



## THE 2023 FARM BILL IS IMPORTANT TO INDIAN COUNTRY BECAUSE IT COULD:

### BOLSTER TRIBAL FOOD ECONOMIES

The 2023 Farm Bill provides several opportunities to support Tribal food sovereignty, bolster regional food economies, promote Tribe-to-Tribe trade and incorporate traditional foods into feeding programs by:

- **Making the 638 FDPIR Pilot Program Permanent.** The eight Tribes participating in the 638 Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) pilot program authorized by the 2018 Farm Bill have demonstrated the positive impact of using this authority to create markets for Tribally produced and Native-produced foods, increase the quality and freshness of foods offered, and incorporate more culturally relevant foods into feeding programs. Making the 638 FDPIR pilot permanent will open the door for Tribes to sell their products, support Tribal producers who want to ramp up production, and improve the overall health and well-being of their community members.
- **Expanding 638 to SNAP.** With approximately 24% of all Native households receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, Tribal governments should be allowed to shape SNAP, within existing federal authority parameters, to best meet the unique needs of Indian Country.
- **Expanding 638 to FSIS Inspections.** Recognizing the shortage of USDA-certified food inspectors throughout the country, Congress should expand 638 to Food Safety and Inspection Services (FSIS) to allow Tribal governments to inspect beef, bison, chicken, fish, seafood and other products, which can then be put directly into their feeding programs.
- **Creating an Office of Self-Governance.** For over 40 years, the use of 638 contracting and compacting has proven to be the most cost effective solution allowing Tribes to make local decisions impacting their community members. Yet, these opportunities aren't available through 99.9% of United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs.
- **Allowing for the Dual Use of SNAP & FDPIR.** Currently, a statutory bar prevents individuals who qualify for both FDPIR and SNAP from using both in the same month even though individuals who qualify for both TEFAP and SNAP or WIC and SNAP, may use both. Removing this statutory prohibition would improve food access and opportunities for Tribal citizens to feed their families.

### INCREASE INDIAN COUNTRY'S ACCESS TO CREDIT

Credit access is challenging for Native producers, as most of Indian Country is considered a "credit desert." On average, Native producers carry more debt with higher interest rates than other producers. To ensure that more than 80,000 Native farmers and ranchers across Indian Country can improve their economic realities, the 2023 Farm Bill could:

- **Establish a CDFI Relending Pilot.** Authorizing Native-serving CDFIs to administer Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Rural Development (RD) programs directly and structuring loan programs to better suit producers in Indian Country.
- **Remove the Graduation Requirement for FSA programs.** Due to the general lack of credit availability on Indian reservations, it is difficult to access tenable credit rates for even experienced producers operating farms and ranches on trust lands. Removal of the statutory requirement for graduation from Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs for producers on Indian Reservations would allow agriculture operations to be more stable. The deletion of a graduation requirement would assist other producers as well who farm and ranch in areas where credit access is tenuous at best.

CONTINUED ON THE BACK

## ENHANCE TRIBAL CONSERVATION & NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Native people are the original land stewards, and our connections and knowledge are key to being able to feed our people for generations to come. The 2023 Farm Bill could increase Tribes' abilities to oversee and implement conservation practices by:

- **Incorporating TEK.** By including Tribal Traditional Ecological Knowledge that is not recognized by the USDA
- **Expanding 638 to all USDA conservation programs,** such as EQUIP, Conservation Reserve Program and other programs administered by NRCS and FSA.
- **Fixing the Good Neighbor Authority.** By enacting the Treating Tribes and Counties as Good Neighbors Act, the 2023 Farm Bill can fix an error in the 2018 Farm Bill which excluded cities and Tribes from being able to reinvest receipts and perform restoration not just on federal lands, but also on lands approved under the project's Good Neighbor Agreement.

## PROVIDE PARITY FOR TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS

By listing Tribes wherever states, cities, or municipalities are mentioned ensures that Tribes and Tribal producers can access the USDA programs that other producers already utilize.

The Farm Bill is passed every five years to determine USDA programs, funding, and eligibility, and has a large impact on Indian Country. To put in perspective, **more money comes to Indian Country through the USDA than any other federal agency** — more than even the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

## INDIAN COUNTRY

FEDERAL FUNDING BY TOP SEVEN AGENCIES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022



\*SOURCE: OMB - Native American Crosscut - [whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/FY-2023-Native-American-Funding-Crosscut\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/FY-2023-Native-American-Funding-Crosscut_FINAL.pdf)



The Native Farm Bill Coalition (NFBC) is a nationwide initiative to lift up the voices of Native American producers and Tribal governments to advance a common policy agenda. It works to ensure that Indian Country's priorities are acknowledged and included in the decision making process for the next Farm Bill, from farming and ranching to nutrition programs, rural development and forestry. The NFBC is a joint project of the Intertribal Agriculture Council, the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, the National Congress of American Indians, and the Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative, its official research partner.

[www.nativefarmbill.com](https://www.nativefarmbill.com)