

2026 USDA EXPLANATORY NOTES – HAZARDOUS MATERIALS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

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PREFACE

This publication summarizes the fiscal year (FY) 2026 Budget for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Throughout this publication any reference to the “Budget” is in regard to the 2026 Budget, unless otherwise noted. All references to years refer to fiscal year, except where specifically noted. The budgetary tables throughout this document show actual amounts for 2023 and 2024, Full-Year Continuing Resolution levels for 2025, and the President’s Budget request for 2026. Amounts for 2025 estimated levels include: non-enacted amounts such as Full-Time Equivalent levels, fleet levels, information technology investment levels, recovery levels, transfers in and out, balances available end of year, and obligation levels.

Throughout this publication, the “2018 Farm Bill” is used to refer to the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018. Most programs funded by the 2018 Farm Bill are funded through 2025, as extended by the American Relief Act, 2025 (P.L. 118-158, Division D). Amounts shown in 2025 and 2026 for most Farm Bill programs reflect those confirmed in the baseline.

Pursuant to the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, sequestration is included in the numbers for mandatory programs in 2023, 2024, 2025 and 2026.

In tables throughout this document, amounts equal to zero (0) are displayed as dashes (-). Amounts less than 0.5 and greater than zero are rounded and shown as a zero (0). This display treatment is used to prevent the masking of non-zero amounts that do not round up to one (1).

AGENCY-WIDE**PURPOSE STATEMENT**

The Hazardous Materials Management Program (HMMP) provides leadership and policy in five key environmental areas, establishing annual funding priorities and funding hazardous material cleanups on USDA-managed lands and sites contaminated from past activities, overseeing enforcement activities and tracking cost recovery from polluters, ensuring pollution prevention and environmental compliance, planning, preparing for, and responding to oil spills and hazardous substance releases affecting the natural and built environment, and ensuring that USDA minimizes environmental liabilities associated with property transfers.

HMMP staff represents USDA on environmental compliance and cleanup issues with federal and state environmental regulatory agencies. In addition, HMMP is responsible for requirements, criteria, and procedures of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. §9601 et seq) and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (42 U.S.C. §6901 et. seq). The program also supports emergency response objectives by representing USDA on the U.S. National Response Team for oil spills and hazardous substance releases and several emergency supporting functions under the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s National Response Plan. HMMP supports natural resources stewardship and quality-of-life goals for rural America. HMMP also supports the remediation of watersheds and groundwater for use as rural communities drinking water supply and the restoration of public land for timber harvesting, livestock grazing, and recreational use, including hunting, fishing, biking, hiking, and camping.

HMMP is headquartered in Washington, D.C. As of September 30, 2024, there were five (5) permanent full-time employees, with four (4) at headquarters and one in a field office in Colorado.

Representing USDA, HMMP responds to information requests from the White House, General Accountability Office (GAO), Office of Inspector General, Federal and State Regulators, tribes, and the public. HMMP responded to GAO’s information requests (105408) on Mining Environmental Liabilities.

AVAILABLE FUNDS AND FTEs**Table HMMP-1. Available Funds and FTEs (thousands of dollars, FTEs)**

Item	2023 Actual	FTEs	2024 Actual	FTEs	2025 Estimated	FTEs	2026 Estimated	FTEs
Salaries and Expenses:								
Discretionary Appropriations...	\$7,581	4	\$3,000	5	\$3,000	5	\$2,500	5
Balance Available, SOY	5,518	-	5,815	-	651	-	-	-
Recoveries, Other	1,193	-	168	-	-	-	-	-
Total Available, Other Funding	14,292	4	8,983	5	3,651	5	2,500	5
Bal. Available, EOY	-5,815	-	-651	-	-	-	-	-
Total Obligations,	8,477	4	8,332	5	3,651	5	2,500	5
Total Available, HMMP	14,292	4	8,983	5	3,651	5	2,500	5

*This table assumes a reduced 2026 FTE baseline due to 2025 voluntary staff separations and administrative cost efficiencies.

PERMANENT POSITIONS BY GRADE AND FTEs**Table HMMP-2. Permanent Positions by Grade and FTEs**

Item	HQ	Field	2023 Actual Total	HQ	Field	2024 Actual Total	HQ	Field	2025 Estimated Total	HQ	Field	2026 Estimated Total
GS-15	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1
GS-14	2	1	3	3	1	4	3	1	4	3	1	4
Total												
Permanent	3	1	4	4	1	5	4	1	5	4	1	5
Total Perm. FT												
EOY	3	1	4	4	1	5	4	1	5	4	1	5
FTE*	3	1	4	4	1	5	4	1	5	4	1	5

*This table assumes a reduced 2026 FTE baseline due to 2025 voluntary staff separations and administrative cost efficiencies.

