

H.R. 2322 and S. 1119 – Fortifying Refrigeration Infrastructure and Developing Global Exports (FRIDGE) Act

Summary

The Fortifying Refrigeration Infrastructure and Developing Global Exports (FRIDGE) Act adds authority to the trade title of the Farm Bill, focusing on strengthening the global supply food supply chain for frozen and refrigerated products. Benefits include increasing export market potential for U.S. perishable products, reducing food loss and waste, and improving food security and nutrition in emerging markets.

Background

Supply chain disruptions highlight the importance of having a strong and resilient food supply chain. USDA currently funds trade promotion programs focused on specific commodities or products, all of which are reliant on a functioning supply chain. To complement USDA's ongoing efforts, there is a need to focus on strengthening the global food supply chain, particularly for perishable products.

Cold chain systems are crucial to the growth of global trade in perishable products and to the worldwide availability of food. Insufficient cold chain capacity in developing and emerging markets limits the ability of American producers to grow export markets for frozen and refrigerated U.S. food and agriculture products. Temperature fluctuations and improper handling damage the product before it reaches the final consumer, damaging the reputation of U.S. products.

In addition to increasing trade opportunities, strengthening cold chains can play an important role in reducing food loss and waste and enhancing nutrition outcomes. The lack of effective cold chain to maintain the quality, nutritional value and safety of food is a leading contributor to global food loss and waste, which has ramifications for people's health and livelihoods. The Food Loss Index of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) shows that approximately 14 percent of food is lost. These numbers are highest among highly perishable fresh fruits, vegetables, protein and dairy. The lack of effective refrigeration is a leading contributor to this challenge, directly resulting in the loss of 526 million tons of food production, or 12 percent of the global total. This lost and wasted food would be enough to feed an estimated 1 billion people in a world where currently 811 million people are hungry and 3 billion are unable to afford a healthy diet.

Policy Recommendation

Support the passage of the Farm Bill with the inclusion of the FRIDGE Act.

The Global Cold Chain Alliance (GCCA) urges additional bipartisan cosponsors to champion the FRIDGE Act. The bill has been introduced with bipartisan sponsorship in both chambers: Reps. Feenstra (R-IA), Mann (R-KS), Costa (D-CA), and Carbajal (D-CA) in the House, and Sens. Banks (R-IN) and Fetterman (D-PA) in the Senate. Increased investments in cold chain capacity will help to decrease the over 1 billion metric tons of global food waste created every year. By strengthening cold chain capacity in developing countries, perishable products can maintain their safety and quality and increase transportability, which provides opportunities for agriculture producers to expand and diversify their market reach. By improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the global cold chain, trade markets can be expanded and billions of dollars in U.S. exports can be saved.