United States Senate

October 18, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear President Biden, Leader Schumer, and Speaker Pelosi:

As negotiations continue on delivering the "Build Back Better" agenda for the American people, we are writing to request that critical investments currently included in the House version of the reconciliation bill be protected from any potential funding cuts. Specifically, we are asking that the $7.75 B provided for agriculture research be retained in the final bill.

A cornerstone of the "Build Back Better" agenda is tackling the climate crisis so that we leave the planet a better place for future generations. The pandemic has shed light on the crucial role that our domestic agricultural industry plays in American society. Research investments are sorely needed to ensure not only that farmers and producers have the tools necessary to continue providing food, feed, and fiber to communities all across the country in the face of climate change, but that farmers and producers are able to contribute to the climate change solution.

According to the 2018 National Climate Assessment, the impacts of climate change on U.S. agriculture will be most felt in rural communities, who steward almost three-quarters of our nation's land. Many of these communities, however, suffer from population loss, slow employment, and higher rates of poverty when compared to urban areas, resulting in reduced capacity to adapt to climate change. Additionally, the Environmental Protection Agency estimates that agriculture contributed to 10 percent of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions in 2019. By making bold investments through "Build Back Better" we have the opportunity to not only ensure that rural communities are not left behind, but also that they are able to make significant contributions to reducing our country's greenhouse gas emissions.

Addressing the climate crisis will require cutting-edge research conducted by top scientists in state of the art research facilities. Unfortunately, agricultural research facilities all across the country are suffering from deferred maintenance. The $3.65 B currently included in the House reconciliation bill ensures significant investment in updating our research facilities to attract and retain the best and the brightest to help tackle climate change—one of the greatest threats facing our society. Additionally, of that amount the bill sets aside $985.5 M to make improvements at minority-serving institutions. Not only will that funding support building a diverse agricultural workforce, but doing so will empower the next generation of minority and underrepresented individuals to find solutions to addressing climate change, which disproportionately impacts minority communities. Finally, these infrastructure upgrades are likely to directly result in greenhouse gas emission reductions, as more efficient systems and greener building materials are becoming increasingly cost competitive.

The other $4.1 B included in the bill provides important public research investments to ensure that America's farmers are able to adapt to the myriad challenges that climate change will provide, including increased pest and disease pressures and shifting rainfall patterns, to name a few. This research will also be instrumental in helping farmers and producers play a role in addressing climate change through the adoption of climate-friendly agricultural practices such as planting of cover crops, reducing tillage, or decreasing use of energy-intensive inputs such as fertilizer. Investments in public research have declined for far too long and we cannot expect our producers to feed more people with yesterday's innovations. We need new science-driven technologies that conserve resources while ensuring America's long-term food security. Simply put, the United States cannot expect American agriculture to remain globally competitive if we fail to provide significant investments in both research and research facilities.

The "Build Back Better" plan has been described as a transformative, once in a generation opportunity to make bold investments in our families, both rural and urban, and their futures. A key component of that is ensuring that America's agricultural industry has the facilities, the scientists, the research, and the next generation of workers to continue putting food on families' tables in the face of climate change while also reducing greenhouse gas emissions. As such, we ask that $7.75 B in agriculture research be retained in the final reconciliation bill to adequately equip American agriculture for the future.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator

Reverend Raphael Warnock
United States Senator

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

Alex Padilla
United States Senator

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

Ron Wyden
United States Senator

Ben Ray Luján
United States Senator

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

CC: Brian Deese, Director, National Economic Council, The White House;
Dr. Eric Lander, Director, Office of Science and Technology Policy, The White House;
Susan Rice, Director, Domestic Policy Council, The White House;
The Honorable Debbie Stabenow, Chair, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry;
The Honorable David Scott, Chair, House Agriculture Committee

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Agriculture
Washington, DC 20515

October 7, 2021

Dear President Biden, Speaker Pelosi, and Majority Leader Schumer,

As we work with the White House to deliver on the Build Back Better Agenda, we—the Democratic Members of the House Committee on Agriculture—wanted to highlight the critical investments we have included in our portions of the budget reconciliation process. These investments are essential to maintaining President Biden's promise to "build back better" not just in urban and suburban communities, but also in rural and agricultural communities across the nation. As such, we respectfully urge that these provisions be maintained in any version of the *Build Back Better Act* passed by Congress.

The provisions included in the agriculture portion of the *Build Back Better Act* will make transformative investments that will benefit agricultural producers and rural communities for years and decades to come in the areas of agricultural research, rural development, renewable energy, biofuels, conservation, and forestry, as well as providing debt relief and assistance to economically distressed, at risk, and historically underserved farmers and producers.

America has been the world leader in agricultural research and innovation, but that position is at risk if we do not make key investments in research and education programs and our agricultural research facilities to help mitigate the impacts of climate change on our food and fiber production. These scholarships and investments will help train the next generation of agricultural scientists and specialists and ensure equity in agriculture by developing a diverse pipeline of agriculture professionals.

The Build Back Better agenda put a special emphasis on ensuring that rural communities and our communities at risk in rural areas be provided with the tools to address the need for clean drinking water, a transition to renewable energy sources, encouraging energy efficiency efforts, and continuing a role for biofuels in our transportation system.

The funding provided for climate-smart agriculture practices will help to address the fact that our current farm bill conservation programs are already oversubscribed with continuing backlogs that show the demand from producers and landowners willing to undertake efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and rebuild soil carbon.

We have also included a historic investment that will allow USDA's Forest Service to be more responsive and proactive in their efforts to mitigate the disastrous wildfire years that have ravaged our Western states and to work with their partners on the needs of state and private forests, including reaching out to underserved private forest landowners.

As we work towards a path forward, we encourage you to keep these crucial investments in place, and we look forward to any further discussions on the importance these investments will have, especially as we prepare to write the next farm bill.

Sincerely,

Rep. DAVID SCOTT, *Chairman*

Rep. Jim Costa

Rep. James P. McGovern

Rep. Filemon Vela

Rep. Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.

Rep. Abigail Spanberger

Rep. Jahana Hayes

Rep. Antonio Delgado

Rep. Bobby L. Rush

Rep. Chellie Pingree

Rep. Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan

Rep. Ann M. Kuster

Rep. Cheri Bustos

Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney

Rep. Stacey E. Plaskett

Rep. Tom O'Halleran

Rep. Salud Carbajal

Rep. Ro Khanna

Rep. Al Lawson, Jr.

Rep. J. Luis Correa

Rep. Angie Craig

Rep. Josh harder

Rep. Cynthia Axne

Rep. Kim Schrier M.D.

Rep. Jimmy Panetta

Rep. Ann Kirkpatrick

Rep. Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.

Our food supply is under threat from climate extremes: Congress must act to save it

BY BENJAMIN HOULTON, OPINION CONTRIBUTOR — 09/09/21 11:30 AM EDT 230
THE VIEWS EXPRESSED BY CONTRIBUTORS ARE THEIR OWN AND NOT THE VIEW OF THE HILL

Just last week, crop markets were roiled by Hurricane Ida, which damaged export facilities and threatened to slow agricultural trade. Market volatility is only just one reason for concern. This year's record winter storm in Texas and the megadrought in the western U.S. are causing serious damage to crop production. Agricultural productivity over the past 60 years was 21 percent lower than it would have been without climate change — the equivalent of seven years of lost productivity growth. And this trend is only expected to worsen, with rising global temperatures projected to significantly reduce crop yields in coming decades.

