

Paul A. Coburn
S.L.C.

AMENDMENT NO.

Calendar No.

Purpose: To establish transparency in the conference process of the Department of Agriculture, to ensure that conferences do not become luxury junkets with unjustified costs, and to limit conference funding to not more than \$15,000,000.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES—110th Cong., 1st Sess.

(no.) **HR 2419**

AMENDMENT No. 3529

To By Coburn

To: Amdt. No. 3500

Refer 5

Page(s)

GPO: 2006 30-772 (Mac)

AMENDMENT intended to be proposed by Mr. COBURN

Viz:

- 1 At the appropriate place in title XI, insert the fol-
- 2 lowing:
- 3 **SEC. 11 ____ . DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE CON-**
- 4 **FERENCE TRANSPARENCY.**
- 5 (a) **REPORTS ON CONFERENCE EXPENDITURES.—**
- 6 For fiscal year 2008 and each fiscal year thereafter, the
- 7 Secretary shall submit to the Inspector General of the De-
- 8 partment of Agriculture quarterly reports that describe

1 the costs and contracting procedures relating to each con-
2 ference or meeting held by the Department of Agriculture
3 during the quarter covered by the report for which the
4 cost to the Federal Government was more than \$20,000.

5 (b) REQUIREMENTS.—Each report submitted under
6 subsection (a) shall include, for each conference and meet-
7 ing covered by the report—

8 (1) a description of the number participants at-
9 tending, and the purpose of those participants for
10 attending, the conference or meeting;

11 (2) a detailed statement of the costs incurred
12 by the Federal Government relating to that con-
13 ference or meeting, including—

14 (A) the cost of any food or beverages;

15 (B) the cost of any audio-visual services;

16 (C) the cost of all related travel; and

17 (D) a discussion of the methodology used
18 to determine which costs relate to that con-
19 ference or meeting; and

20 (3) a description of the contracting procedures
21 relating to that conference or meeting, including—

22 (A) whether contracts were awarded on a
23 competitive basis; and

24 (B) a discussion of any cost comparison
25 conducted by the Department of Agriculture in

1 evaluating potential contractors for any con-
2 ference or meeting.

3 (c) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—

4 (1) DEFINITION OF CONFERENCE.—In this sub-
5 section, the term “conference” means a meeting
6 that—

7 (A) is held for consultation, education,
8 awareness, or discussion;

9 (B) includes participants who are not all
10 employees of the same agency;

11 (C) is not held entirely at an agency facil-
12 ity;

13 (D) involves costs associated with travel
14 and lodging for some participants; and

15 (E) is sponsored by 1 or more agencies, 1
16 or more organizations that are not agencies, or
17 a combination of those agencies or organiza-
18 tions.

19 (2) REPORT.—Not later than September 30 of
20 each fiscal year, the Secretary shall submit to the
21 Committee on Agriculture of the House of Rep-
22 resentatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nu-
23 trition, and Forestry of the Senate, and post on the
24 public website of the Department of Agriculture in
25 a searchable, electronic format, a report on each

1 conference for which the Department of Agriculture
2 paid travel expenses during the fiscal year covered
3 by the report, including—

4 (A) a description of—

5 (i) the itemized expenses paid by the
6 Department of Agriculture, including trav-
7 el expenses and any other expenditures to
8 support the conference;

9 (ii) the primary sponsor of the con-
10 ference; and

11 (iii) the location of the conference;
12 and

13 (B) in the case of a conference for which
14 the Department of Agriculture was the primary
15 sponsor, a statement that—

16 (i) justifies the location selected;

17 (ii) demonstrates the cost efficiency of
18 the location;

19 (iii) specifies the date or dates of the
20 conference;

21 (iv) includes a brief explanation of the
22 ways in which the conference advanced the
23 mission of the Department of Agriculture;
24 and

1 (v) specifies the total number of indi-
2 viduals whose travel or attendance at the
3 conference was paid for, in whole or in
4 part, by the Department of Agriculture.

5 (d) LIMITATION ON FUNDING FOR CONFERENCES.—
6 Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, not more
7 than \$15,000,000 of amounts made available to the Sec-
8 retary pursuant to this Act and the amendments made by
9 this Act shall be used for expenses relating to conferences,
10 including for conference programs, conference travel costs,
11 and related expenses.