

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
United States Senate  
Chair, Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
United States Senate  
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Hoeven  
United States Senate  
Chair, Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug  
Administration, and Related Agencies  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeff Merkley  
United States Senate  
Ranking Member, Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and  
Drug Administration, and Related Agencies  
Washington, DC 20510

June 26, 2019

Dear Chairmen Shelby and Hoeven and Ranking Members Leahy and Merkley:

We, the undersigned stakeholders, are committed to scientific integrity and to growing public funding of food and agricultural research to address pressing global, domestic, and local challenges. We are grateful for the increases you have been able to make for research over the past several years in the agricultural appropriations bill, and we urge you to keep moving forward to revitalize the research budget. We are very concerned, however, that this progress, and indeed the integrity of USDA science, is being undermined by recent administrative decisions.

In light of our commitments to scientific integrity and to enhancing agricultural research funding, commitments we share with you, we urge you to immediately take all steps necessary to support agricultural research by rejecting funding cuts and rejecting the expenditure of funds to relocate the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and Economic Research Service (ERS) outside the hub of science and statistical agencies located in the National Capital Region (NCR).

As stakeholders, we know firsthand the importance of scientific research, education, extension, economics, and statistics to our nation's trillion dollar plus agricultural economy. The investments made through USDA's Research, Education and Economics (REE) mission area are essential for American trade, agricultural production, human health and nutrition, innovation, and to complement our nation's broader basic research and statistical investments. As partners who leverage public dollars to achieve solutions to local and global agricultural problems, we do not support severing beneficial ties across science and statistical institutions. We also believe that

relocating these agencies with no clear multi-stakeholder engagement plan will have severe short- and long-term effects on investment efficiency and result in unnecessary transaction costs that will undermine the agencies' viability into the future.

Relocating NIFA and ERS will have a significant negative impact on the future role and strength of America's vaunted agricultural research and extension enterprise. The action jeopardizes the efficacy of state, local, private, and non-governmental sector funding for agricultural research and extension, creating a potential economic loss of more than \$26 billion,<sup>i,ii</sup> and impacting tens of thousands of direct and indirect jobs in every district of every state. Keeping NIFA in NCR is essential for its interactions with the other major research agencies in Washington. Moving it away sends a clear message that agricultural research is not as important as research funded by the National Science Foundation, Department of Energy, the National Institutes of Health, and numerous other major research agencies. Simply put, these actions would needlessly unravel a strong system that provides innumerable benefits to our nation's productivity, profitability, and rural economy and human health.

We note, with alarm, that Congress was not given a cost benefit justification prior to the announcement in August 2018. Additionally, Congress has still not been given a cost benefit analysis that is informed by OMB circular guidance, a detailed budget plan, the Office of the Inspector General report, or a multi-stakeholder plan to provide input on the future of agricultural research and statistics.

We therefore respectfully request that you include bill language stating that no funding be used for relocation or reorganization of ERS and NIFA in FY20. We further urge you to withhold approval of any and all reprogramming requests. We believe a robust congressional response is necessary to uphold the future efficacy of public agricultural research investments.

Sincerely,

Aaniiih Nakoda College  
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
Acadia Foods  
Agricultural & Applied Economics Association  
Agriculture and Land Based Training Association  
Alabama Sustainable Agriculture Network  
Alamosa Farmers' Market  
American Association for Public Opinion Research  
American Association for the Advancement of Science  
American Association of Family & Consumer Sciences  
American Dairy Science Association  
American Federation of Government Employees  
American Heart Association  
American Indian Higher Education Consortium  
American Indian Mothers Inc.  
American Institute of Biological Sciences  
American Malting Barley Association  
American Public Health Association  
American Samoa Community College, Agriculture, Community & Natural Resources Division

American Society for Horticultural Science  
Antibiotic Resistance Action Center, GW Milken Institute School of Public Health  
Appetite for Change  
Arkansas Land and Community Development  
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges  
Association of Population Centers  
Association of State Public Health Nutritionists  
California Institute for Rural Studies  
California Polytechnic State University, College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences  
Carolina Farm Stewardship Association  
CASA del Llano, Inc.  
Center for Agricultural Development and Entrepreneurship  
Center for Foodborne Illness Research & Prevention  
Center for Rural Affairs  
Center for Science in the Public Interest  
Certified Naturally Grown  
Child Care Aware of America  
Clif Bar & Company  
Coalition on Human Needs  
Coastal Enterprises, Inc.  
Colorado Blueprint to End Hunger  
Colorado Springs Food Rescue  
Community Farm Alliance  
Consortium of Social Science Associations  
Consumer Federation of America  
Cooperative Development Institute  
Cornell University, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences  
Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics  
Dawson Resource Council  
Decision Demographics  
Defenders of Wildlife  
Detroit Food Policy Council  
Double Up Food Bucks Garfield County  
Entomological Society of America  
Fair Food Network  
Family Farm Defenders  
Farm Aid  
Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance  
Farm to Institution New England  
Farm Women United  
Farmworker Association of Florida  
Federation of Animal Science Societies  
First Focus Campaign for Children  
Food & Water Watch  
Food Animal Concerns Trust