High operating costs, volatile commodity prices, and stagnating yields are exerting major pressure on farmers and many are struggling to survive. Today, nearly 90 percent of American farm families require off-farm income to keep their farms afloat, according to USDA's Economic Research Service. Further contraction in the industry and losses in productivity will ultimately threaten our access to safe, affordable food and worsen global hunger, which is already on a menacing rise.

As climate change intensifies, researchers are working hard to help farmers adapt — developing a host of new climate-smart farming solutions, including new drought-resistant crop varieties, improved management practices to conserve water, and digital tools to optimize input efficiency.

Perhaps most importantly, we are finding that agriculture can be a powerful tool for mitigating climate change. Farms don't have to be victims of this challenge — they can

take active steps to fight against it if the U.S. makes substantial new investments to support the commoditization of carbon. We can increase carbon sequestration in soils by using natural additives such as biochar, compost, and rock dust — all while increasing crop yields.

Agricultural research is key to fighting climate change and protecting global food supplies, but pathways to innovation are under threat. The U.S. has fallen behind competitors China and Brazil in public support for agricultural research, according to a recent report commissioned by Farm Journal Foundation and the American Farm Bureau Federation. U.S. public funding has declined in real dollars since 2003, while investments in other forms of domestic research have risen.

This lack of support means that across the U.S., many potentially groundbreaking studies are significantly underfunded or even unfunded — which can delay or stifle important discoveries. What's more, many universities are in desperate need of infrastructure investments to upgrade laboratories and other facilities for the 21st century. According to the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities, 69 percent of the buildings and facilities at U.S. schools of agriculture are at the end of their useful life.

Public support for agricultural research is necessary to fill gaps left by the private sector. Often, public funding serves as a foundation for early-stage developments that can unlock significant innovations longer term. Publicly funded research can also open up access to new technologies for a broad range of farmers — including smallholders in developing countries where the impacts of climate change and hunger are most acute. In addition, private companies often focus their research investments on a few major crop markets, leaving other important areas under-explored, such as the environment, specialty crops, and food safety.

Importantly, public funding can also leverage private-sector dollars, as the Foundation for Food & Agriculture Research has shown. FFAR, a public-private model established by Congress in 2014 to fund urgent agricultural research, matches every dollar in government funding it receives with another dollar from a non-federal source, creating great returns for taxpayers.

To ensure the nation's agricultural scientists can do their work — and that groundbreaking discoveries can reach farmers and help fight climate change — the federal government needs to act now.

Specifically, Congress must prioritize funding for agricultural research in budget reconciliation legislation. The budget resolution that Congress just passed lays the

groundwork to make transformational, once-in-a-generation investments in these areas. For this to happen, however, members must direct a significant portion of funding toward research for climate change adaptation and mitigation, leveraging private sector resources where possible. Doing so will help reverse the long decline in public support for agricultural innovation and put the nation's farmers on a more secure path.

Scientific research takes years to refine and develop before new discoveries are ready for the market. This is why it's important to prioritize agricultural research funding today, to ensure that our nation's crop and livestock producers can stay one step ahead of the climate crisis.

The clock is ticking, and every season, farmers face greater and greater challenges. By increasing support for agricultural research now, we can help ensure that the best and brightest scientific ideas make it into farmers' hands — ultimately turning the agricultural industry into a climate change success story and creating a more food secure future for us all.

Benjamin Z. Houlton is the Ronald P. Lynch Dean of Cornell University's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and a professor of ecology and evolutionary biology as well as global development. His research interests include global ecosystem processes, climate change solutions, and agricultural sustainability.

1890 Universities Foundation

October 11, 2021

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader, United States Senate
Room S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer:

As you proceed with negotiating the Build Back Better human and climate infrastructure package, the 1890 Universities Foundation respectfully requests that you prioritize and protect the vital investments in agricultural climate research, agricultural Extension, and agricultural research infrastructure. The $7.75 billion agricultural research investment is only 0.2% of the House reconciliation package, but the impact of investment is invaluable for constructing enabling environments for minority students and faculty success. Additionally, it will advance solutions and technologies instrumental for addressing climate change and food security challenges.

America's Land-grant Universities, including the 1890 institutions, are uniquely positioned to address the climate challenges faced by American farmers, businesses, and communities. The research and outreach services performed by 1890 institutions Colleges of Agriculture are foundational for America's communities. Our nation's agricultural research and innovation network is complimented by the Cooperative Extension System which transfers science-based information to individuals, businesses, and communities. This system has a notable return on investment with $17 returned to the U.S. economy for every $1 invested.

Our nation is in a period of great transformation. The agricultural research portion of the Build Back Better legislation will reverse the unacceptable trend of asking faculty, students, and researchers to perform optimally in facilities constructed seventy years ago. This historic investment in state-of-the-art facilities will allow the agricultural, food, and biobased sciences to recruit a diversity of talent, add jobs to the economy, and enhance the U.S.' ability to compete with international rivals. It will renew America's commitment to food security, science, and agricultural innovation to make success universally accessible. This has never happened before.

America's agriculture and food system faces multiple threat to our social and economic future. From multi-year droughts, heat, and forest fires, to hurricanes and flooding, farmers, ranchers, and foresters require innovative tools to weather the storms. The research, innovation, and Extension funding provided in this package will allow us to be responsive to challenges with science and services to climate-proof our food system.

Investing in agricultural and food research, innovation, and agricultural facilities across America will revitalize and reformulate our agricultural system in a new light. Thank you for any support.

Sincerely,

Mortimer H. Neufville, PhD
President & CEO 1890 Universities Foundation

130 Years of Providing Access and Enhancing Opportunities

September 9, 2021

The Honorable David Scott
Chairman
House Agriculture Committee
1310 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Scott:

Thank you, the committee members and your staffs for your commitment and partnership in working with the 1890 HBCU Land-Grant Universities. My colleagues and I were pleased to join the Committee earlier this year to discuss investing in our universities to meet the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.

As the House Committee on Agriculture begins its budget reconciliation process, I would like to commend you for making certain that many of the priorities we have discussed are addressed in the legislation. These include new funding to build and renovate research facilities at our universities; increased funding for agricultural research and extension programs; additional support for our 1890 Centers of Excellence to focus on climate change; and new scholarship money to continue to increase the agriculture workforce pipeline. Together, with the investments in clean water programs, building reliable and efficient renewable energy sources and prioritizing rural job opportunities, this effort can have a meaningful impact in the communities we serve around the country.

As we continue to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic and begin a new school year, we welcome these new investments in our campus communities. No one bill or piece of legislation can solve every problem, but your efforts to increase awareness of the historical and systemic disparities among 1890 Land-Grant institutions and set a course for action to secure new and permanent funding priorities that preserve our unique land-grant mission, is very much appreciated. Thank you, again, for your leadership.

Sincerely,

Makola M. Abdullah
President, Virginia State University
Chairman, Council of 1890 Universities

cc: The Honorable Debbie Stabenow, Chairwoman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry

September 28, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
H-222 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
U. S. Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Yarmuth, Chairman
House Committee on the Budget
U.S. House of Representatives
204-E Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bernie Sanders, Chairman
Senate Budget Committee
U.S. Senate
624 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader Schumer, Chairman Sanders and Chairman Yarmuth,

The Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) Coalition thanks you for your leadership during the budget reconciliation process to make transformational investments in agricultural research that will help address our nation's most pressing food and public health challenges, now and in the future.

The AFRI Coalition includes organizations representing research institutions, scientific societies, and other food and agricultural stakeholders. Working together, we advocate for increased investments in AFRI, the nation's leading competitive grants program for agricultural sciences. The USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) awards AFRI research, education, and extension grants to improve rural economies, increase food production, stimulate the bioeconomy, mitigate impacts of climate change, address water availability issues, ensure food safety and security, enhance human nutrition, and train the next generation of the agricultural workforce.

