



**To:** Chairman Tom Cole and Members of the House Appropriations Committee

**From:** National Taxpayers Union (NTU)

**Date:** July 10, 2023

**Subject:** Markup of Fiscal Year 2025 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill

National Taxpayers Union (NTU), the nation's oldest taxpayer advocacy organization, commends your work on the proposed Fiscal Year 2025 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. Most importantly, the proposed appropriations bill would cut spending from Fiscal Year 2024 levels and would provide significant savings for taxpayers relative to the Biden administration's budget request. NTU further applauds the committee's efforts to address excessive regulations that harm agricultural producers and workers in rural communities.

NTU supports of Section 733 of the bill, which specifies that Secretary of Health and Human Services may not use the appropriated funds to ban menthol cigarettes or characterizing flavors in cigars, or to mandate a maximum nicotine level for cigarettes, until the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) takes specific steps to regulate illegal e-cigarette products. This would prevent overreach by regulators that would have significant negative impacts on taxpayers, farmers,

retailers, consumers, manufacturers, state and local governments, and supply chains across the country.

Section 766 of the bill would include the Secretary of Agriculture in Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) reviews involving agricultural transactions. By encouraging fact-based analyses of the size and impact of foreign investment, this provision could help prevent legitimate national security threats while protecting against undue restrictions on the property rights of U.S. landowners, who own the vast majority of agricultural land.

While NTU supports many aspects of this bill, we recommend that the committee reevaluate federal Buy American provisions. Buy American policies are unfair to taxpayers because they increase the cost of government projects. They also encourage our trading partners to enact retaliatory barriers to U.S. exports. Our competitive agricultural producers will benefit from policies that reduce trade-distorting barriers and subsidies.

One of the most important taxpayer priorities for Congress should be to reduce deficit spending. NTU strongly supports your efforts to accomplish this goal, starting with the Fiscal Year 2025 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. We look forward to working with the Committee as it completes work on the remaining appropriations bills.