

Congress of the United States

Washington, D.C. 20515

August 7, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
H-232
United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
H-204,
United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
322 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
322 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader McConnell, Republican Leader McCarthy and Minority Leader Schumer,

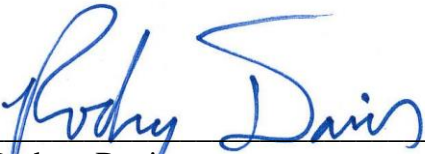
As you look to provide additional relief amid the COVID-19 pandemic, we respectfully request your consideration of our nation's agriculture and food industries and the research institutions that support them through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). Through NIFA's capacity and competitive programs, including the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative, experiment station and 1890s research, and Cooperative Extension, agricultural research institutions across the country assist producers, businesses, and local families while helping our nation maintain its competitive edge as the leader of global agricultural research.

Today, agriculture research accounts for just two percent of federal research and development spending, despite an incredible rate of return on these public invests that ranges from 20 to 60 percent. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, preserving and ultimately increasing investments that protect, secure, and improve our food, agriculture and natural resources systems is now more critical than ever before. These investments will drive changes that are key to maintaining our nation's ability to spur innovation for the future and quickly adapt to changing needs.

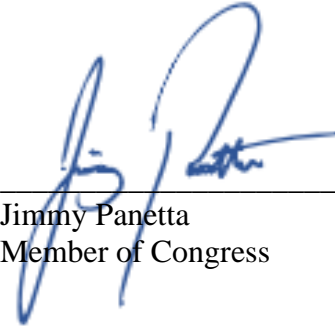
Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, expert personnel have continued their work, analyzing data, writing research proposals, and planning for safely conducting post-COVID-19 research; at the same time, unfortunately, a variety of unfunded costs arising across research environments have compromised their work. Disruptions have been felt in production research on farms and in labs; have negatively impacted prevention, protection, and response research regarding zoonotic diseases; and have completely shuttered some lab and field work focused on environmental health. In order to restart research with the necessary safety protocols in place, Congress must invest in additional resources to cover costs related to securing personal protective equipment and unbudgeted restart materials needed to safely facilitate research again. We also suggest that Congress consider supporting Cooperative Extension programs that help our nation's farmers, businesses and communities recover from COVID-19 economic impacts.

Our nation's ongoing commitment at the federal, state, and local levels to provide and secure a robust, safe, affordable, and accessible food supply is paramount to our national security. We look forward to working together on a bipartisan basis to ensure our nation's food security and appreciate your consideration of this request in order to ensure that critical agriculture research and Cooperative Extension activities can continue.

Sincerely,



Rodney Davis
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress