

Action Alert from Washington

October 6, 2014

Oppose the Elimination of the Matching Funds Provision in the FY2105 Senate Agriculture Appropriations Bill

BACKGROUND:

The Agricultural Act of 2014”2014 Farm Bill” contains a provision entitled “Section 7128. Matching Funds Requirement” that amended the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3101 et seq.) by adding a new provision “Section 1492. MATCHING FUNDS REQUIREMENT.”

The matching funds requirement would:

1. Establish a new, uniform matching requirement for NIFA competitive grants;
2. Require at least a 100% match;
3. Exempt ARS from the match;
4. Exempt institutions eligible to receive capacity funds (such as land-grants) and their partners from the match;
5. Authorize the Secretary to waive the match for a year for research/extension grants “that the NAREEE Advisory Board has determined is a national priority”; and
6. Take effect on Oct. 1, 2014.

The Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2015, the Agriculture Appropriations Bill (S. 2389), includes provisions that would “notwithstanding” the matching funds requirement of the 2014 farm bill for NIFA research and education activities, extension activities, and integrated activities. In other words, the 2015 Senate Agriculture Appropriations Bill would eliminate the matching funds requirement of the 2014 farm bill for all entities receiving a competitive grant, not just ARS and institutions eligible to receive capacity funds (including any institutions that partner with them).

S. 2389 has been reported by the Senate Appropriations Committee, has been placed on the Senate calendar, and is awaiting Senate floor consideration. However, it is **STRONGLY** expected that S. 2389 will not go through the “regular order process” and will be “informally conferenced” with the House for possible inclusion in a broader appropriations package.

ACTION NEEDED:

Stakeholders need to contact their respective House and Senate Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee members and express their opposition to the Senate’s proposed elimination of the matching funds requirement as included in the 2014 farm bill.

TALKING POINTS:

The Matching Funds Requirement (MFR) would harmonize the many different matching requirements that currently exists among various agriculture research and extension programs relating to aquaculture, specialty crops, and organics to name a few.

The MFR leverages scarce federal agriculture research dollars and encourages collaboration and cooperation among research entities by exempting all institutions that partner with land-grant institutions or institutions that are eligible to receive capacity funds.

The MFR exempts a wide range of institutions (such as 1994 tribal colleges and ARS) outright from the matching requirement and provides flexibility by ensuring that other institutions participating in crucial agricultural research, extension, and education activities may also become exempt in their own right as a non-land-grant college of agriculture.

The MFR recognizes the significant capacity funding investment made by Congress and the States to exempt institutions in annual appropriations bills and the conflicting aspect of a matching funds requirement for those institutions.

The MFR was just enacted as part of the 2014 farm bill debate after a long delay, the provision should be implemented as enacted.

Click [here](#) to view more detailed information on this urgent matter.

Please contact Jim Richards, Vernie Hubert or Hunt Shipman should you have any questions.