The proposed **$7.75 billion for agricultural research** in the pending budget reconciliation package**, which includes $500 million in additional funding for AFRI**, is a true game-changer that will put American agriculture in the driver's seat once again to lead the world in global food security and environmental sustainability.

Agricultural research underpins the success of our food production. Small, targeted investments in lean years can support some progress, but decades of stagnant and inadequate publicly funded agricultural research have hindered the nation's ability to address climate change and invasive species mitigation, food safety and security, and rural economic prosperity. What is needed now are long-term investments in integrated, multidisciplinary agricultural research, which will help

farmers meet production challenges while achieving long-term environmental sustainability goals.

There is no doubt that agriculture will face future challenges as a result of a changing climate, including increasingly erratic temperature extremes and rainfall patterns that will exacerbate pest pressures and hinder crop yields. Despite incremental increases in AFRI funding via the annual discretionary appropriations process, roughly 70 percent of AFRI proposals that are deemed worthy by expert review panels go unfunded, simply because of insufficient funding. Robust investment in USDA-supported research is also needed to attract, retain, and develop the next generation of scientists to address increasing pressures on our natural resources and advance innovations benefiting all.

Thus, we strongly support the proposal for **$7.75 billion for agricultural research** in the budget reconciliation package**, especially the $500 million for the AFRI program**. This additional funding will help the AFRI competitive grant programs close some of the massive funding gaps that exist for highly ranked agricultural research proposals while supporting more targeted research that builds climate resilience, improves food security and rural economic prosperity, and trains the next generation of the agricultural workforce to help meet these challenges.

Respectfully,

The AFRI Coalition

About the AFRI Coalition: The AFRI Coalition is a coalition of diverse scientific societies and science advocacy organizations dedicated to highlighting the important role of federally-funded agricultural research, including AFRI, in advancing economic and environmental sustainability, enhancing nutrition, promoting health and fostering vibrant rural communities. The AFRI Coalition is united behind fully funding AFRI.

October 14th, 2021

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader, United States Senate

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker, United States House of Representatives

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Speaker Pelosi:

As you face many decisions in the coming week concerning the Build Back Better human and climate infrastructure package, we ask that you **please prioritize and protect the vital investments in agricultural climate research, agricultural innovation, and agricultural research infrastructure**. The **$7.75 billion agricultural research investment**, or just 0.2% of the proposed original total reconciliation package, underlies the tools necessary to build climate resilience and food security for all Americans.

Our agriculture and food system is highly vulnerable to climate change. From multi-year droughts, heat and forest fires to hurricanes and flooding, our farmers, ranchers, and foresters need innovative and powerful tools to weather the storms that are now arriving with greater force and frequency. R&D investments also impact American's access to a sustainable, equitable and healthy food supply.

A recent study found that U.S. public spending on food and agriculture R&D returns, on average, $17 in benefits for every $1 invested. Despite this incredible return, the United States' share of global agricultural R&D investment has decreased significantly in the last half-century, going from 20 percent to 8.9 percent.

These proposed investments are a generational down payment to fill critical R&D gaps and climate-proof our food system -- realizing agriculture's beneficial role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and supporting carbon sequestration. They provide funding for USDA research, the land grant colleges and universities, as well as tribal colleges and universities, historically Black colleges and universities, and Extension programs throughout the nation. Without these investments, we will face food supply shortages as well as an inability to mitigate climate change by storing carbon in our soils and forests.

Modern agricultural research and education facilities serve as the backbone of our nation's cutting-edge innovations, but unfortunately this research infrastructure has been woefully neglected for many years due to lack of sufficient funds. A recent study showed that 69% of buildings at U.S. colleges of agriculture are at the end of their useful life. This lack of investment stymies potential innovation and must be reversed so that our nation's top scientists can develop critical tools to enable our food system to weather climate change.

We look forward to working with you to make these critical investments for the agriculture and food sector.

Sincerely,

American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges
American Dairy Science Association
American Feed Industry Association
American Institute of Biological Sciences
American Malting Barley Association
American Mushroom Institute
American Phytopathological Society
American Samoa Community College, Agriculture, Community and Natural Resources Division
American Seed Trade Association
American Society for Microbiology
American Society for Nutrition

American Society of Agronomy
American Society of Plant Biologists
Amvac Chemical Corporation
Animal Health Institute
Aquatic Plant Managment Society
ASCC-ACNR (Land Grant Program)
Associated Oregon Hazelnut Industries (AOHI)
Association of Northeast Extension Directors
Association of 1890 Research Directors
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU)
Biotechnology Innovation Organization
Colorado State University
Cooperative Extension System, Extension Committee on Organization and Policy
Corn Refiners Association
Cornell University
Council for Agricultural Science and Technology
Crop Science Society of America
CropLife America
Donald Danforth Plant Science Center
Entomological Society of America
Eversole Associates
Experiment Station Committee on Organization and Policy
Farm Journal Foundation
FASS
Ferguson College of Agriculture, Oklahoma State University
Food Producers of Idaho
Idaho Alfalfa/Clover Seed Commission
Idaho Alfalfa/Clover Seed Growers Association
Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts
Idaho Dairymen's Association
Idaho Hay & Forage Association
Idaho Honey Industry Association
Idaho Irrigation Equipment Association
Idaho Noxious Weed Control Association
Idaho Oilseed Commission
Idaho Onion Growers' Association
Idaho Wheat Commission
Idaho Wool Growers Association
Idaho-Oregon Fruit and Vegetable Association
Illinois Green Industry Association
Institute of Food Technologists
International Wheat Genome Sequencing Consortium (IWGSC)
Iowa State University
Land For Good
Lincoln University of Missouri

Louisiana State University, AgCenter
Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association
Michigan Food & Farming Systems (MIFFS)
Michigan State University, AgBioResearch
Michigan State University, College of Agriculture & Natural Resources
Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals – Multistate Initiative
National Barley Improvement Committee
National Bison Association
National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research
National Milk Producers Federation
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
New Entry Sustainable Farming Project, Beverly, MA
New Jersey Landscape Contractors Association
Nezperce Prairie Grass Growers Association
North American Millers' Association
North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University
North Carolina State University
North Central Regional Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors
North Central Weed Science Society
Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors
Northeastern Weed Science Society
Northern Marianas College
Oklahoma State University Agricultural Programs
Oregon Association of Nurseries
Oregon Cattlemen’s Association
Oregon Dairy Farmers Association
Oregon State University, College of Agricultural Sciences
Oregon Women for Agriculture
Oregonians for Food and Shelter
Organic Farming Research Foundation
Penn State University
Pennsylvania Landscape & Nursery Assn.
Phytobiomes Alliance
Rochester Institute of Technology
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
Soil Science Society of America
Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors
Southern Idaho Potato Cooperative
Southern Weed Science Society
Supporters of Agricultural Research (SoAR) Foundation
Tennessee State University
Texas A&M AgriLife
The Breakthrough Institute
The Ohio State University
Tufts University

Union of Concerned Scientists
University of Arizona Division of Agriculture, Life and Veterinary Sciences, and Cooperative Extension
University of California System
University of California, Berkeley
University of California, Davis
University of California, Riverside
University of Florida
University of Guam
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, Agriculture Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service
University of Idaho
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences
University of Maine
University of Maine System
University of Maryland Eastern Shore
University of Maryland, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources – College Park
University of Puerto Rico Mayagüez, College of Agricultural Sciences
University of Tennessee
University of the Virgin Islands, School of Agriculture
University of Wisconsin, Madison College of Agricultural and Life Sciences and Division of Extension
University of Wyoming
US Dairy Forage Research Center Stakeholder Committee
Virginia Association for Biological Farming
Virginia Tech
Washington State University
Weed Science Society of America
West Virginia State University
West Virginia University
Western Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors
Western Extension Directors Association
Western Growers
Western Society of Weed Science

