



**Committee:** House Agriculture Committee

**Event:** [To Receive Testimony from Brooke Rollins, Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture](#)

**Date:** June 4, 2026

***Executive Summary:***

On June 4, 2026 the House Agriculture Committee held a hearing to receive testimony from **Brooke Rollins**, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

- Republicans supported the Trump administration's efforts to limit federal support for solar development on productive farmland and refocus USDA programs on agricultural production and rural economic development.
- Democrats raised concerns with cuts to drought and wildfire resilience research, and argued that renewable energy investments and conservation programs provide important economic benefits for rural communities.
- Members from both parties expressed concerns with foreign ownership of U.S. farmland and discussed the need to strengthen oversight of agricultural land acquisitions, particularly those involving China.

***Member Toplines:***

[Chair Glenn Thompson \(R-PA-15\):](#) Thompson praised USDA's implementation of the *One Big Beautiful Bill Act* and base acre additions. He commended the USDA for cracking down on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) fraud and boosting domestic fertilizer production.

[Ranking Member Angie Craig \(D-MN-02\):](#) Craig argued that the Trump Administration's tariffs and war with Iran have destroyed critical export markets and cost farmers billions of dollars. She pointed to a 46 percent surge in farm bankruptcies and rising diesel and fertilizer costs caused by the conflict in Iran. Craig also criticized Sec. Rollins for removing millions of Americans from SNAP.

***Witness Toplines:***

[Brooke Rollins, Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture:](#) Rollins praised the Trump administration for reversing a \$50 billion agricultural trade deficit by securing 19 new trade deals. She highlighted massive investments to onshore fertilizer production, efforts to eradicate the New World screwworm, and sweeping reforms to SNAP that have rooted out massive fraud in participating states.

## **Major Takeaways:**

### Solar Energy on Farmland:

- Rep. **Mike Bost** (R-IL-12) argued that utility-scale solar projects are increasingly taking productive farmland out of agricultural use, citing a proposed 5,200-acre solar development in his district. He promoted his Solar Act ([H.R.1592](#)) which would establish USDA guidelines for solar project funding and provide local communities with greater input in project siting decisions.
  - Rollins agreed that preserving prime farmland should be a USDA priority and stated that the administration does not support using federal incentives to encourage solar development on productive agricultural land.
- Rep. **Josh Riley** (D-NY-19) criticized a proposed solar project in his district backed by an out-of-state developer. He argued that projects should prioritize American-made supply chains and be located on brownfields, parking lots, and rooftops rather than farmland. He also called for greater local control over project approvals.
- Rep. **Dave Taylor** (R-OH-02) thanked the administration for ending subsidies for large-scale solar projects on U.S. farmland.

### USDA Renewable Energy Programs:

- Rep. **Eric Sorensen** (D-IL-17) questioned whether farmers support funding reductions to conservation programs such as the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).
  - Rollins explained that previous USDA investments placed too much emphasis on renewable energy projects rather than direct support for farmers.
- Rep. **Nikki Budzinski** (D-IL-13) highlighted that Illinois farmers and rural small businesses that applied for Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) grants are facing uncertainty regarding reimbursements for completed projects.
  - Rollins explained that many pending REAP applications involved solar investments from foreign countries such as China. She added that the administration continues to support certain solar projects, particularly those located on existing structures and utilizing American-made equipment.
- Budzinski highlighted the economic benefits of the Environmental Protection Agency's Renewable Fuel Standard Set Rule. She argued that expanded biofuel production supports rural economies and provides additional opportunities for agricultural producers.

### Wildfire Preparedness:

- Rep. **Adam Gray** (D-CA-13) criticized cuts to research programs focused on drought and wildfire resilience.
- Rep. **Gabe Vasquez** (D-NM-02) argued that staffing shortages at local Farm Service Agency offices in New Mexico are making it more difficult for producers to access disaster assistance, conservation programs, and technical support.

### Foreign Ownership of Land:

- Rep. **Shontel Brown** (D-OH-11) argued that the administration has not done enough to address concerns regarding Chinese ownership of U.S. farmland.

- Rep. **Mary Miller** (R-IL-15) praised the administration's National Farm Security Action Plan and its efforts to limit Chinese acquisitions of agricultural land and strengthen agricultural supply chain security.
- Bost highlighted that foreign investors hold interests in more than 45 million acres of U.S. agricultural land. He expressed particular concern with foreign investments in farmland near military installations, including Scott Air Force Base in Illinois.
- Riley linked concerns with foreign ownership of farmland to broader efforts to protect rural communities and limit foreign influence over U.S. agricultural resources.
  - Rollins described foreign ownership of American farmland as a significant national security issue. She highlighted USDA's efforts to improve transparency, strengthen oversight, and increase coordination with national security agencies.