ACCOUNT 1: HAZARDOUS MATERIALS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**APPROPRIATIONS LANGUAGE**

The appropriations language follows (new language underscored):

Hazardous Materials Management (Including Transfers of Funds)

For necessary expenses of the Department of Agriculture, to comply with the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (42 U.S.C. 9601 et seq.) and the Solid Waste Disposal Act (42 U.S.C. 6901 et seq.), \$2,500,000, to remain available until expended: Provided, That appropriations and funds available herein to the Department for Hazardous Materials Management may be transferred to any agency of the Department for its use in meeting all requirements pursuant to the above Acts on Federal and non-Federal lands.

LEAD-OFF TABULAR STATEMENT**Table HMMP-3. Lead-Off Tabular Statement (In dollars)**

Item	Amount
Enacted, 2025	\$3,000,000
Change in Appropriation	- 500,000
Budget Estimate, 2026	<u>2,500,000</u>

PROJECT STATEMENTS**Table HMMP-41. Project Statement on Basis of Appropriations (thousands of dollars, FTEs)**

Item	2023 Actual	FTEs	2024 Actual	FTEs	2025 Estimated	FTEs	2026 Estimated	FTEs	Inc. or Dec.	FTE Inc. or Dec.	Chg Key
Discretionary											
Appropriations:											
Hazardous Materials											
Management	\$7,581	4	\$3,000	5	\$3,000	5	\$2,500	5	-\$500	-	(1)
Recoveries, Other	1,193	-	168	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bal. Available, SOY	5,518	-	5,815	-	651	-	-	-	-651	-	-
Total Available	14,292	4	8,983	5	3,651	5	2,500	5	-1,151	-	-
Bal. Available, EOY	5,815	-	-651	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Obligations	8,477	4	8,332	5	3,651	5	2,500	5	-1,151	-	-

Table HMMP-5. Project Statement on Basis of Obligations (thousands of dollars, FTEs)

Item	2023 Actual	FTEs	2024 Actual	FTEs	2025 Estimated	FTEs	2026 Estimated	FTEs	Inc. or Dec.	FTE Inc. or Dec.
Discretionary Obligations:										
Hazardous Materials										
Management	\$8,477	4	\$8,332	5	\$3,651	5	\$2,500	5	\$1,151	-
Total Obligations	8,447	4	8,332	5	3,651	5	2,500	5	-1,151	-
Total Bal. Available, EOY ...	5,815	-	651	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Available	14,292	4	8,983	5	3,651	5	2,500	5	-1,151	-
Recoveries, Other	-1,193	-	-168	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bal. Available, SOY	-5,518	-	-5,815	-	-	-	-	-	651	-
Total Appropriation	7,581	4	3,000	5	3,651	5	2,500	5	-500	-

JUSTIFICATION OF CHANGES**Hazardous Materials Management Program**

Base funding supports the continued oversight, guidance, planning, and coordination of Department-wide efforts to advance the cleanup and site remediation activities of USDA agencies under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act efforts. Further, the account pays for legal activities performed by the Office of the General Counsel staff to determine responsibility for pollution cleanup and recover costs from responsible parties. Monetary judgments awarded to the Department resulting from these legal activities do not only go to the individual USDA agency that has performed or contracted for cleanup work. Proportional amounts are also credited to the Hazardous Materials Management account based on the value of legal services performed. In addition to the activities and functions specifically described in the budget request, current year and budget year base funds will be used to carry out activities and functions consistent with the full range of authorities and activities delegated to the office. In addition to Departmental Administration funding used for human resources operational services, current year and budget year base funds will also be used to support expedited and enhanced classification, staffing and processing efforts.

HMMP oversees USDA's environmental management of hazardous materials which includes the following functions:

- Funds priority projects for addressing hazardous material releases on USDA-managed lands and other properties;
- Funds environmental attorneys in the Office of General Counsel who provide legal advice regarding
- Environmental compliance and recovery of cleanup costs;
- Negotiates environmental compliance and cleanup issues with federal and state regulators;
- Develops policies on environmental compliance and hazardous materials management;
- Performs program reviews of agency environmental programs;
- Minimizes environmental liabilities associated with property transactions;
- Promotes brownfield redevelopment to improve quality of life in rural America;
- Represents USDA on the U.S. National Response Team and coordinates with USDA Regional Response Teams to prepare for and respond to oil and hazardous substance releases;
- Supports disaster response functions under the National Response Framework;
- Participates in interagency meetings and rule-making processes; and
- Supports natural resources stewardship through cleanup of contaminated land and prevention of future releases

The numbers and letters of the following listing relates to values in the Change (Chg) Key column of the Project Statement:

(1) A decrease of \$500,000 to Hazardous Materials Management (\$3,000,000 and 5 FTEs available in 2025).

