

February 2021



**To:** Dr. Carrie Castille, Director, National Institute of Food and Agriculture

**CC:** Dr. Parag Chitnis, Associate Director for Programs

Members, APS Public Policy Board

Dear Dr. Castille;

The Public Policy Board of the American Phytopathological Society (APS) has a long and successful relationship with National Program Leaders (NPLs) and administrators of NIFA. With 4,200 members, APS is the country's largest professional society of plant health specialists. APS supports research-based science and fact-driven policies in agricultural research and education. We welcome the opportunity to continue our close relationship with NIFA program leaders and to discuss how we can align our mutual interests in sound scientific principles while supporting NIFA's delivery of intramural and extramural research and education programs.

The Public Policy Board would also like to meet with you, post pandemic, to discuss our support for NIFA's priority areas and the programs you administer. In past years, a small group of our members traveled to Washington DC, where we met NPLs and administrators directly to discuss our mutual goals. Under the current circumstances, we propose a virtual meeting with you, Parag Chitnis and program leaders as available in March or April of this year. Please let me know if your schedule allows a virtual meeting with APS members and who we should invite from your agency.

I look forward to working with you as we continue our collaborative relationship to further advance the mission of NIFA.

Respectfully,

Rick Bennett, Chair, APS Public Policy Board