CC: The Honorable Debbie Stabenow, Chair, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry
The Honorable David Scott, Chair, House Agriculture Committee

ARD
Association of 1890 Research Directors, Incorporated
1890 Land-Grant Universities
Office of the Executive Director

October 11, 2021

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader Schumer:

As you proceed with negotiating the Build Back Better human and climate infrastructure package, the Association of 1890 Research Directors (ARD) writes to request that you prioritize and protect the agriculture research facilities, as well as research and innovation investments. The funding for the Research Facilities Act (RFA) will provide historic support to the United States Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture's capacity-eligible institutions, including the 1890 Colleges of Agriculture. This funding will allow modernization of our facilities and those of the greater system, enabling a renewal and transformation of our research capabilities to address climate challenges, as well as global agricultural pests, diseases, and viruses at the human-animal interface.

Historically, for every $1 invested, U.S. public food and agriculture R&D spending has returned $17, on average, to the American economy. Despite this incredible return on investment, the United States' share of global agricultural R&D has decreased significantly in the last half-century, going from 20 percent to 8.9 percent. At the same time, support for agricultural research facilities at U.S. colleges of agriculture has diminished—the deferred maintenance backlog is estimated to be *at least* $11.5 billion.

The nation's colleges of agriculture are key implementers of climate research and innovation because of the connection to local stakeholders. Yet, scientists cannot perform optimally in facilities from the 1950s and 1960s. Modern agriculture research facilities will allow for robust and needed research on climate change, food safety, zoonotic disease preparedness, biosecurity, biobased packaging, and advanced market analysis. State-of-the-art facilities will also allow the agricultural, food, and biobased sciences to recruit a diversity of talent, add jobs to the economy, and enhance the U.S.' ability to compete with international rivals.

ARD appreciates your consideration of our request and continued support for America's colleges of agriculture.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at athompson1@ncat.edu or at 336-285-2955.

Sincerely,

Alton Thompson, Ph.D.
Executive Director

May 25, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, Leader McCarthy, and Leader McConnell:

We are writing as members of Ceres' Climate-Smart Agriculture and Healthy Soil Working Group. We represent a group of leading companies who have joined together to make the case for ambitious action on climate, focusing on land-based solutions that help combat climate change while growing the economy. As companies that partner with American farmers, ranchers, and foresters who produce the ingredients and raw materials for consumer products, we are particularly focused on how Congress can better support agriculture and forest lands in becoming a solution to climate change. **We urge you to include a substantial investment of at least $200 billion over the next decade in support for climate mitigation and adaptation on farm, ranch and forestland in any infrastructure package or reconciliation bill that Congress is currently considering.** This amount will help scale work across hundreds of millions of acres of private working lands with millions of private landowners. The new management innovations that are needed require up-front capital, technical assistance and research & development to overcome the short-term costs most landowners face.

We are glad to see that Congress has turned its attention to infrastructure. Furthermore, we see tremendous opportunity for Congress to think big and pursue infrastructure investments that deliver good-paying clean energy jobs, environmental justice, and climate solutions that protect our economy and public health. *As companies, we believe that agriculture and forests are critical to achieving science-based emission reduction targets aligned with a 1.5-degree pathway globally*. Given that the U.S. is currently the world's second-largest GHG emitter and the U.S. agriculture sector is responsible for 10 percent of these emissions, there is an unprecedented opportunity for this sector to demonstrate climate leadership and lead the shift to net-zero.

Consumer brands in the private sector are working with the agriculture and forestry industry on emissions reductions, particularly through corporate climate commitments. We cannot achieve net-zero alone and welcome public-private partnerships to help scale quicker and across more working landscapes. Farmers, ranchers, and foresters need greater support from USDA programs tailored toward climate mitigation and adaptation while planning and implementing conservation activities. They are

essential if we are to achieve the kind of broad engagement across all agriculture and forestry sectors that is urgently needed to turn this sector into a climate solution.

We appreciate that the Biden-Harris Infrastructure proposal calls for "positioning the U.S. agricultural sector to lead the shift to net-zero emissions while providing new economic opportunities for farmers." Unfortunately, we also know that many of the current USDA programs that support farmers, ranchers, and foresters in climate mitigation and adaptation are *greatly oversubscribed*. We believe it is essential that any infrastructure package or reconciliation instructions to the House Committee on Agriculture and the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry ***include $200 billion over the next decade to support new and existing USDA conservation, research, renewable energy, tree planting, and food systems initiatives. This funding should be in addition to robust funding for rural development programs including investments in USDA rural water, broadband, business, and electric program*s**.

Many of our companies are already working with USDA to advance and co-finance strategies to engage farmers, ranchers and foresters in climate mitigation and adaptation. It is imperative for the public and private sectors to invest today to achieve the vision of a healthier future where American agriculture and forestry are leading the way towards net-zero emissions across the entire U.S. economy.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Danone North America
Fetzer Vineyards
Impossible Foods
Indigo Agriculture
Nestlé
Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI)
Stonyfield Organic

CC:
The Honorable Debbie Stabenow, Chairwoman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
The Honorable John Boozman, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
The Honorable David Scott, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture
The Honorable Glenn "GT" Thompson, Ranking Member, House Committee on Agriculture

September 8, 2021

U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow
Chairwoman, United State Senate Committee
Nutrition & Forestry
328A Russell SOB
Washington, D.C. 20510

U.S. Representative David Scott
United States House Agriculture Committee on Agriculture,
1301 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Stabenow and Representative Scott,

Thank you for your ongoing work to improve the well-being of rural communities and support for sustainable agriculture in the budget reconciliation process. This is an important opportunity to make investments that can bring long term value for farmers, businesses, consumers, and the planet that supports all of us. Clif Bar & Company, with an agricultural footprint in more than a dozen states, offers the following suggestions that we believe will encourage an agriculture system with improved social and environmental sustainability.

Conservation and Climate

We support the request of the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition to increase working lands conservation funding by $30 billion, with a specific target to provide technical assistance to BIPOC producers to better engage them in program opportunities. While there are many ideas and theories about how we can mitigate agriculture's GHG impact, the proven reality is that working lands conservation programs are immediate and actionable. We also support the funding of a Civilian Climate Corps to Americans respond to our current climate crisis and help transition to clean economy by helping protect our natural resources.

Renewable Energy on Farm

Increase funding for the Rural Development's Renewable Energy for America Program (REAP) by $300 million annually with an increase in cost share to 50%, and with a special set-aside of funds or increased cost-share for BIPOC and beginning farmers and ranchers. We are at a moment when on-farm energy generating potential is increasing with more affordable farm-scale opportunities from solar panels with pollinator habitat underneath, to biodigesters, or wind generated power. REAP has historically been oversubscribed and we are at a moment when technology scaled for farmers is available and opportunity abounds.

Organic

Organic is the original regenerative, and its potential to improve biodiversity, water quality and soil health can be expanded. While some of that potential needs to be untapped via improved speed in USDA managing new standard development, the budget reconciliation provides an important tool for expansion, and the opportunity to bring more US farmers into the sector at a time with the industry is still importing crops that could be domestically produced. **We recommend the USDA provide an infusion of funding that positions organic agriculture to be responsive to consumers and business expectations and to grow domestically and internationally, including:**

- $50 million for USDA to invest in public-private partnerships via competitive grants for technical assistance to organic farmers and those transitioning. Clif Bar is the largest private funder of organic research and technical assistance, serving not only farmers in our supply chain but across the nation. We can attract

more companies to invest in the future of organic with a more robust public-private partnership. This would help address the paucity of technical advisors and extension specialist serving organic in our public institutions.

