

**From:** [Coale, Dana - MRP-AMS](#)  
**To:** [Morris, Erin - MRP-AMS](#)  
**Cc:** [Summers, Bruce - MRP-AMS](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Heinrich: Senate Ag-FDA bill will be 'aligned' with debt deal  
**Date:** Friday, June 23, 2023 10:32:39 AM

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That would be great. Thanks.

Dana

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**From:** Morris, Erin - MRP-AMS <Erin.Morris@usda.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 23, 2023 7:52:37 AM  
**To:** Coale, Dana - MRP-AMS <Dana.Coale@usda.gov>  
**Cc:** Summers, Bruce - MRP-AMS <Bruce.Summers@usda.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Heinrich: Senate Ag-FDA bill will be 'aligned' with debt deal

Thanks for the update. I've asked Ashley to see if we can move the 2020 along any faster. Sometimes Departmental clearance is very slow but it would be great to at least get this one out.

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**From:** Coale, Dana - MRP-AMS <Dana.Coale@usda.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 23, 2023 9:37 AM  
**To:** Morris, Erin - MRP-AMS <Erin.Morris@usda.gov>  
**Cc:** Summers, Bruce - MRP-AMS <Bruce.Summers@usda.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Heinrich: Senate Ag-FDA bill will be 'aligned' with debt deal

Erin-

With regards to the 2020, 2021 and 2022 Reports, here are the status of those:

2020 – In clearance. We sent it to PA on May 5 and understand it is still pending with them. They handle the approval through the Department. We asked for expedited clearance.

2021 – We received the economic analysis from Texas A&M on June 5. Our economists are reviewing the analysis and asking a few clarification questions. We have the rest of the report completed so once the economic analysis review is completed, we will put the 2021 report into clearance.

2022 – The economist at Texas A&M is still waiting to get data from the State and Regional programs before the analysis can begin. Once he gets the data, it usually takes about 2-4 months to get the report from him. We are working on the rest of the report so it will be ready to put into clearance once we receive it.

There is overall a problem with requiring the Report every July. The Boards and State and Regionals do not have their financials completed until about 6 months following the end of the year or later depending on various situations. Consequently, we will never be able to make the July 1 timeframe as required by the legislation.

Let me know if you want to discuss further.

Dana

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**From:** Morris, Erin - MRP-AMS <[Erin.Morris@usda.gov](mailto:Erin.Morris@usda.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 21, 2023 8:22 AM  
**To:** Coale, Dana - MRP-AMS <[Dana.Coale@usda.gov](mailto:Dana.Coale@usda.gov)>  
**Cc:** Summers, Bruce - MRP-AMS <[Bruce.Summers@usda.gov](mailto:Bruce.Summers@usda.gov)>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Heinrich: Senate Ag-FDA bill will be 'aligned' with debt deal

Hi Dana,

Please see below. Do we have a schedule for catching up?

Thanks,  
Erin

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**From:** POLITICO Pro's Morning Agriculture <[newsletter@email.politicopro.com](mailto:newsletter@email.politicopro.com)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 21, 2023 5:47 AM  
**To:** Morris, Erin - MRP-AMS <[Erin.Morris@usda.gov](mailto:Erin.Morris@usda.gov)>  
**Subject:** Heinrich: Senate Ag-FDA bill will be 'aligned' with debt deal

Jun 21, 2023

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POLITICO Pro's Morning Agriculture newsletter logo



BY **[GARRETT DOWNS](#)**

Presented by



*With help from Meredith Lee Hill, Marcia Brown and Marissa Martinez*

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## QUICK FIX

— **Senate Ag-FDA Appropriations Chair [Martin Heinrich \(D-N.M.\)](#) told reporters on Tuesday the Senate's proposal to fund the Agriculture Department and FDA will largely hew** to the deal between President Joe Biden and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy to raise the debt ceiling.

— **Meanwhile, senators are racing to clear one last hurdle** to confirm Xochitl Torres Small as deputy secretary of USDA.

— **Antimonopoly advocates are pushing USDA to complete dairy checkoff reports.** And, MA has a sneak peek into today's House Ag hearing on rural broadband.

**HAPPY WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21**, welcome to Morning Ag. I'm your host, Garrett Downs. Send tips to [gdowns@politico.com](mailto:gdowns@politico.com) and follow us at [@Morning\\_Ag](#).

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A message from Renewable Fuels Association:

The Renewable Fuels Association thanks President Joe Biden, EPA Administrator Michael Regan, USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack, and our champions in Congress for ensuring lower-cost, lower-carbon E15 gasoline is available all summer long. [E15 contains 15% American-made ethanol](#) and helps drivers save money at the pump, protects air quality, and prevents fuel shortages. [Learn more about the benefits of E15.](#)

## DRIVING THE DAY

**SENATE'S TURN ON APPROPS:** The full Senate Appropriations Committee on Thursday will mark up its version of the Ag-FDA spending bill, just over one week after the House committee advanced its spending bill and discretionary caps.

The Senate is skipping a subcommittee hearing on the spending bill,

which Heinrich said will be “very closely aligned” with the debt limit deal’s spending caps. House Republicans sharply undercut that deal in their spending limits (known as 302(b) numbers) and Ag-FDA bill, infuriating Democrats. House Republicans’ bill funds the agencies at \$17.8 billion, a nearly \$8 billion decrease from last year.

