



Harvard Model Congress Boston 2024

CLIMATE-RELATED FOOD SECURITY CHALLENGES UPDATE

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The 2023 United Nations Climate Change Conference took place at the end of November leading into December 2023. President Biden did not attend the two-week summit, but officials such as U.S. Special Climate Envoy John Kerry were in attendance. The focus of the summit was centered around fossil fuel use and production. Over 120 nations in attendance at the summit agreed to reduce “both consumption and production of fossil fuels, in a just, orderly and equitable manner” and pledged to “double the global average annual rate of energy efficiency improvements from around 2% to over 4% every year until 2030.” Another major initiative from the summit includes the implementation of a fund that will focus millions of dollars to developing countries suffering from “loss and damage” from climate change. The fund will be set up within the next year and housed at the World Bank (NPR, 2023).

Updates regarding bills mentioned in the original briefing are as follows. The Global Food Security Reauthorization Act was introduced to the Senate in 2022 after being passed in the House. This act reauthorizes the implementation of the Global Food Security Strategy and the Emergency Food Security Program to combat global food insecurity, as mentioned in the original briefing. As of December 2023, provisions of the bill were incorporated into the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act and signed off by President Biden in December 2022. The provisions authorized the creation of a Center for Excellence in Environmental Security to provide education and research on matters relating to environmental stresses that can contribute to economic, social, political, or national security events.

The Agriculture Resilience Act of 2023, the Agricultural Innovation Act of 2023, and the Sustainable Agriculture Research Act of 2021 continue to remain in committee as of December 2023.

Other recent bills that have been introduced include the Climate Change Resiliency Fund for America Act of 2023 and the Climate Agricultural Conservation Practices Act.

The Climate Change Resiliency Fund for America Act of 2023 establishes the Climate Change Advisory Commission to develop recommendations, frameworks, and guidelines for climate change impact responses. The Commission will also issue federal obligations that will be used to fund projects for climate change responses. As of December 2023, this bill was introduced to the Senate and referred to the Senate Committee on Finance. The Climate Agricultural Conservation Practices Act was introduced in February 2023. It requires the Natural Resources Conservation Service to evaluate the climate benefits of the Department of Agriculture’s conservation practice standards. These reviews intend to target the minimum criteria for federally funded conservation practices.

Amendments to existing acts have also been extremely prevalent congressional action. Amendments to the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 were introduced in December 2023 to encourage natural climate solution research through the extension grants. This amendment was referred to the House Committee on Agriculture. An amendment to the Food Security Act of 1985 was also introduced in December 2023 to update conservation practice standards. This amendment was referred to the House Committee on Agriculture as well.

Climate change has been a major focus of the upcoming 2024 Presidential Election. President Biden, the leading Democratic candidate who is seeking re-election in 2024, refers to climate change as an “existential threat to humanity” and has made it a focal point of his presidency and current campaign. Donald Trump, former president and also the leading Republican candidate seeking reelection in 2024, acknowledges climate change’s impact but does not support much existing climate legislation, including the 2015 Paris Climate Accord and Inflation Reduction Act, and he hoping to repeal them during his possible future presidency.

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