- $125 million to expand organic processing and infrastructure. Organic supply chains are often challenged by a lack of redundancy. We urge Congress to instruct USDA to use existing authorities to package and launch a three-prong organic market facilitation initiative that includes grants, loans, and technical assistance to deepen and engender more resilient food processing, distribution, and aggregation.
- $20 million dedicate to grow international markets for US Organic products via the Market Access Program.

Climate Research

While climate action is urgent, there is much we do not know about best practices for agricultural mitigation and adaptation. We align with the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition in their request for funding of $5 billion for research, education and extension focused on climate transformation. In particular we support their request for $400 million focused on climate-related seeds and breeds research; $400 million for climate hubs; and $800 million to 1890s and 1994 Land Grant Institutions and other minority-serving institutions for BIPOC-focused climate transformation work.

We appreciate your consideration for investing in priorities Clif Bar believes would provide U.S. agriculture and the American people redeeming dividends for future generations that help sustain our planet, our farmers, and our rural communities. We look forward to future engagement with you in these shared efforts.

Sincerely,

Matthew Dillon
VP of Government Affairs
Clif Bar & Company

September 23, 2021

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Chairwoman
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry
U.S. Senate
731 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable David Scott
Chairman
Committee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives
468 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

CC: The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Chairs Stabenow and Scott,

As food and farm policy advocates, we strongly support the investments proposed in the current reconciliation package and oppose any reductions in the size and scope of these food, nutrition, farm, forestry, renewable energy, research, and rural development investments.

In particular, we strongly support the investments designed to simplify and increase year-round assistance to low-income school children; help schools provide and expand access to healthier meals; provide debt relief for those most at risk; invest in farming practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and store carbon; expand sustainable farming research; and support renewable energy development on our farms. The programs that result from this spending bill will be stronger with equity central to their design, application, accessibility, and impact.

We urge you to maintain these investments at the proposed levels. They will reduce hunger, improve nutrition, address long-standing inequities in our food and farm system, create thousands of jobs in our rural communities, and meet growing farmer demand for conservation funding.

Sincerely,

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Border Agricultural Workers Project
Carolina Farm Stewardship Association
Center for Science in the Public Interest
Certified Naturally Grown
Chef Ann Foundation
Community Alliance with Family Farmers
Community Health Improvement Partners Farm to Institution Center
DC Greens
Earthjustice
Environmental Working Group
Fair Food Network
Family Farm Action Alliance
Family Farm Defenders

Farm Aid
Farm Generations Cooperative
Farm to Table New Mexico
Farmers Market Coalition
Farms to Grow, Inc.
Farmworker Association of Florida
Food Research & Action Center
FoodCorps
Foodshed Capital
Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities
Hazon
Health, Environment, Agriculture, Labor (HEAL) Food Alliance
Healthy Babies Bright Futures
Hunger Free America
Illinois Stewardship Alliance
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Intertribal Agriculture Council
Island Grown Initiative
Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future
Land Loss Prevention Project
Maine Farmland Trust
Missouri Coalition for the Environment
National Center for Appropriate Technology
National Farm to School Network
National Latino Farmers & Ranchers Trade Association
Natural Resources Defense Council
New Entry Sustainable Farming Project
Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York
Northwest Center for Alternatives to Pesticides
Oregon Climate and Agriculture Network
Oregon Farm to School & School Garden Network
Organic Farming Research Foundation
Rooted
Roots of Change
Rural Advancement Foundation International-USA (RAFI-USA)
Rural Advancement Fund of the National Sharecropper Fund
Rural Coalition
Rural Development Leadership Network
San Diego Hunger Coalition
Slow Food USA
Sustainable Agriculture and Food System Funders
Sustainable Food Center
Sustainable Iowa Land Trust
The Food Trust
The James Beard Foundation
Union of Concerned Scientists
Virginia Association for Biological Farming

Wallace Center
Whole Kids Foundation
Wholesome Wave

May 28, 2021

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, Leader McCarthy, and Leader McConnell:

Thank you for your ongoing bipartisan efforts to craft strategic investments designed to equitably rebuild infrastructure, create jobs, revitalize the economy, and tackle the climate crisis. As Congress develops these legislative proposals, we urge you to fully invest in our nation's soil as a fundamental component of infrastructure and one key way to help communities adapt to and help mitigate climate change.

Devastating climate impacts are already unfolding across the country and around the world. The 2018 Fourth National Climate Assessment shows ways in which farms, ranches, and forests across the United States are projected to experience climate change impacts. These impacts—which include an increased frequency and severity of droughts, heavy rainfall, and extreme heat; changing planting seasons; and new pests and crop diseases—are taking a toll on farmers, farmworkers, the environment, and eaters. To prevent the worst of these impacts, science shows that the United States must commit to transitioning to a net-zero emissions economy no later than 2050. As scientists with expertise in food and farm systems, we strongly believe that the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has a vital role to play in reducing the global warming emissions that come from the agriculture sector.

In 2016, science and technical experts issued The State and Future of US Soils, which referred to soil as "essential to modern life" due to its ability to grow food, reduce water pollution, and support climate change mitigation and ecological resilience. More specifically, agricultural practices that build healthy soil on farms can deliver services such as sequestering carbon and contributing to global warming emissions reductions, increasing resilience to droughts and floods, and reducing water pollution.

We applaud President Biden's American Jobs Plan calling for "the US agricultural sector to lead the shift to net-zero emissions" as well as for its clear message that new investments should advance racial equity, yet we simultaneously caution that the plans' proposed scale of investment in soil health practices falls short of the urgent need of this moment. As a scientific community with expertise throughout the food and farm system, we believe that in order to build climate-resilience, it is essential that Congress make immediate and major additional investments in effective, existing USDA research and conservation programs. Further, we firmly believe that Congress must take into

account the institutional and systemic racism experienced by Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) farmers and the disproportionate impacts of climate change on BIPOC communities.

As a first step, it is essential to increase public funding for agricultural and food research particularly research that addresses climate change mitigation and adaptation at the USDA, especially through agroecological interdisciplinary and systems approaches. In recent decades, the US investment in publicly funded research has declined. Among high-income countries, the US share has decreased from 35 percent in 1960 to less than 25 percent by 2013. Congress can and should reverse this trend by acting this year to bolster existing programs and initiatives that can fund and support more urgently needed climate-related research needs—including the USDA Climate Hubs, the Long-Term Agroecosystem Research Network, the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program, and the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative.

The USDA's Farm Bill conservation programs—including programs such as the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), and the Regional Conservation Partnership Program—are incredibly popular and consequently routinely oversubscribed at current funding levels yet offer one of the most immediate pathways to promote climate adaptation and mitigation through soil health. Because CSP and EQIP are familiar to farmers and ranchers and already encourage the adoption of many practices that can help farmers mitigate and adapt to climate change, small adjustments and significant investments in these programs offer immediately actionable opportunities to tackle the climate crisis. Furthermore, the USDA's ability to successfully deliver the full benefits of these and other conservation programs depends heavily on Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA). As Congress crafts investments to promote soil health, strengthening CTA will help ensure that we can meet climate mitigation and adaptation goals.