(A) A decrease of \$500,000 for USDA's hazardous waste cleanup. At this level of funding HMMP will seek efficiencies for USDA's hazardous waste cleanup obligations and prioritize USDA's environmental disposal liabilities, primarily at the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC) in Maryland. BARC is on Environmental Protection Agency's National Priorities List, the list of the Nation's most hazardous waste sites.

GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF OBLIGATIONS AND FTEs**Table HMMP-6. Geographic Breakdown of Obligations and FTEs for Hazardous Material Management Program (thousands of dollars, FTEs)**

State/Territory/Country	2023		2024		2025		2026	
	Actual	FTEs	Actual	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs
Colorado	\$196	1	\$198	1	\$199	1	\$201	1
District of Columbia.....	2,481	3	7,097	4	2,452	4	2,229	4
Kansas.....	720	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Maryland.....	3,800	-	1,037	-	1,000	-	-	-
Nebraska	1,280	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Obligations	8,477	4	8,332	5	3,651	5	2,500	5
Bal. Available, EOY.....	5,815	-	651	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Available.....	14,292	4	8,983	5	3,651	5	2,500	5

CLASSIFICATION BY OBJECTS**Table HMMP-7. Classification by Objects (thousands of dollars)**

Item No.	Item	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Estimated	2026 Estimated
Personnel Compensation:					
	Washington D.C.	\$527	\$537	\$539	\$540
	Personnel Compensation, Field	162	165	167	170
11	Total personnel compensation	689	702	706	710
12	Personal benefits	249	258	261	265
13.0	Benefits for former personnel	1	-	-	-
	Total, personnel comp. and benefits.....	939	960	967	975
Other Objects:					
21.0	Travel and transportation of persons	27	10	10	10
	Communications, utilities, and misc.				
23.3	charges.....	32	14	10	10
25.2	Other services from non-Federal sources ..	39	23	40	20
	Other goods and services from Federal				
25.3	sources	7,437	7,324	2,623	1,484
26.0	Supplies and materials	3	-	1	1
	Total, Other Objects.....	7,538	7,372	2,684	1,525
99.9	Total, new obligations.....	8,477	8,332	3,651	2,500
Position Data:					
	Average Salary (dollars), GS Position	\$170,000	\$171,500	173,000	\$175,000
	Average Grade, GS Position	14.3	14.3	14.4	14.4

*This table assumes a reduced 2026 FTE baseline due to 2025 voluntary staff separations and administrative cost efficiencies.

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STATUS OF PROGRAMS**Current Activities**

HMMP funds are used to maintain staff in both the Office of Property and Environmental Management, Environmental Management Division (EMD) and the Office of the General Counsel (OGC). HMMP devotes available funding to cleanup projects that pose the greatest risk to human health and the environment. Additionally, HMMP staff leverages funds recovered from potentially responsible parties (PRPs) or work conducted by PRPs through environmental enforcement.

HMMP staff provides Departmental leadership through the development and implementation of policy and guidance and oversees CERCLA and RCRA activities of the Department and other entities that operate on USDA-managed land. The HMMP includes environmental cleanup, preparedness, and response to discharges of oil and releases of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants. The program also includes environmental compliance for all USDA facilities and reviewing environmental assessments on high value real property for acquisition or disposal.

As a member of the U.S. National Response Team (NRT), HMMP provides technical assistance, resources, and coordination on planning, preparedness, response, and recovery activities for emergencies involving oil, hazardous substances, pollutants and contaminants, weapons of mass destruction, and other environmental incidents of national significance.

OGC provides legal advice to the HMMP and USDA agencies, and ensures USDA is following environmental laws and regulations. Each year OGC has been successful in bringing additional money into the HMMP through enforcement actions and other agreements with PRPs. In most cases, this cost recovery comes from past owners or operators of Abandoned Mine Lands. Using this cost recovery, USDA has been able to fund further efforts to clean up USDA managed lands.

