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(Original Signature of Member)

115TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

**H. R.** \_\_\_\_\_

To direct the Secretary of Agriculture to provide for prize competitions relating to specialty crop mechanization, and for other purposes.

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IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. PANETTA introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**A BILL**

To direct the Secretary of Agriculture to provide for prize competitions relating to specialty crop mechanization, and for other purposes.

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 “Specialty Crop Mecha-  
5       nization Prize Challenge of 2018”.

6       **SEC. 2. SPECIALTY CROP MECHANIZATION CHALLENGES.**

7       (a) **AUTHORITY.**—Not later than 180 days after the  
8       date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture

1 shall establish a program to be known as “Specialty Crop  
2 Mechanization Challenges” for carrying out prize competi-  
3 tions described under subsection (c) pursuant to section  
4 24 of the Stevenson-Wydler Technology Innovation Act of  
5 1980 (15 U.S.C. 3719) relating to the mechanization of  
6 specialty crop production.

7 (b) PRIZE COMMITTEES.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall assem-  
9 ble a prize committee with respect to each prize  
10 competition that shall define the scope and detail of,  
11 and provide the requirements for, the prize competi-  
12 tions under this section. Such committee shall be  
13 composed of—

14 (A) representatives of the specialty crop in-  
15 dustry, with at least a plurality of committee  
16 members from sectors of the specialty crop in-  
17 dustry that are labor-intensive and lack ade-  
18 quate mechanization technology;

19 (B) members from the Federal agency, de-  
20 partment, or office that most appropriately cor-  
21 responds with the topic of the prize competi-  
22 tion; and

23 (C) representatives of any other entities, as  
24 determined appropriate by the Secretary, in-

1 including State and local governments and insti-  
2 tutions of higher education.

3 (2) INCENTIVE FOR PRIZE COMPETITION.—The  
4 prize committee for each prize competition shall de-  
5 termine the incentive for the prize competition. In  
6 determining the incentive, the committee shall con-  
7 sider—

8 (A) a cash prize;

9 (B) access to Government facilities, a coop-  
10 erative research and development agreement, or  
11 other method; and

12 (C) any other incentive provided for by  
13 law.

14 (3) JUDGING CRITERIA.—The prize committee  
15 for each prize competition shall establish judging cri-  
16 teria for the competition that shall include, at a min-  
17 imum—

18 (A) potential for the solution to become a  
19 commercial product or service to further the  
20 public good;

21 (B) consideration of how likely the solution  
22 is to lead to subsequent research, development,  
23 or manufacturing in the United States;

1 (C) the degree to which the solution will  
2 alleviate stresses on the agricultural workforce  
3 and allow them to work more efficiently;

4 (D) the degree to which the solution will  
5 alleviate burdens on agricultural producers,  
6 shippers, and packers facing labor shortages;  
7 and

8 (E) the degree to which the solution will  
9 reduce losses of fresh fruit and vegetables due  
10 to lack of available workers to manage and har-  
11 vest crops.

12 (4) CONSIDERATION.—In carrying out this sec-  
13 tion, the committee shall take into consideration the  
14 best practices provided for in the challenges and  
15 prizes toolkit made publicly available on December  
16 15, 2016, by the General Services Administration.

17 (c) PRIZE COMPETITIONS.—In carrying out the pro-  
18 gram, the Secretary shall provide for prize competitions,  
19 including at least one prize competition on each of the fol-  
20 lowing:

21 (1) PLANTING.—Solutions to automate or al-  
22 leviate stresses on the workforce during the planting  
23 of specialty crops including, but not limited to, the  
24 planting of seeds, seedlings, and plants being trans-  
25 ferred from nurseries or greenhouses to the field.

1           (2) CROP MANAGEMENT.—Solutions to auto-  
2       mate or alleviate stresses on the workforce when  
3       conducting tasks associated with the management of  
4       specialty crops including, but not limited to, weed-  
5       ing, pest management, and the application of crop  
6       protectants.

7           (3) HARVESTING.—Solutions to automate or al-  
8       leviate stresses on the workforce related to the har-  
9       vesting of specialty crops.

10          (4) PACKAGING.—Solutions to automate or al-  
11       leviate stresses on the workforce when processing  
12       and preparing specialty crops for distribution.

13       (d) ACCEPTANCE OF FUNDS.—In addition to such  
14       sums as may be appropriated or otherwise made available  
15       to the Secretary to award prizes under this section, the  
16       Secretary may accept funds from other Federal agencies,  
17       private sector entities, institutions of higher education,  
18       and State and local governments to award prizes under  
19       this section. The Secretary may not give any special con-  
20       sideration relating to the selection of awards under the  
21       prize competition to any private sector entity or individual  
22       in return for a donation to the Secretary or prize com-  
23       mittee.

24       (e) ELIGIBILITY.—Notwithstanding section 24(g)(3)  
25       of the Stevenson-Wydler Technology Innovation Act of

1 1980 (15 U.S.C. 3719(g)(3)), for a group to be eligible  
2 for an award under this section, at least one member of  
3 such group shall be a citizen or permanent resident of the  
4 United States.

5 (f) COMPLETION OF PRIZE COMPETITIONS.—The  
6 prize competitions carried out under this section shall be  
7 completed not later than the date that is 5 years after  
8 the program is established under subsection (a).

9 (g) GAO REPORT.—Not later than the date of com-  
10 pletion under subsection (f), the Comptroller General of  
11 the United States shall submit to Congress a report on  
12 the impact and the effectiveness of the program carried  
13 out under this section.

14 (h) SPECIALTY CROP DEFINED.—In this section, the  
15 term “specialty crop” has the meaning given the term in  
16 section 3(1) of the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act  
17 of 2004 (7 U.S.C. 1621 note).

18 (i) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is  
19 authorized to be appropriated \$10,000,000 to carry out  
20 this Act, to remain available until expended.