

March 25, 2019¹

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chair, Appropriations Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member, Appropriations
Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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

Dear Chairs Shelby and Lowey and Ranking Members Leahy and Granger,

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

¹ 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.

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
 (SEMPA)
 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 Appropriations Subcommittees on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and
 Drug Administration, and Related Agencies.*