Food Policy Action  
FoodCorps  
Friends of the Earth  
Friends of the Earth  
Good Food for All  
Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities  
HEAL (Health, Environment, Agriculture, Labor) Food Alliance  
Hempstead Project Heart  
Holy Moly Farm  
Hunt or Gather  
Ilisagvik College  
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy  
Jefferson County Food Policy Council  
Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future  
Kansas Black Farmers Association, INC  
La Semilla Food Center  
Land for Good  
Little Big Horn College  
LiveWell Colorado  
Maine Farmland Trust  
Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association  
Michael Fields Agricultural Institute  
Michigan Food and Farming Systems  
Michigan State University, AgBioResearch  
Michigan State University, College of Agriculture & Natural Resources  
Missouri Coalition for the Environment  
Montana Organic Association  
Montana State University  
National Association of University Fisheries and Wildlife Programs  
National Barley Improvement Committee  
National Family Farm Coalition  
National Farm to School Network  
National Farmers Union  
National Hmong American Farmers, Inc.  
National Latino Farmers and Ranchers Trade Association  
National Latinos Farmers and Ranchers  
National Organic Coalition  
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition  
National WIC Association  
National Young Farmers Coalition  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
Nebraska Indian Community College  
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice  
New Orleans Food Policy Advisory Committee  
North American Regional Science Council  
North Carolina Association of Black Lawyers Land Loss Prevention Project

Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA)  
Northeast Organic Farming Association of Massachusetts (NOFA-MA)  
Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York (NOFA-NY)  
Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT)  
Northeast Organic Farming Association-Interstate Council  
Northwest Forest Worker Center  
Northwest Indian College  
Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association  
Oregon State University, Center for Small Farms & Community Food Systems  
Oregon State University, College of Agricultural Sciences  
Oregon Tilth  
Organic Farming Research Foundation  
Organic Seed Alliance  
PCC Community Markets  
Peace Roots Alliance  
Penn State University, College of Agricultural Sciences  
Pesticide Action Network  
Pinnacle Prevention  
Poetry X Hunger  
Population Association of America  
Renewing the Countryside  
Restoration Urban Farm of New England  
Rhode Island Food Policy Council  
Rhode Island Healthy Schools Coalition  
Roots of Changer  
Rural Advancement Foundation International-USA  
Rural Coalition  
Rural Sociological Society  
Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College  
San Luis Valley Local Foods Coalition  
Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior  
South Carolina State University  
South Dakota State University  
Southeast Michigan Census Council  
Southern Regional Science Association  
Southwest Institute for Resilience  
Strategic Consulting Services  
Sustainable Food Center  
SustainFloyd  
The American Phytopathological Society  
The Food Trust  
The Ohio State University, College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences  
Union of Concerned Scientists  
United States Breastfeeding Committee  
University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources  
University of California, Berkeley

University of California, Davis  
University of California, Merced  
University of California, Riverside  
University of California, Santa Cruz  
University of Colorado, Colorado Springs - Sustainability, Wellness and Learning Program  
University of Maryland  
University of Rhode Island, College of the Environment and Life Sciences  
University of Tennessee, Institute of Agriculture  
University of Vermont, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences  
US Dairy Forage Research Center Stakeholder Advisory Committee  
Utahns Against Hunger  
Virginia Association for Biological Farming  
Washington State Department of Health  
Washington State University  
World Perspectives, Inc.  
Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation

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<sup>i</sup> OECD (2016), *Innovation, Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability in the United States*, OECD Food and Agricultural Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264264120-en>.

<sup>ii</sup> Alston, J.M. Andersen, J. James, and P.G. Pardey (2011), "The economic returns to US public agricultural research", *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* Vol. 93, pp. 1257–1277. <http://ajae.oxfordjournals.org/content/93/5/1257.abstract>.