In the months ahead, Congress has a historic opportunity to address the climate crisis head on by supporting science-based policies which benefit farmers, urban and rural communities, and the environment. To date, numerous legislative proposals, including the Agriculture Resilience Act (HR 2803/S 1337) and the Climate Stewardship Act (HR 2534/S 1072), have been introduced and detail many essential investments that could be included in a climate and infrastructure package this year. Furthermore, many of these same investments have been highlighted by both the House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis and the Senate Democrats' Special Committee on the Climate Crisis.

As you continue to craft much needed infrastructure investments, we look forward to working with you to ensure that Congress recognizes soil as infrastructure and invests boldly in science-based policies that will create a more equitable and climate-resilient food and farm system.

Sincerely,

Affiliations are listed for identification purposes only

Delenora Grey, M.A./M.S.
Earth Sciences
Anchorage, AK

Nicole Jacobs, Ph.D. Candidate
Environmental Science
University of Alaska, Fairbanks
Fairbanks, AK

Pascal Molineaux, M.A./M.S.
Agriculture
Cali, AL

Jo K Johnson, M.A./M.S.
Earth Sciences
Little Rock, AR

Judson Wynne, Ph.D.
Economics
Flagstaff, AZ

Ronald Hubert, M.A./M.S.
Environmental Science
Flagstaff, AZ

Linda Schermer, M.P.H.
Public Health
Sedona, AZ

Bruce Switzer, Ph.D.
Biology
Tucson, AZ

Elizabeth L Mathieson, M.A./M.S.
Earth Sciences
Alameda, CA

Mary Harte, Ph.D.
Biology
Berkeley, CA

Laurie Archambault, M.A./M.S.
Biology
Chico, CA

Ian Rodriguez, B.A./B.S. Candidate
Biology
Citrus Heights, CA

Lelia Hawkins, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Environmental Science
Harvey Mudd College
Claremont, CA

Marc P. Vayssieres, Ph.D.
Retired, Ecology
Davis, CA

Steven Allison, Ph.D.
Professor, Ecology
University of California, Irvine
Irvine, CA

Robert Clover, Ph.D.
Ecology
California State University
Los Osos, CA

Renee Klein, M.A./M.S.
Education
LAUSD
Marina Del Rey, CA

Jerry Torrance, Ph.D.
Physical Science
Menlo Park, CA

Francis W. Mangels, M.A./M.S.
Agriculture
Retired USFS / SCS / NRCS
Mount Shasta, CA

Ann Dorsey, M.A./M.S.
Ecology
Northridge, CA

Anne H. Ehrlich
Sr. Research Scientist Emerita
Environmental Science
Stanford University
Palo Alto, CA

Jeffrey Creque, Ph.D.
Agriculture
Petaluma, CA

Taia Ergueta, M.B.A.
Life Science
Redwood City, CA

Allison Taylor, Ph.D.
Environmental Science
Riverside, CA

Mary F. Platter-Rieger, M.A./M.S.
Biology
San Diego, CA

Lauren Meredith, M.A./M.S.
Environmental Science
San Francisco, CA

Andrea Whitson, M.A./M.S.
Physical Science
San Jose, CA

Anne Cohen, Ph.D.
Research Professor, Biology (Retired)
University of California, Los Angeles
San Rafael, CA

Charles Bruce Collins, B.A./B.S.
Sebastopol, CA

Mary Elizabeth, M.A./M.S.
Environmental Science
Stockton, CA

Affiliations are listed for identification purposes only

Michael W Hair, Ph.D.
Ecology
West Sacramento, CA

Eric Hintsa, Ph.D.
Chemistry
Boulder, CO

Dick Wolfe, M.A./M.S.
Engineering
Broomfield, CO

Jean A. Garren, M.A./M.S.
Senior Planner
Colorado Springs, CO

Cindy Fornstrom, M.A./M.S.
Environmental Science
Englewood, CO

Lee O'Brien, Ph.D. Candidate
Ecology
Fort Collins, CO

Peter Levon, Ph.D.
Biology
Grand Junction, CO

Angela Kantola, M.A./M.S.
Ecology
Littleton, CO

Ron L. Alberty, Ph.D.
Earth Sciences
Longmont, CO

Lindsay S. Suter, M.A./M.S.
North Branford, CT

Ricardo Salvador, Ph.D.
Agriculture
Washington, DC

Copley H. Smoak, M.A./M.S.
Biology
Calusa Waterkeepers
Bonita Springs, FL

Christian Camphire, M.A./M.S.
Environmental Science
Bradenton, FL

John Jr Darovec, M.A./M.S.
Biology
Bradenton, FL

Cathey Falvo, M.D.
Medicine
Physicians for Social Responsibility
Delray Beach, FL

Drew Martin, M.B.A.
Social Sciences
Lake Worth, FL

Brenda Westhorp, M.A./M.S.
Engineering
Miami, FL

Yoca Arditi-Rocha, M.D.
Environmental Science
Pinecrest, FL

William Keller, Ph.D.
Professor, Management and National Security Affairs
Port Charlotte, FL

John S. Thompson, M.P.H.
U.S. Dept. of Agriculture
Environmental Science
Saint Petersburg, FL

Cheryl Gross, M.A./M.S.
Environmental Science
Sarasota, FL

Richard Scissors, Ph.D.
Mathematics
Sarasota, FL

Sheryan Chester, M.A./M.S.
Biology
Tavares, FL

David Christman, M.A./M.S.
Athens, GA

David Christman, M.A./M.S.
Athens, GA

David E. Greenland, Ph.D.
Environmental Science
Atlanta, GA

Laura Wittke, M.A./M.S.
Education
Douglasville, GA

Marjorie Osheroff, M.A./M.S.
Social Sciences
Johns Creek, GA

Marcia Grady, Ph.D.
Ecology
Tucker, GA

Russell Benedict, Ph.D.
Professor, Biology
Central College
Pella, IA

Affiliations are listed for identification purposes only

Robert Marcinko, M.A./M.S.
Medicine/Medical Research
Pocatello, ID

Chuck Broscious,
Environmental Science
Troy, ID

Donald Fournier, Ph.D. Candidate
University Of illinois
Champaign, IL

Crystal Mcallister, M.A./M.S.
Teacher, Biology
Glen Ellyn, IL

M Strimbu, B.A./B.S.
Engineering
Homewood, IL

Donna Twickler, M.A./M.S.
Environmental Science
La Grange Park, IL

R. Wade Wade Kohlmann, B.A./B.S.
Engineering
Indianapolis, IN

Rick Bennett, Dr. P.H.
Professor, Agriculture
American Phytopathological Society
Lexington, KY

Margaret Carreiro, Ph.D.
Professor Emerita, Ecology
University of Louosville
Louisville, KY

Tom Herman, M.A./M.S.
Engineering
Louisville, KY

Lorna Mangus, M.P.H.
Public Health
Morehead, KY

Radost Stanimirova, Ph.D.
Environmental Science
Boston University
Cambridge, MA

Alison Sanders-Fleming, M.A./M.S.
Earth Sciences
Cambridge, MA

Dennis Walsh, B.A./B.S.
Biology
Dennis, MA

Jenna Grauer-Gray, M.A./M.S.
Environmental Science
Framingham, MA

Charles H. Patterson, D.V.M.
Medicine
Norwell, MA

Danelle Laflower, M.A./M.S.
Ecology
Wales, MA

Edwin Jaros, M.A./M.S.
Environmental Science
Wellesley, MA

Michael L. McCarthy, M.A./M.S.
Environmental Science
West Roxbury, MA

Jason Racela, M.A./M.S.
Biology
Williams College
Williamstown, MA

John Martin, M.A./M.S.
Ecology
Beltsville, MD

Elizabeth Moore, M.A./M.S.
Engineering
Gaithersburg, MD

Elizabeth Wilkins, M.A./M.S.
Greenbelt, MD

Roger Akeley Jr, M.A./M.S.
Camden, ME

Robert S. Capers, Ph.D.
Biology
Fayette, ME

Walter Keene, M.A./M.S.
Engineering
Waterville, ME

Ian Robinson, Ph.D.
Research Scientist, Social Sciences
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
Ann Arbor, MI