**Amendments:** Heinrich demurred on whether the Senate would see any amendments.

“I don’t think it’s clear yet, there may be a few,” he said, adding that he would likely add a manager’s amendment. “There will probably be a manager’s amendment ... nothing out of the ordinary.”

**Between the lines:** The full Senate Committee will mark up the Ag-FDA bill, along with its 302(b) allocations and the Military Construction-VA bill. The Senate, which is controlled by Democrats, is likely to impose much less harsh spending cuts than the House.

House appropriators undercut the debt limit deal in part to placate far right Republicans angered that the deal didn’t cut enough. That is likely to be a non-issue in the Senate, where numbers will hew more to the Biden-McCarthy deal.

## THE SENATE

**RUSH TO CONFIRM TORRES SMALL:** [Senators are narrowing in on a path to confirm Xochitl Torres Small](#) as the No. 2 official at the Agriculture Department, Meredith reports.

Torres Small in February was tapped by President Joe Biden to replace Jewel Bronaugh, who resigned citing family reasons. Bronaugh was the first Black woman and woman of color to serve in the role.

As [POLITICO first reported](#), Torres Small was the leading contender for the role. She is a former Democratic member of Congress who flipped a red New Mexico district to blue in 2018 and has served in the role of undersecretary for rural development since the early days of the administration. Biden himself endorsed Torres Small in her successful

2018 bid for Congress, saying she understood the struggles of rural America.

**The hold up:** Senators are trying to confirm Torres Small by unanimous voice vote before the July 4 recess, or shortly after the recess. That will require all holds on Torres Small to be lifted.

Sen. [Dan Sullivan](#) (R-Alaska) is the last hold at this point, according to two people familiar with the matter who were granted anonymity to discuss internal matters. His office did not respond to a request for comment, but he has held up Biden officials in the past for separate reasons.

**Replacement:** Former Rep. Cindy Axne is the odds-on favorite to replace Torres Small. Axne was recently tapped as USDA's senior adviser for rural engagement, delivery and prosperity after losing reelection last year.

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A message from Renewable Fuels Association:

[Advertisement Image](#)



## COMPETITION CORNER

**DAIRY CHECKOFFS:** Farm Action, an anti-monopoly group, and the National Dairy Producers Union [sent a letter to Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack](#) urging USDA to complete and send its reports on the dairy checkoff to Congress. The reports required by Congress, the group writes, are missing for years 2020, 2021 and 2022.

Checkoffs, which require farmers to pay into general funds for commodities for everything from raisins to milk to eggs, use the funding for research and promotion of the commodity. According to Farm Action's letter, dairy farmers have paid nearly \$1 billion in checkoff fees since USDA released the last report.

**Context:** Checkoffs are a common source of tension because many

farmers say that there is not enough transparency about how the funds are spent. Advocates, including Farm Action, have pushed for the OFF Act in the farm bill, legislation that proponents say will require more transparency for the funds.

It's not the first time reports to Congress on the dairy checkoffs have been late. In 2017, [POLITICO reported that the annual financial reports](#) for the dairy checkoff were MIA for four years.

## BROADBAND LAND

**BROADBAND HEARING:** Today's House Agriculture Committee hearing on broadband will include testimony from Jim Matheson, CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, ahead of the looming farm bill draft.

In his statement, sent in advance to MA, Matheson will urge the committee to make the ReConnect program permanent and streamline the application process. He also will discuss prioritizing symmetrical speeds and scalable networks in future federal funding rounds.

He also will cite his concerns on the National Environmental Policy Act's permitting requirements. The NEPA review process has drawn ire from some Republicans who say the timeframe to complete environmental studies is an undue barrier on the ability to push through projects and get funding.

## ROW CROPS

— **The Agriculture Department offered thousands of struggling farmers a lifeline last fall by forgiving nearly \$800 million in USDA loans. [But what was intended as a rescue plan from Washington quickly became an expensive tax headache](#)** this spring for some of the country's most vulnerable farmers and ranchers, many of them people of color, Marcia reports this morning.

— **USDA is making disaster federal nutrition assistance available to low-income residents of Guam who were victims of Typhoon**

**Mawar, which walloped the island this spring.**

— **Minnesota is going after the spongy moth, [which poses a threat to trees](#)**, CBS reports.

## ON THE CALENDAR

**10 a.m.:** The House Agriculture Committee holds a hearing on “Closing the Digital Divide in Rural America.”

A message from Renewable Fuels Association:

Thanks to the Biden administration, an emergency fuel waiver allows the sale of lower-cost, lower-carbon E15 through the summer driving months. Last year, this waiver saved drivers nearly \$60 million at the pump during summer months because drivers paid 20-30 cents less for each gallon of gasoline. E15 is made with 15 percent American-made ethanol and helps extend gasoline supplies, protect air quality, and reduce carbon emissions. Nearly 97 percent of registered vehicles on the road today are legally approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to use E15, and most automakers recommend drivers use E15. [Learn more about why E15 is the right choice this summer.](#)

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