

American Statistical Association Praises House Appropriations Bill Blocking USDA Research Arm Upheaval

Applauds Chairs Bishop and Lowey for Protecting Integrity of USDA Science

The American Statistical Association welcomes the [language](#) released today by the House Appropriations Committee in the FY20 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies bill. As stated in their [accompanying press release](#), “The bill includes language blocking USDA’s proposal to relocate the Economic Research Service (ERS) and the National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) outside the National Capital Region ... [and] blocks USDA’s proposal to put ERS, currently under USDA’s research mission area, under the Office of the Chief Economist, which is under the Office of the Secretary.” The bill also rejects the USDA’s proposed 50 percent cut to ERS programs, including to the following research areas:

1. Farm, conservation, and trade policy
2. Food assistance, nutrition, and diet quality
3. Rural economy and well-being
4. Food safety

ASA Executive Director Ron Wasserstein issued this statement:

We applaud Chair Sanford Bishop and his subcommittee for standing up for science and evidence-based policymaking at USDA. Secretary Sonny Perdue’s proposals would cripple the ability of ERS and NIFA to carry out their vital work supporting our food and agriculture as well as rural America, setbacks that could take many years to address. These sectors are too important to keeping our country fed and nourished to let the secretary proceed with a poorly justified upheaval of the USDA research arm that experts in the USDA stakeholder community agree is an illogical and counterproductive move.

Under Chair Bishop’s leadership and that of full committee Chair Nita Lowey, the House Appropriations Committee is exercising its oversight authority to ensure USDA’s research arm remains a strong and independent mission area. We hope the Senate will follow suit in protecting the integrity of USDA science.

We urge Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue to heed the House language and the wisdom and concerns of the broader USDA stakeholder community.

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See also the May 6 press release, [USDA's Research Short-List Announcement Another Step in Wrong Direction for Food and Agriculture Research and Policy](#); the March 25 press release, [101 Agriculture, Food, and Science Organizations Urge Congress to Block USDA Moves](#); the March 12 press release, [American Statistical Association, Other Leaders Maintain USDA's Upheaval of Research Arm Unwise, Counterproductive](#); and the December 5 press release, [The American Statistical Association Board of Directors Decries USDA Undermining of Federal Statistical Agency and Evidence-Based Policymaking](#).

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About the American Statistical Association

The ASA is the world's largest community of statisticians and the oldest continuously operating professional science society in the United States. Its members serve in industry, government and academia in more than 90 countries, advancing research and promoting sound statistical practice to inform public policy and improve human welfare. For additional information, please visit the ASA website at www.amstat.org.

As part of ASA's commitment to support the importance of government statistics for evidence-based policymaking, ASA created [Count on Stats](#). In partnership with over a dozen organizations, the initiative is designed to educate and inform the public about the critically important nature of federal data. Without federal agencies' data collection and analysis, we would not have key insights into nutrition, economic trends, community issues, public safety, agriculture, and countless other facets that are vital to our society. For additional information, please visit the Count on Stats website at www.countonstats.org.