

## 2027 USDA EXPLANATORY NOTES – HAZARDOUS MATERIALS MANAGEMENT

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**PREFACE**

This publication summarizes the fiscal year (FY) 2027 Budget for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Throughout this publication any reference to the "Budget" is in regard to the 2027 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 2024 and 2025, Working Families Tax Cut Act, Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agency Appropriations Act, 2026, and the President's Budget request for 2027. Amounts for 2026 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 "Working Families Tax Cut Act" is used to refer to the Public Law 119-21.

Pursuant to the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, sequestration is included in the numbers for mandatory programs in 2024, 2025, 2026 and 2027.

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 small non-zero amounts that do not round up to one (1). Due to rounding, some tables may not sum exactly.

**AGENCY-WIDE**

**PURPOSE STATEMENT**

Hazardous Materials Management (HMM) 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.

HMM staff represent USDA on environmental compliance and cleanup issues with federal and state environmental regulatory agencies. In addition, HMM 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. HMM supports natural resources stewardship and quality-of-life goals for rural America. HMM 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.

HMM headquarters in Washington, D.C. As of September 30, 2025, there were five (5) permanent full-time employees, with four (4) at headquarters and one in a field office in Colorado.

**OIG AND GAO REPORTS**

***Table HMM-1. Closed, Implemented Reports***

ID	Date Opened	Date		Title	Result
			Closed		
GAO-23-105408	01/13/2023		04/28/2025	Abandoned Hardrock Mines: Land Management Agencies Should Improve	Recommendation - The Secretary of Agriculture should expand the information available to Congress regarding the agency's fiscal

ID	Date Opened	Date Closed	Title	Result
			Reporting of Total Cleanup Costs	exposure from abandoned hardrock mines by clearly identifying the amount of known cleanup cost estimates specifically for such mines in supplemental reports or other budget materials.

**AVAILABLE FUNDS AND FTEs**

**Table HMM-2. Available Funds and FTEs (thousands of dollars, FTEs)**

Item	2024		2025		2026		2027	
	Actual	FTEs	Actual	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs
Hazardous Materials Management								
Discretionary Appropriations .....	\$3,000	5	\$3,000	5	\$1,619	5	\$1,000	5
Total Discretionary Appropriations .....	3,000	5	3,000	5	1,619	5	1,000	5
Total Adjusted Appropriation .....	3,000	5	3,000	5	1,619	5	1,000	5
Balance Available, SOY .....	5,815	-	651	-	-	-	-	-
Recoveries, Other .....	168	-	2,239	-	1,981	-	-	-
Total Available .....	8,983	5	5,890	5	3,600	5	1,000	5
Balance Available, EOY .....	-651	-	-1,981	-	-	-	-	-
Total Obligations .....	8,332	5	3,909	5	3,600	5	1,000	5
Total Obligations, HMM .....	8,332	5	3,909	5	3,600	5	1,000	5
Total Available, HMM .....	8,983	5	5,890	5	3,600	5	1,000	5

**PERMANENT POSITIONS BY GRADE AND FTEs**

**Table HMM-3. Permanent Positions by Grade and FTEs**

Item	2024			2025			2026			2027		
	HQ	Field	Total	HQ	Field	Total	HQ	Field	Total	HQ	Field	Total
GS-15 .....	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1
GS-14 .....	3	1	4	3	1	4	3	1	4	3	1	4
Total Permanent ....	4	1	5	4	1	5	4	1	5	4	1	5
Total Perm. FT EOY ...	4	1	5	4	1	5	4	1	5	4	1	5
FTE .....	4	1	5	4	1	5	4	1	5	4	1	5

**ACCOUNT 1: HAZARDOUS MATERIALS MANAGEMENT**

**APPROPRIATIONS LANGUAGE**

The appropriations language follows (new language underscored; deleted matter enclosed in brackets):

*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.), [~~\$1,619,000~~]\$1,000,000, 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 HMM-4. Lead-Off Tabular Statement (In dollars)**

Item	Amount
Estimate, 2026 .....	\$1,619,000
Change in Appropriation .....	<u>-619,000</u>
Budget Estimate, 2027 .....	<u>1,000,000</u>

