

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,^{i,ii} 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

ⁱ 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>.

ⁱⁱ 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>.