

March 25, 2019<sup>1</sup>

The Honorable Sanford Bishop  
Chair, Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food  
and Drug Administration, and Related  
Agencies  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

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

The Honorable Jeff Fortenberry  
Ranking Member, Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural  
Development, Food and Drug  
Administration, and Related Agencies  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

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

Dear Chairs Bishop and Hoeven and Ranking Members Fortenberry and Merkley,

As strong supporters of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) research mission area, we write to express serious concern regarding the USDA's proposed relocation of the Economic Research Service (ERS) and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and the reorganization of ERS. In our view, these proposals are likely to result in a major negative impact on U.S. farmers, ranchers, consumers, and researchers.

As you prepare FY 2020 agriculture appropriations legislation, we respectfully request that you include bill language stating no funding be used for relocation or reorganization of ERS and that no funding be used for the NIFA relocation outside the National Capital Region. We also request that you deny any FY 2019 reprogramming requests from USDA for them to continue to implement relocation.

Our shared fundamental belief is that the proposed relocation and reorganization will undermine the quality and breadth of the work these agencies support and perform – work that is vital to informing and supporting US agriculture, food security, and rural development. The rationale provided by the USDA for the relocation also fails to identify problems substantive enough to justify such a disruption of ERS's and NIFA's operations, and jeopardizes the much needed growth in funding for both agencies' programs.

Equally concerning is that USDA made their decision last summer without stakeholder or congressional input. How USDA fosters, supports, and guides US agriculture and food research and analysis has evolved through the decades in close consultation with the broader community.

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<sup>1</sup> This letter was originally sent on March 25 with 101 signers. The [letter is being kept open](#) for additional signers, with the total number now 108.

Secretary Perdue's unilateral decision goes against decades of improvements and collaboration and contradicts the Department's stated goal of better serving stakeholders.

The USDA proposal has the potential to reverse the significant progress your subcommittees have made in recent years to revitalize agricultural research, education, extension, and economics. Consequently, we believe that preventing the proposal from moving forward is in the best interest of American food and agricultural research, and the millions who depend on it.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request. We would welcome the opportunity to further discuss these issues with you.

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
Agricultural & Applied Economics  
Association  
Alianza Nacional de Campesinas  
American Association for Public Opinion  
Research  
American Dairy Science Association  
American Heart Association  
American Indian Mothers Inc  
American Malting Barley Association  
American Phytopathological Society  
American Public Health Association  
American Pulse Association  
American Society for Nutrition  
American Society of Animal Science  
American Statistical Association  
Antibiotic Resistance Action Center, The  
George Washington University  
Association of American Veterinary  
Medical Colleges  
Association of Population Centers  
BioRegional Strategies  
California Institute for Rural Studies  
Carolina Farm Stewardship Association  
Center for Foodborne Illness Research &  
Prevention  
Center for Rural Affairs  
Center for Science in the Public Interest  
Concerned Citizens of Tillery, NC  
Consortium of Social Science Associations  
Consumer Federation of America  
Cooperative Development Institute

Council of Professional Associations on  
Federal Statistics  
Decision Demographics  
Entomological Society of America  
Fair Food Network  
Family Farm Defenders  
Farm to Institution New England  
FASS  
Fertile Ground  
First Focus Campaign for Children  
Food & Water Watch  
Food Animal Concerns Trust  
Food Research and Action Center  
FoodCorps  
Friends of the Earth  
Harvest Time Outreach Ministries  
Idaho Barley Commission  
Indigenous Environmental Network  
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy  
Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future  
Kansas Black Farmers Association  
Keep Antibiotics Working  
Land For Good  
Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food, Education  
& Policy, Teachers College Columbia  
University  
Maine Farmland Trust  
Michael Fields Agricultural Institute  
Michigan State University AgBioResearch  
Mississippi Association of Cooperatives  
Missouri Coalition for the Environment  
National Barley Growers Association  
National Barley Improvement Committee

National Family Farm Coalition  
National Farmers Union  
National Latino Farmers & Ranchers Trade Assn  
National Organic Coalition  
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition  
National WIC Association  
National Young Farmers Coalition  
North American Regional Science Council  
North Carolina Association of Black Lawyers Land Loss Prevention Project  
Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont  
Northeast Organic Farming Association, Interstate Council  
Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group  
Northern New Mexico Stockmen's Association  
Northwest Forest Worker Center  
O'Connor Analytics LLC  
Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association  
Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project, Inc.  
Oregon State University Center for Small Farms & Community Food Systems  
Oregon Tilth  
Organic Farming Research Foundation  
Organic Seed Alliance  
Peace-Work  
Pesticide Action Network  
Pima County Food Alliance

pineapple collaborative  
Pinnacle Prevention  
Population Association of America  
Restaurant Services, Inc.  
Rural Advancement Fund of the National Sharecroppers Fund  
Rural Coalition  
Rural Development Leadership Network  
Rural Sociological Society  
Share Our Strength  
Slow Food USA  
Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior  
Southeast Michigan Census Council  
SouthEast Michigan Producers Association  
Southern Regional Science Association  
Sustainable Agriculture of Louisville  
Sustainable Food Center  
Union of Concerned Scientists  
University of California, Davis  
US Canola Association  
US Dairy Forage Research Center Stakeholder Committee  
USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council  
Utahns Against Hunger  
Virginia Association for Biological Farming  
WineAmerica  
World Farmers  
World Perspectives, Inc.  
Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation

CC: Members, House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies

*NB: An [identical version of this letter was sent to the chair and ranking members](#) of the House and Senate Appropriation Committees.*