Clayton Bartley, M.A./M.S.
Environmental Science
Ann Arbor, MI

Brenda Rowley Gray, M.A./M.S.
Ann Arbor, MI

Gina Putt, M.A./M.S.
Buchanan, MI

Affiliations are listed for identification purposes only

Jan Herrick, J.D.
Economics
Chelsea, MI

Marjorie Tursak, M.A./M.S.
Social Sciences
Clayton, MI

David Zaiss, M.A./M.S.
Education
Interlochen, MI

Virginia A Jones, Ph.D.
Ecology
Kalamazoo, MI

Martha Elizabeth Cook, Ph.D.
Biology
Marquette, MI

John Zasada, Ph.D.
Ecology
Grand Rapids, MN

Jo Anna Hebberger, Ph.D.
Ecology
Saint Paul, MN

Stephen Mudrick, Ph.D.
Environmental Science
Columbia, MO

Bobbie Deister, Ph.D.
Social Sciences
Independence, MO

Alexandra Welsko, J.D.
Environmental Science
Saint Louis, MO

Scott Kampas, M.A./M.S.
Candidate
Earth Sciences
Saint Louis, MO

Judith Zwicker, Ph.D.
Chemistry
Environmental Protection Agency
(Retired)
University City, MO

John H. Parker, Ph.D.
Professor Emeritus, Chemistry
Florida International University
Asheville, NC

Susan Yarnell, Ph.D. Candidate
History/Philosophy of Science
Chapel Hill, NC

Tracy Feldman, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Biology/Ecology
St. Andrews University
Durham, NC

Paul Williams, M.A./M.S.
Environmental Science
King, NC

Anja Collette, M.A./M.S.
Sylva, NC

Rebecca Galloway, M.A./M.S.
Ecology
Department of Agriculture
Wake Forest, NC

Christopher Wenzel, Ph.D. Candidate
Ecology
Morrill, NE

Penelope & Patrick M. Eggleston, Ph.D.
Professor, Biology
Amherst, NH

Anne Altor, Dr. P.H.
Environmental Science
Campton, NH

Andrew Abate, M.A./M.S.
Biology
Albuquerque, NM

John Brown, M.A./M.S.
Social Sciences
Corrales, NM

Ahraham I Rozman, M.A./M.S.
Education
Albion, NY

Darlyne Mitchell, M.A./M.S.
Social Sciences
Binghamton, NY

Ela Thomas, M.B.A.
Education
Brooklyn, NY

Ela Thomas, M.B.A.
Education
Brooklyn, NY

Ilya Speranza, M.A./M.S.
Brooklyn, NY

Alexandra Lalli, Ph.D.
Center Moriches, NY

Bruce Wenger, M.A./M.S.
Fillmore, NY

Affiliations are listed for identification purposes only

Mary Boite, MLS
Hemlock, NY

Valentina Gonzalez, M.A./M.S.
Biology
Henrietta, NY

Tim Wolcott, M.A./M.S.
Research Assistant, Earth Sciences
Johnson City, NY

Christian Roche, Ph.D.
Earth Sciences
Mamaroneck, NY

Rafael Mutis, Dr. P.H.
Earth Sciences
New York, NY

Georgina D'Addario, M.A./M.S.
Old Westbury, NY

Donald Fried, M.A./M.S.
Pelham, NY

Alex Ellram, Ph.D.
Professor, State University of New York, Cobleskill
Schoharie, NY

Elaine Livingston, M.A./M.S.
Chemistry
Vestal, NY

Cathy Stohr, M.A./M.S.
Education
Williamson, NY

Debra K. Shankland, B.A./B.S.
Ecology
Brecksville, OH

Richard Boyce, Ph.D.
Professor, Ecology
Northern Kentucky University
Cincinnati, OH

Julia DeNiro, M.P.H.
Public Health
Doylestown, OH

Lindsey Kohl, B.A./B.S.
Education
Mount Gilead, OH

Barbara Baird, M.A./M.S.
Medicine/Medical Research
Rayland, OH

Deborah Hirt, Dr. P.H.
Stillwater, OK

Ned J. Knight, Ph.D.
Adjunct Professor, Ecology
Linfield College
Newberg, OR

Andrew Mashintonio, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Ecology
Kutztown University
Bethlehem, PA

Les Nyiri, M.A./M.S.
Public Health
Dresher, PA

Patricia Jean Barnhart, M.A./M.S.
Education
Elkins Park, PA

Valerie Federoff, M.A./M.S.
Education
Hanover, PA

MaryCatherine Lowery, M.A./M.S.
Public Health
Norristown, PA

Michael Heaney, M.A./M.S.
Engineering
Philadelphia, PA

Anne E. Pinkerton, Ph.D.
Phoenixville, PA

Jody Zwick, M.A./M.S.
Public Health
Pomeroy, PA

Marianne Valerio, M.A./M.S.
Department Chair, Education
Prosperity, PA

Roger Latham, Ph.D.
Ecology
Rose Valley, PA

Jay Wilson, M.A./M.S.
Biology
Turtle Creek, PA

Sheila Ward, Ph.D.
Ecology
San Juan, PR

Marian Falla, M.A./M.S.
Environmental Science
Jamestown, RI

Affiliations are listed for identification purposes only

Connie Lippert, M.A./M.S.
Earth Sciences
Seneca, SC

Karen Mehner, Ph.D.
Social Sciences
Butler, TN

Joyce Coombs, M.A./M.S.
Environmental Science
Corryton, TN

Ken S. Lewis, B.A./B.S.
Ecology
Jackson, TN

Greg Loflin, B.A./B.S.
Engineering
Knoxville, TN

Mary Louise Linn, M.A./M.S.
Environmental Science
Nashville, TN

Gunnar W. Schade, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Environmental Science
College Station, TX

John Kipp, Ph.D.
Agriculture
Retired, US Army
El Paso, TX

Kurt Schultz, M.A./M.S.
Lago Vista, TX

Barbara Dorf, Ph.D.
Earth Sciences
Rockport, TX

Benjamin G. Jr Liles, Ph.D.
Biology
Salado, TX

Douglas Rives, M.A./M.S.
Biology
Wheeler, TX

Ray C. Telfair II, Ph.D.
Wildlife Biology
Whitehouse, TX

Tim Schmitt, M.A./M.S.
Sr. Environmental Scientist
Arlington, VA

Becky Daiss, M.A./M.S.
Biology
Arlington, VA

Keith F. Brill, M.A./M.S.
Earth Sciences
Arlington, VA

John Parrotta, Dr. P.H.
Ecology
Falls Church, VA

Andrew Smith, M.A./M.S.
Ecology
Flint Hill, VA

William C. Wells, Ph.D.
Physical Science
Springfield, VA

Alan K. Betts, Ph.D.
Earth Sciences
Atmospheric Research
Pittsford, VT

Virginia M. Clarke, D.V.M.
Medicine
Richmond, VT

Lise Grace, M.A./M.S.
Ecology
Bellingham, WA

Bob Zeigler, M.A./M.S.
Biologist, Ecology
Department of Fish and Wildlife
Olympia, WA