For 2024, three USDA agencies reported estimated environmental liabilities associated with future cleanup costs for contamination issues on USDA managed lands or facilities, or contamination for which USDA is otherwise responsible for the cleanup. The Agricultural Research Service (ARS) total estimated cost is over \$53 million through 2045. The Farm Service Agency (FSA) Commodity Credit Corporation total estimated cost ranges from \$27.6 million to \$337.2 million. The Forest Service total estimated cost exceeds \$12 billion. The Forest Service reports their greatest contamination issues revolve around Abandoned Mine Lands.

Selected Examples of Recent Progress

HMMP, in coordination with OGC, recovered \$774,396 (or \$0.8 million) from responsible parties for contamination on USDA managed lands. This amount includes reoccurring payments from responsible parties at the Holden Mine site in Washington State (\$487,628.66) and the Southeast Idaho phosphate mines (\$263,467.92), and a settlement from the BP settlement for Sweetwater Mine in Missouri (\$60,764). Cleanup activities conducted either voluntarily or involuntarily by PRPs are not included in the cost recovery amount.

In 2024, USDA agencies completed 26 site assessments, 13 cleanup studies, five cleanup decisions, and three cleanups. In addition, HMMP activities included evaluating and prioritizing USDA agency project proposals, providing \$1.037 million to the ARS Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC) in Beltsville, Maryland. BARC is listed on the EPA National Priorities List (NPL), EPA's list of the Nation's most contaminated sites on private and Federal land. ARS investigations in the late 1990s identified 63 Areas of Concern (AOC). HMMP efforts to date to address the original 63 AOCs have led to 44 AOCs where EPA has determined that no further action is required by ARS.

Five AOCs where EPA will likely require further investigation. Eight AOCs are currently undergoing in-depth investigations. One AOC where ARS is waiting EPA approval on a proposed plan for cleanup; and one AOC where ARS has completed cleanup, and the site is undergoing performance monitoring.

The USDA invested \$64 million for investigations and cleanups at BARC, through September 24, 2024. ARS estimates the future environmental liability is over \$53 million to complete the remaining investigations, cleanups, and long-term monitoring at BARC through 2045. Results of investigations in progress and subsequent remediation methods selection could increase this estimate.

Provided \$717,039 to the OGC for environmental attorneys and legal advice regarding environmental compliance and recovery of cleanup costs.

Funded ARS' early testing of their Public Water Systems to screen for hazardous substances, per- and polyfluorinated alkyl substances (PFAS) release to protect employee health.

Continued enhancement of the National Environmental Accomplishment Tracking (NEAT) system, a SharePoint database for tracking the status of USDA's more than 19,000 potentially contaminated site inventory, cleanup accomplishments, and environmental compliance. Enhancements include developing a dashboard for viewing status information in NEAT.

Developed an Environmental Compliance and Enforcement dashboard linking to an EPA's Enforcement and Compliance History Online database for viewing environmental compliance information for more than 1,200 USDA permitted facilities.

Conducted three formal reviews of USDA agency environmental programs to address the USDA Office of the Inspector General's recommendations concerning funds accountability and the Government Accountability Office's (GAO) concerns about reconciling USDA's inventory of contaminated sites. Formal program reviews were conducted for three Forest Service regions (Regions 1, 3 and 5). In addition, EMD also conducted two Environmental Compliance Program reviews of the Food Safety and Inspection Service and the Office of Operations.

Monitored environmental compliance violations at various agencies and working with agencies and state regulators to resolve environmental compliance violations related to facility operations.

Continued to collaborate with the Office of Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense to establish a memorandum of understanding and a standard access agreement to guide cleanup actions on land managed by USDA that are being conducted under the Formerly Used Defense Sites Program.

Continued to review and update the status of all military legacy sites known to exist on USDA-managed land and added new sites in NEAT to establish a more comprehensive inventory. Provided guidance and support to USDA agencies to streamline the cleanup of the military legacy sites.

Completed environmental assessments for high-value land transactions and land acquisitions, as requested by agencies.

Responded to EPA's request for all USDA owned and/or operated Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) landfills as part of their National Enforcement and Compliance Initiative to reduce emissions from MSW landfills.

Responded to General Accountability Office (GAO) information requests on Mining Environmental Liabilities – Code 105408 and developed the Statement of Action and implemented actions for the GAO recommendations.

Responded to Freedom of Information Act request from the public, as required.

Represented USDA at various Federal interagency meetings hosted by the White House and lead Federal agencies on environmental compliance, cleanup and interagency cooperation.

Conducted over 46 reviews of proposed regulatory policies, rules and regulations requested by the White House Office of Management and Budget for potential impacts to USDA and agencies.