

Farm Bill in US Senate threatened by Marco Rubio



Washington, June 28 (RHC) The US Senate vote on an agricultural bill is at risk due to the political interests of rabid anti-Cuban Senator Marco Rubio, over the economic interest of US farmers and the American people in general.

The Florida Republican Senator tweeted on Wednesday that he would block any new amendments to the farm bill unless the Senate votes to strike a provision that would allow USDA funding for foreign market development programs to be spent on the island — or until senators adopt his proposal to ban U.S. taxpayer dollars from being spent on businesses owned by the Cuban military, reports Prensa Latina.

Rubio is being joined in his efforts to delete the Cuban amendment from the bill by fellow anti-Cuban lawmakers Bob Menendez and Ted Cruz.

On Wednesday, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell filed cloture on the bill, and the earliest final vote could be on Friday.

Senate Agriculture Chairman, Republican from Kansas Pat Roberts, said the U.S. agriculture community “is in dire need of this farm bill” because producers have endured slumping commodity prices that have led to a steep decline in farm income in recent years.

Lawmakers have cited those conditions as justification for passing a farm bill quickly to provide producers with a greater degree of economic certainty. The current farm bill expires at the end of September.

Roberts, referring indirectly to Rubio, said that passing a farm bill “is paramount over any other issue,” despite some lawmakers wanting to use the farm bill as a vehicle to make a reform “that they believe is very salutary.”

According to Politico magazine, many parts of the agriculture industry are interested in opening Cuba to more U.S. farm goods, seeing the island nation as a convenient and largely untapped market. The U.S.-Cuba Trade and Economic Council estimates that the island imported about \$260 million in U.S. farm goods last year.

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