**PROJECT STATEMENTS**

**Table HMM-5. Project Statement on Basis of Appropriations (thousands of dollars, FTEs)**

Item	2024		2025		2026		2027		Inc. or	FTE	Chg
	Actual	FTEs	Actual	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs	Dec.	Inc.	Dec. Key
Discretionary Appropriations:											
HMM.....	\$3,000	5	\$3,000	5	\$1,619	5	\$1,000	5	-\$619	-	(1)
Total Appropriation .....	3,000	5	3,000	5	1,619	5	1,000	5	-619	-	-
Recoveries, Other .....	168	-	2,239	-	1,981	-	-	-	-1,981	-	-
Bal. Available, SOY .....	5,815	-	651	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Available .....	8,983	5	5,890	5	3,600	5	1,000	5	-2,600	-	-
Bal. Available, EOY .....	-651	-	-1,981	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Obligations.....	8,332	5	3,909	5	3,600	5	1,000	5	-2,600	-	-

**Table HMM-6. Project Statement on Basis of Obligations (thousands of dollars, FTEs)**

Item	2024		2025		2026		2027		Inc. or	FTE Inc.
	Actual	FTEs	Actual	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs	Dec.	or Dec.
Discretionary Obligations:										
Hazardous Materials Management .....	\$8,332	5	\$3,909	5	\$3,600	5	\$1,000	5	-\$2,600	-
Total Obligations .....	8,332	5	3,909	5	3,600	5	1,000	5	-2,600	-
Total Bal. Available, EOY .....	651	-	1,981	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Available .....	8,983	5	5,890	5	1,619	5	1,000	5	-2,600	-
Recoveries, Other .....	-168	-	-2,239	-	-1,981	-	-	-	+1,981	-
Bal. Available, SOY .....	-5,815	-	-651	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Appropriation.....	3,000	5	3,000	5	1,619	5	1,000	5	-619	-

**JUSTIFICATION OF CHANGES**

**Hazardous Materials Management**

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.

HMM 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;
- Develop policies on environmental compliance and hazardous materials management;
- Performs program reviews of agency environmental programs;
- Minimize 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;
- Participate in interagency meetings and rule-making processes; and
- Supports natural resources stewardship through cleanup of contaminated land and prevention of future releases

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

1. A decrease of \$619,000 to Hazardous Materials Management (\$1,619,000 and 5 FTEs available in 2026).

At this level of funding HMM will seek efficiencies for USDA’s hazardous waste cleanup obligations and prioritize USDA’s environmental disposal liabilities. HMM will continue to prioritize critical cleanup projects, provide vital legal support for cost recovery efforts, and ensure robust departmental oversight of hazardous materials management and hazardous waste cleanup. By focusing on efficiency, prioritization, and leveraging our established expertise and resources, the program will continue its vital work in protecting natural resources, minimizing environmental liabilities, and supporting disaster response functions, ensuring the Department remains a responsible steward of the environment.

**GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF OBLIGATIONS AND FTEs**

***Table HMM-7. Geographic Breakdown of Obligations and FTEs for Hazardous Material Management (thousands of dollars, FTEs)***

State/Territory/Country	2024		2025		2026		2027	
	Actual	FTEs	Actual	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs
Colorado .....	\$198	1	\$199	1	\$200	1	\$202	1
District of Columbia .....	7,097	4	2,673	4	2,949	4	798	4
Maryland .....	1,037	-	1,037	-	451	-	-	-
Obligations .....	8,332	5	3,909	5	3,600	5	1,000	5
Bal. Available, EOY .....	651	-	1,981	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Available .....	8,983	5	5,890	5	3,600	5	1,000	5

