

## **Peas, Legumes, and Nuts Today (PLANT) Act of 2023, H.R. xxxx**

The Peas, Legumes, and Nuts Today (PLANT) Act would ensure that farmers and companies producing plant-based food are eligible for USDA programs.

### **The Problem:**

The United States is currently the global leader in plant-based food production. The plant-based industry currently directly employs more than [55,000](#) people, and new investment could help add more than [200,000 new jobs](#). The governments of [China](#), [Canada](#), [Israel](#), [Denmark](#), [Sweden](#), [Singapore](#), the [Netherlands](#), [Qatar](#), [Australia](#), the [EU](#), and the [UK](#), are making significant investments in the development of plant-based foods. To maintain a leadership role in plant-based food production and to support farmers, food manufacturing workers, and rural communities, Congress should ensure that farmers and companies producing plant-based foods are eligible for USDA assistance.

### **Summary:**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture administers programs that create opportunities for U.S. producers of food, fiber, and specialty crops. This bill would help ensure that USDA programs support farmers and companies producing plant-based foods.

Existing USDA programs can do more to support the production, marketing, and processing of plant-based food products. By ensuring that farmers and companies are eligible for USDA assistance, Congress can ensure that new food manufacturing jobs are being created in our communities, especially our rural communities.

Specifically, the bill will:

- Increase USDA incentives for farmers producing ingredients in plant-based foods, such as pulses and mushrooms.
- Update USDA's Market Access Program to encourage exports of plant-based foods.
- Clarify that existing USDA loan programs include the expansion or building of plant-based food processing facilities.
- Update Rural Development initiatives to support plant-based food manufacturing in rural communities, including updates to the Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Area Program and the RISE program.
- Create a new plant-based protein research program (within the USDA's high-priority research and extension initiatives) to improve the functionality and flavor of key plant protein ingredients.
- Expand the authorization for the Pulse Crop Health Initiative.
- Update the Value-Added Producer Grant program to support domestic supply chains, including specialty crop growers.

- Create an Office of Plant-Based Food Options and Innovative Production within USDA, modeled after existing offices, to provide competitive grants to farmers, companies, and researchers, and to help new and beginning farmers.
- Create a Plant Protein Innovation Initiative to direct technical assistance and grants to businesses, including grants for the development of new products, business development, regional plant-based food production, research, and plant-protein functionality. Regionally diverse initiatives would be created to support local farmers and rural food processors.