

September 16, 2016

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Cochran and Rogers & Ranking Members Mikulski and Lowey,

The undersigned organizations support the inclusion of \$3 million within the *Fiscal Year 2017 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act* to better inform the public about the application of biotechnology to food and agricultural production.

Regrettably, there is a tremendous amount of misinformation about agricultural biotechnology in the public domain. Dedicated educational resources will ensure key federal agencies responsible for the safety of our nation's food supply – the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) – are able to more easily convey to the public science- and fact-based information about food.

Agricultural innovation is important to all Americans because it enables plant and animal producers to increase production of healthful food using less land, while conserving soil, water, and on-farm energy. These benefits are passed on to consumers who reap the advantage of affordable food prices, greater access to nutritious food, an improved environment, a strengthened rural economy, and enhanced domestic and international food security.

Embracing modern agriculture is the right thing to do for our country, which has a rich history of nurturing science, research, and innovation in all areas of the economy, including farming. As President Obama stated in December 2011, "The world is shifting to an innovation economy and nobody does innovation better than America." This presidential quote is displayed prominently in the *National Bioeconomy Blueprint*, which embraces and promotes the use of biotechnology as a significant driver of American economic growth.

The United States is strong and prosperous because American leaders embrace the responsible use of technology and set forth public policies to move the nation forward in this regard. Science education plays an important role in this forward momentum. That is why we support the inclusion of \$3 million for FDA and USDA to help the public better understand science- and fact-based information about agricultural biotechnology.

We urge you to retain this provision throughout the legislative process and oppose any legislative action to restrict agricultural technology development, to hinder farmers' access to modern agricultural tools, or to malign advancements in plant and animal agricultural applications that are helping society meet current and future food production challenges.

Sincerely,
The American Phytopathological Society and many other societies

Cc: The Honorable Jerry Moran
The Honorable Jeff Merkley
The Honorable Robert Aderholt
The Honorable Sam Farr