

September XX, 2019

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
H-232, The Capitol  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
H-204, The Capitol  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 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

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Chairwoman, Committee on Appropriations  
H-307, The Capitol  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Ranking Member, Committee on  
Appropriations  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Chairman, Senate Appropriations  
304 Russell Senate Office Building  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Vice Chairman, Senate Appropriations  
437 Russell Senate Office Building  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McConnell, Leader McCarthy, Leader Schumer, Chairwoman Lowey, Ranking Member Granger, Chairman Shelby and Vice Chairman Leahy,

Thank you for your past commitment and support for competitive agricultural research through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA-NIFA). The President's proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 budget requested \$500 million for the USDA-NIFA Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI), and we continue to support the maximum funding possible for this critical program.

NIFA-AFRI awards education, research, and extension grants that bolster our rural economies, sustainably increase food production, and invest in the next generation of our agricultural workforce.

The Economic Research Service has found that the rate on return for public investments in agricultural research ranges from 20 to 60 percent. We must continue to support agriculture research in order to sustain our family farms for generations to come. These efforts will help us maintain American leadership in international agriculture research, including innovations that will carry us forward.

In our enacted FY 2019 spending bill, with your help, we secured an overall funding increase of 5 percent for NIFA over FY 2018 levels. Earlier this year, a bipartisan group of 112 Members of the House of Representatives sent a letter to House Appropriators advocating for robust funding for USDA-NIFA's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative in FY 2020 appropriations which resulted in a House-passed bill that included \$460 million for NIFA-AFRI, an increase of \$45 million over enacted FY 2019 levels.

As you meet jointly to consider funding for FY 2020, we urge you to sustain this effort in order to continue the vital work of NIFA-AFRI, and request that a final spending bill include at least \$460 million for the program.

We are grateful for your leadership and hope that you will ensure NIFA-AFRI will be able to function at its full capacity with maximum funding. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

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Rodney Davis  
United States House of Representatives

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Jimmy Panetta  
United States House of Representatives

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Suzan DelBene  
United States House of Representatives