

To the office of U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski

Re: S 4779 (119th Congress), A bill to support nutrition, farmers, the seafood industry, agricultural research, wood energy and innovation, and indigenous self-determination, and for other purposes. · Latest action (2026-06-15): Read twice and referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

VFA SI Solution #133 · published 2026-06-19 · <https://www.valuesforamerica.com/solutions/133>

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American Agriculture, Nutrition, and Innovation Act of 2025

The measure, as described from the official record: To improve nutrition access for low-income Americans, support domestic farmers and the seafood industry, fund agricultural research and wood energy innovation, and strengthen indigenous self-determination, all within federal constitutional authority.

THE PROPOSAL

This Act establishes a consolidated program to support nutrition, agriculture, seafood, wood energy, and indigenous self-determination, operating within enumerated federal powers and with strict fiscal and temporal limits.

Title I – Nutrition Assistance: The Secretary of Agriculture shall continue the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and school meal programs, with enhanced fraud prevention and a requirement that at least 85% of funds go directly to food benefits. States may apply for waivers to test innovative delivery models, but no state may be required to adopt any federal standard beyond those necessary for program integrity.

Title II – Farmer and Seafood Industry Support: The Secretary shall provide direct payments to farmers and seafood harvesters affected by market disruptions, limited to operations with gross annual sales under \$500,000. Payments shall be capped at \$50,000 per recipient per year and sunset after 3 years. A separate grant program for agricultural research and wood energy innovation shall be funded at \$2 billion annually, with projects selected based on interstate market impact and environmental sustainability.

Title III – Indigenous Self-Determination: The Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with tribal governments, shall administer a grant program for tribal food sovereignty and natural resource management. Grants shall be awarded on a competitive basis, with no federal mandate on tribal governance structures. All programs under this Act shall be subject to annual audits by the Government Accountability Office and shall expire 5 years after enactment unless reauthorized by Congress.

OPERATIVE PROVISIONS (VFA PROPOSAL)

Funding Source	Reallocation of existing agricultural subsidies and a 0.5% fee on processed food sales, deposited into a dedicated trust fund.
Funding Amount	\$50 billion over 5 years, with annual caps: \$10 billion for nutrition, \$8 billion for farmer/seafood support, \$2 billion for research/wood energy, \$1 billion for indigenous programs, and \$1 billion for administration and oversight.
Sunset Years	5 years
Oversight Body	Government Accountability Office (GAO) with annual reports to Congress; USDA Inspector General for fraud investigations.
Enforcement Mechanism	Civil penalties of up to 10% of funds for non-compliant states or recipients; withholding of future grants for repeated violations; whistleblower protections for reporting misuse.
Effective Date	90 days after enactment

CONSTITUTIONAL BASIS

- Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 (General Welfare)
- Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 (Commerce Clause)
- Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 (Necessary and Proper Clause)
- Tenth Amendment (reservation of powers to states)

Concerns with the measure as written:

- Potential overreach if provisions impose unfunded mandates on states or regulate purely intrastate activities without a substantial effect on interstate commerce.
- Risk of violating the Tenth Amendment if federal conditions on grants coerce state policy choices beyond the scope of spending power.

WHY BOTH SIDES CAN BACK IT (VFA'S ASSESSMENT)

Honors Democratic priorities: robust nutrition assistance, support for small farmers and seafood harvesters, tribal self-determination, and climate-friendly wood energy. Honors Republican priorities: strict spending caps, sunset provision, state flexibility, fraud prevention, and no new permanent entitlements.

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