

March 19, 2021

The Honorable John Yarmuth (KY-3), Chair
Committee on the Budget
204-E Cannon House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jason Smith (MO-8), Ranking Member
Committee on the Budget
204-E Cannon House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro (CT-3), Chair
Committee on Appropriations
H-307, The Capitol
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger (TX-12), Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
H-307, The Capitol
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Bernie Sanders (VT), Chair
Committee on the Budget
624 Dirksen Senate Office Building
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lindsey Graham (SC), Ranking Member
Committee on the Budget
624 Dirksen Senate Office Building
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy (VT), Chair
Committee on Appropriations
S-128, The Capitol
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby (AL), Vice Chair
Committee on Appropriations
S-128, The Capitol
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Yarmuth, Ranking Member Smith, Chair DeLauro, Ranking Member Granger, Chair Sanders, Ranking Member Graham, Chair Leahy, and Vice Chair Shelby:

America's farmers, ranchers, foresters, and producers are at the fulcrum of multiple challenges: the COVID-19 pandemic, the need to strengthen our interconnected food and agricultural systems, the inequity in those systems, climate change, and competition from other countries like China to feed the growing world population while still meeting our country's nutritional needs.

We strongly urge you to increase the 302(a) allocations for Appropriations Committees in Fiscal Year 2022 and the 302(b) allocations for the respective Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittees in order to significantly increase discretionary funding for crucial U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs to help our farmers and rural America.

According to USDA's Economic Research Service, "agriculture, food, and, related industries contributed \$1.109 trillion to the U.S. gross domestic product (GDP) in 2019, a 5.2-percent share," and account for 10.9 percent of U.S. employment.¹ Farmers, ranchers, foresters, and producers are the lifeblood of our rural communities. Strengthening investments in USDA

¹ <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/ag-and-food-statistics-charting-the-essentials/ag-and-food-sectors-and-the-economy/>

programs will help rebuild our rural communities, provide additional resources for socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers and ranchers, enhance our agriculture and food system, provide solutions to climate change, and protect our national security.

As compared to other appropriations subcommittees, the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittees have not received the same levels of increase. Considering how crucial rural America, agriculture, and food security is to our national security, USDA's programs should reflect similar levels of investment.

For example, the Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittees have had increased funding for the agencies under their jurisdiction from \$34.2 billion in Fiscal Year 2015 to \$49.5 billion in Fiscal Year 2021, a **44.7 percent** increase. The Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Subcommittees have also had increased funding for their agencies from \$50.1 billion in Fiscal Year 2015 to \$71.1 billion in Fiscal Year 2021, a **41.9 percent** increase. Over the same time period, the total discretionary funding for the Federal government increased **27 percent**.

The Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Subcommittees have been given much smaller increases, from \$20.6 billion in Fiscal Year 2015 to \$23.4 billion in Fiscal Year 2021, a mere **13.6 percent** increase. Public investment of USDA's programs should be significantly increased because:

- 1.) Farm Production and Conservation programs provide crop insurance, conservation and technical assistance programs, and commodity, lending, and disaster programs for farmers, ranchers, and other stewards of private agricultural lands and non-industrial private forest lands.
- 2.) Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services programs work to end hunger across the United States and improve the health of all Americans.
- 3.) Food Safety programs ensure that our commercial supply of meat, poultry, egg products, and catfish is safe, wholesome, and properly labeled and packaged.
- 4.) Marketing and Regulatory Programs enable the marketing of U.S. agricultural products, including organic and specialty crops, and ensure the care and health of animals and plants.
- 5.) Research, Education, and Economics programs, that include the Cooperative Extension System and 4-H, deliver science and innovation to our farmers, ranchers, foresters, and producers, giving them the tools needed to help mitigate the impacts of challenges facing our world, while still improving our Nation's food security.
- 6.) Rural Development programs improve our rural economy and quality of life in our rural communities by providing financial support for essential public facilities and services, which include broadband, electric and telephone service, emergency service facilities, health clinics, housing, and water and sewer systems.

- 7.) Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs programs provide farmers, ranchers, and producers with opportunities to compete globally by promoting exports of U.S. agricultural products.

We join in this urgent call to substantially increase public investment in USDA's programs and strongly urge your respective committees to increase 302(a) allocations and 302(b) allocations for Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittees.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Agricultural & Applied Economics Association
Agricultural Retailers Association
American Association of Meat Processors
American Association of Mycobacterial Diseases
American Dairy Science Association
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Farmland Trust
American Horticulture Industry Association (AmericanHort)
American Institute of Biological Sciences
American Malting Barley Association
American Mushroom Institute
American Phytopathological Society
American Pulse Association
American Society for Horticultural Science
American Society for Nutrition
American Society of Agronomy
American Society of Animal Science
American Society of Plant Biologists
American Soybean Association
American Statistical Association
American Veterinary Medical Association
Animal Health Institute
Aquatic Plant Management Society
Association of 1890 Research Directors
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges
Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities Board on Agriculture Assembly
Biotechnology Innovation Organization
California Association of Winegrape Growers
Charles Valentine Riley Memorial Foundation
Clif Bar & Company
Corn Refiners Association
Crop Science Society of America
CropLife America
Ecological Society of America
Entomological Society of America

Farm Credit Council
Farm Journal Foundation
Farmers Business Network
FASS
FRESHFARM Markets
Institute of Food Technologists
Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals – Multistate Initiative
National Agriculture in the Classroom Organization
National Association for the Advancement of Animal Science
National Association of Conservation Districts
National Association of Federal Veterinarians
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Barley Growers Association
National Barley Improvement Committee
National Bison Association
National Cattlemen’s Beef Association
National Coalition for Food & Agricultural Research
National Corn Growers Association
National Grange
National Immigrant Farming Initiative
National Pork Producers Council
National Sunflower Association
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
National Turfgrass Federation
National Turkey Federation
NC State University
North Central Regional Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors (NCRA)
North Central Weed Science Society
Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors (NERA)
Northeastern Weed Science Society
Organic Farming Research Foundation
Plant Based Products Council
Poultry Science Association
Produce Marketing Association
Rochester Institute of Technology
Rural & Agriculture Council of America
Rural Community Alliance
Society for Range Management
Soil and Water Conservation Society
Soil Science Society of America
Southern Weed Science Society
Supporters of Agricultural Research (SoAR) Foundation
The Breakthrough Institute
The Fertilizer Institute
U.S. Apple Association
U.S. Canola Association
Union of Concerned Scientists

United States Cattlemen's Association
United States Golf Association
University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture
USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council
USA Rice
Weed Science Society of America
Western Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors
Western Growers
Western Landowners Alliance
Western Society of Weed Science
Wisconsin State Cranberry Association

CC: Members of the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate Budget Committees
Members of the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committees
Chairs and Ranking Members of the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate
Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittees and Members
Chairs and Ranking Members of the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate
Agriculture Committees and Members