**CLASSIFICATION BY OBJECTS**

**Table HMM-8. Classification by Objects (thousands of dollars)**

Item No.	Item	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	2026 Estimated	2027 Estimated
<b>Personnel Compensation:</b>					
	Washington D.C.....	\$537	\$407	\$410	\$375
	Personnel Compensation, Field .....	165	366	375	325
11	Total personnel compensation .....	702	773	785	700
12	Personal benefits.....	258	278	285	250
	Total, personnel comp. and benefits .....	960	1,051	1,070	950
<b>Other Objects:</b>					
21.0	Travel and transportation of persons .....	10	2	5	5
23.3	Comms, utilities, and misc. charges .....	14	11	5	5
25.2	Other services from non-Federal sources .....	24	-	-	-
25.3	Other goods and services from Fed. sources.....	7,324	2,824	2,492	34
25.4	Operation and maintenance of facilities.....	-	22	22	-
25.6	Medical Care.....	-	26	25	25
	Total, Other Objects .....	7,372	2,858	2,530	50
99.9	Total, new obligations.....	8,332	3,909	3,600	1,000
<b>Position Data:</b>					
	Average Salary (dollars), GS Position .....	\$171,500	\$179,000	\$180,000	\$181,000
	Average Grade, GS Position.....	14.3	14.3	14.3	14.3

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## **STATUS OF PROGRAMS**

### **Current Activities**

HMM 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). HMM devotes available funding to cleanup projects that pose the greatest risk to human health and the environment. Additionally, HMM staff leverages funds recovered from potentially responsible parties (PRPs) or work conducted by PRPs through environmental enforcement.

HMM staff provide Departmental leadership through the development and implementation of policy and guidance and oversee CERCLA and RCRA activities of the Department and other entities that operate on USDA-managed land. The HMM 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), HMM 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 HMM and USDA agencies, and ensures USDA is following environmental laws and regulations. Each year OGC has been successful in bringing additional money into the HMM 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 2025, 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 approximately \$56 million through 2045. The Farm Service Agency (FSA) Commodity Credit Corporation total estimated cost ranges from \$34 million to \$271 million. The Forest Service total estimated cost exceeds \$12 billion. The Forest Service reports their greatest contamination issues revolve around Abandoned Mine Lands. In addition, in *TPMC-Energy Solutions Environmental Services 2008, LLC v. United States*, 176 Fed. Cl. 56 (2025) related to the cleanup of the low-level radioactive waste burial site on the ARS Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC) in Beltsville, Maryland, the U.S. agreed to settle a breach of contract claim for \$6.2 million.

### **Selected Examples of Recent Progress**

In 2025, the HMM accomplished the following:

- In coordination with OGC, recovered \$834,062 (or \$0.8 million) from parties responsible for contamination on USDA managed lands. This amount includes reoccurring payments from responsible parties at the Holden Mine site in Washington State (\$632,544) and the Southeast Idaho phosphate mines (\$201,538), and a settlement from the BP settlement for Sweetwater Mine in Missouri (\$60,764). Cleanup activities conducted by PRPs are not included in the cost recovery amount.
- Conducted CERCLA cleanup projects on more than 20 sites, including two site assessments, nine cleanup investigations, three cleanup decision documents, and 6 cleanups.
- Provided \$900,000 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). HMM efforts to date to address the original 63 AOCs have led to 45 AOCs where EPA has determined that no further action is required by ARS.
- ARS is currently conducting in-depth investigations at eight AOCs and EPA will likely require further investigation at an additional five AOCs. ARS has completed cleanup of one AOC and

that site is undergoing long-term performance monitoring. In September 2025, EPA signed a Record of Decision stating that no further action is required by ARS at one AOC.

- HMM invested \$65 million for investigations and cleanups at ARS facilities, through Fiscal Year 2025. ARS estimates the future environmental liability is over \$56 million to complete the remaining investigations, cleanups, and long-term monitoring through 2045. Results of investigations in progress and subsequent remediation methods selection could increase this estimate. HMM 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. Development of a map viewer to spatially display contaminated site information was initiated to provide continuous improvement for program management.
- Continued enhancement of the Environmental Compliance and Enforcement dashboard which is linked to the EPA's Enforcement and Compliance History Online database for viewing environmental compliance information for more than 1,200 USDA permitted facilities.
- Monitored environmental compliance violations at various agencies and worked 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.
- Closed General Accountability Office #105408 on Mining Environmental Liabilities by implementing the actions recommended.
- Conducted over 30 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.