

105TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1522

To authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to provide assistance to rural cooperatives.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 12, 1997

Mr. HARKIN introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to provide assistance to rural cooperatives.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Rural Cooperative Act
5 of 1997”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

7 In this Act:

8 (1) **RURAL COOPERATIVE.**—The term “rural co-
9 operative” means an association of rural residents
10 (as defined by the Secretary) that—

1 (A) organize on a user-owned cooperative
2 basis for purposes of purchasing consumer
3 goods, business products and services, health
4 care, utilities, communications, child and day
5 care, housing, credit, insurance, or other goods
6 or services; or

7 (B) market handicrafts or other member-
8 or cooperative-produced goods.

9 (2) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
10 the Secretary of Agriculture.

11 **SEC. 3. RURAL COOPERATIVE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.**

12 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may carry out com-
13 prehensive programs to provide service, technical assist-
14 ance, research, and education to members of rural co-
15 operatives and persons desiring to organize rural
16 cooperatives.

17 (b) TYPES OF PROGRAMS.—The programs under
18 subsection (a) shall include programs to—

19 (1) acquire, analyze, and disseminate economic,
20 statistical, and historical information regarding the
21 progress, organization, and business methods of
22 rural cooperatives in the United States and foreign
23 countries;

24 (2) conduct and publish studies of the eco-
25 nomic, legal, financial, social, and other phases of

1 cooperation, which may include analyses of the orga-
2 nization, operation, business practices, management,
3 financial, and merchandising problems of rural co-
4 operatives;

5 (3) make surveys and analyses of the accounts
6 and business practices of representative rural co-
7 operatives, which—

8 (A) shall be reported to the cooperatives so
9 surveyed; and

10 (B) with the consent of a cooperative, shall
11 be summarized, together with similar facts, and
12 published for the guidance of rural cooperatives
13 and for the purpose of assisting rural coopera-
14 tives in developing methods of business and
15 market analysis;

16 (4) confer with and advise committees or
17 groups of rural residents that may desire to organize
18 a rural cooperative and make an economic survey
19 and analysis of the facts surrounding the activities
20 of the proposed rural cooperative;

21 (5)(A) promote the knowledge of rural coopera-
22 tive principles and practices; and

23 (B) cooperate, in promoting such knowledge,
24 with educational agencies, rural cooperatives, and
25 others; and

1 (6)(A) conduct studies in the United States and
2 foreign countries; and

3 (B) acquire and disseminate the information ac-
4 quired and any useful conclusions that may be
5 drawn from the information relating to the develop-
6 ment and practice of rural cooperation.

7 **SEC. 4. REGULATIONS.**

8 The Secretary may promulgate such regulations as
9 the Secretary considers necessary to carry out this Act.

10 **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

11 There are authorized to be appropriated such sums
12 as are necessary to carry out this Act.

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