement to provide services, the adminis-
24 trative and performance requirements for coopera-

1 tive agreements under this section, as well as codify
2 within its internal policy its implementation process.

3 “(4) HEIRS PROPERTY NOT IN FARMING.—On
4 a limited basis, and when determined by the Sec-
5 retary to meet the purposes of a program adminis-
6 tered by the Secretary and to expand access to such
7 a program, the Secretary may allow an eligible enti-
8 ty to provide services at no cost to an heir who is
9 not an underserved heir if—

10 “(A) the land with respect to which the
11 services are to be provided is not farmland or
12 in agricultural production, but could be viably
13 productive for agricultural, conservation, or for-
14 estry purposes;

15 “(B) the heir satisfies all other require-
16 ments of the definition of ‘underserved heir’;

17 “(C) the heir can provide proof to substan-
18 tiate that the heir is in control of the real prop-
19 erty; and

20 “(D) the heir certifies to the Secretary
21 that the heir intends to apply for, and make a
22 good faith effort to enroll the land in, a pro-
23 gram administered by the Secretary once prop-
24 erty claims to the land are resolved through

1 services provided under a cooperative agreement
2 entered into under this section.

3 “(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

4 “(1) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term ‘eligible en-
5 tity’ means a nonprofit organization that—

6 “(A) provides legal or accounting services
7 to an underserved heir at no cost to the under-
8 served heir to resolve property ownership issues;
9 and

10 “(B) has demonstrated experience in re-
11 solving issues related to ownership and succes-
12 sion on farmland or forest land that has mul-
13 tiple owners.

14 “(2) LIMITED RESOURCE HEIR.—An heir shall
15 be considered a limited resource heir for purposes of
16 this section if—

17 “(A) the total household income of the heir
18 is at or below the national poverty level for a
19 family of 4, or less than 50 percent of the coun-
20 ty median household income for the 2 imme-
21 diately preceding calendar years, as determined
22 annually using data of the Department of Com-
23 merce; or

24 “(B) the property of the heir for which
25 legal services are provided pursuant to a coop-

1 erative agreement entered into under this sec-
2 tion is in a persistent poverty community, as
3 determined annually on the basis of data from
4 the Department of Commerce, or a socially vul-
5 nerable area, as designated by the Centers on
6 Disease Control and Prevention.

7 “(3) UNDERSERVED HEIR.—The term ‘under-
8 served heir’ means an heir with an undivided owner-
9 ship interest in farmland or forest land that has
10 multiple owners, who is—

11 “(A) a limited resource heir;

12 “(B) a member of a socially disadvantaged
13 group (as defined in section 2501(a) of the
14 Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act
15 of 1990); or

16 “(C) a veteran (as defined in section
17 101(2) of title 38, United States Code).

18 “(d) ANNUAL REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—Within 1
19 year after the date of the enactment of this section, and
20 annually thereafter, the Secretary shall prepare, make
21 public, and submit to the Committee on Agriculture of the
22 House of Representatives and the Committee on Agri-
23 culture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate a written
24 report on the activities carried out under this section in
25 the year covered by the report.

1 “(e) LIMITATIONS ON AUTHORIZATION OF APPRO-
2 PRIATIONS.—To carry out this section, there is authorized
3 to be appropriated to the Secretary \$60,000,000 for each
4 of fiscal years 2027 through 2031.”.

Page 267, beginning on line 24, strike “310I(g) of such Act, as so redesignated by subsection (b) of this section,” and insert “310I(f) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1936c(f))”.

Page 653, line 10, strike “**9014**” and insert “**9015**”.

Page 658, line 11, strike “**9015**” and insert “**9016**”.