Yonit Yogev, M.A./M.S.
Environmental Science
Olympia, WA

Cynthia Bratz, B.A./B.S.
Engineering
Port Townsend, WA

Roger Ovink, M.A./M.S.
Ecology
Richland, WA

Charles B. Halpern, Ph.D.
Ecology
Seattle, WA

Deane Wang, Ph.D.
Ecology
University of Vermont
Seattle, WA

Eric Zimdars, M.A./M.S.
Engineering
Seattle, WA

Norman Baker, Ph.D.
Biology
Sequim, WA

Affiliations are listed for identification purposes only

Larry Karns, M.A./M.S.
Engineering
Shoreline, WA

William Golding, M.A./M.S.
Tacoma, WA

William J. Hoffer, B.A./B.S.
PE, Engineering
White Salmon, WA

Mike Rosing, Ph.D.
Engineering
Madison, WI

Daniel Weber, Ph.D.
Environmental Science
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Milwaukee, WI

Keith Johnson, M.A./M.S.
Agriculture
Muscoda, WI

cc:
The Honorable Debbie Stabenow, Chairwoman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
The Honorable John Boozman, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
The Honorable David Scott, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture
The Honorable Glenn "GT" Thompson, Ranking Member, House Committee on Agriculture
The Honorable Bernie Sanders, Chairman, Senate Committee on the Budget
The Honorable Lindsey Graham, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on the Budget
The Honorable John Yarmuth, Chairman, House Committee on the Budget
The Honorable Jason Smith, Ranking Member, House Committee on the Budget

August 25, 2021

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Chairwoman, Senate Agriculture Committee

The Honorable David Scott
Chairman, House Agriculture Committee

Re: Reconciliation Support for Climate Solutions & Equity in Agriculture

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, Chairwoman Stabenow, and Chairman Scott,

We appreciate your leadership and recognition of the deep connections between agriculture, climate change, and the overarching importance of equity. We strongly support adoption of a robust reconciliation package that advances climate, economic, and equity goals together. In particular, to build a food system that is resilient enough to feed us in a changing climate, we must dramatically increase public investments in sustainable farming and farming communities – including those who have been, and continue to be, underserved by U.S. farm policy.

USDA's well-documented and ongoing track record of marginalization of small-scale farmers and discrimination against farmers of color, especially in its farm loan programs, has left many small and limited-resource farms, particularly those owned by Black, Indigenous, and other farmers of color, on the brink of financial ruin. These farmers are often leaders in climate-friendly agriculture, innovators in regionally tailored farming practices, and key providers of food for local communities. The National Institute for Food and Agriculture calls small farms "a nursery for the development of new enterprises and marketing systems," and this is especially true of farms operated by people of color.

However, these farmers also face enormous barriers, and they need immediate support, including debt relief and other tools that will help them access and retain land and capital. In addition, they need regionally and culturally appropriate technical assistance, research, and market development.

To ensure that the Build Back Better agenda supports truly diversified and climate-friendly farming that delivers meaningful emissions reductions and climate resilience, aligns with the Justice40 Initiative, and does not exacerbate long-standing inequities in our food system, the reconciliation agriculture package should direct significant funding to climate-friendly agriculture and resources for underserved producers. While significantly more funding is needed in the future to support healthy ecosystems, underserved producers and workers, food security, and climate resilience, **at a minimum**, the reconciliation investments should include:

- **$30B for conservation programs** with a focus on climate-friendly agricultural practices and organic production, including sustainable pest management without synthetic (fossil-fuel derived) pesticides, cover cropping, reduced tillage, hedgerow planting, pollinator protection, composting, prescribed grazing, and other regenerative practices that

increase resilience to climate change, improve the health of workers, communities, and soil, protect water and air quality, increase biodiversity, and help store carbon in the soil
- **$5B for sustainable and organic agriculture research programs** focused on climate resilience-related research, education, and extension programs with strong dedicated support for 1890s and 1994 Land Grant Institutions
- **$3B to support resilient rural development through investments in community-based infrastructure** focused on value-added agriculture, rural renewable energy, and infrastructure for local processing of crops and livestock to improve food system resilience and better support small- and medium-sized farmers
- **$10B for debt relief** to stabilize the operations of producers who have not received a fair share of aid from recent federal support programs.

The package should guarantee socially disadvantaged producers the opportunity to participate in, and be key beneficiaries of, any program funded through the package, regardless of past participation and without cumbersome application requirements. These resources should support the next generation of farmers, including beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, as well as farmworkers desiring to enter farming as producers, and support them as they build on their knowledge of traditional ecological stewardship.

In addition, the package should fund an on-farm Civilian Conservation Corps program that:
- Trains the next generation of farmers to adopt climate-friendly practices, particularly in underserved regions;
- Creates job opportunities for beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers, ranchers, and farmworkers that pay a living wage and provide pathways to long-term employment;
- Protects farmer and farmworker health, safety, and economic stability;
- Increases biodiversity, restores critical wildlife habitat, and increases carbon sequestration on working lands;
- Promotes rural entrepreneurship and rural economic development; and
- Prioritizes environmental justice for frontline communities

We look forward to working with you to fully realize the many benefits of climate-friendly agriculture and to ensure producers of color receive the support they deserve – this year and into the future.

Sincerely,

Alabama State Association of Cooperatives
Alianza Nacional de Campesinas
American Indian Mothers Inc
American Sustainable Business Council
Appetite For Change
Beyond Pesticides
BioRegional Strategies (BRS)
Black Farmers and Agriculturalists
Campaign for Family Farms and the Environment

Center for Biological Diversity
Center for Food Safety
Concerned Citizens of Tillery
Cottage House Incorporation
Detroit Food Policy Council
Earthjustice
Family Farm Action
Farm Aid
Farmworker Association of Florida (FWAF)
Fertile Ground LLC
FoodCorps
Friends of the Earth
Green America - Center for Sustainability Solutions
Hawaii Ulu Cooperative
HEAL (Health, Environment, Agriculture, Labor) Food Alliance
Health Care Without Harm
I-Collective
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Intertribal Agriculture Council
JSA Sustainable Wealth Management
Just Food and Water
Kansas Black Farmers Association
League of Conservation Voters
MegaFood
National Center for Appropriate Technology
National Family Farm Coalition (NFFC)
National Latino Farmers and Ranchers Trade Association
National Organic Coalition
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC)
National Young Farmers Coalition
Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)
Naturepedic Organic Mattresses & Bedding
Northeast Organic Farming Association-Interstate Council
North Carolina Association of Black Lawyers Land Loss Prevention Project
Nourish Colorado
Now You Know New Mexico
Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project, Inc.
Organic & Non-GMO Report
Organic Farmers Association
Pesticide Action Network
Rural Advancement Fund of the National Sharecroppers Fund, Inc.
Rural Coalition
Rural Development Leadership Network
Scenic Hudson

Sierra Club
Southwest Georgia Project for Community Education, Inc.
Steward
The Carbon Underground
Thousand Hills Lifetime Grazed
Union of Concerned Scientists
World Farmers
Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation
Zero Foodprint

Cc: USDA Secretary Vilsack

To fight climate change, don't neglect agricultural R&D

BY CAROLINE GRUNEWALD, OPINION CONTRIBUTOR — 08/02/21 01:30 PM EDT 278
THE VIEWS EXPRESSED BY CONTRIBUTORS ARE THEIR OWN AND NOT THE VIEW OF THE HILL

With the Senate's recent vote to advance the $1 trillion bipartisan infrastructure deal — a deal limited to "hard" infrastructure like roads, railways and bridges — advocates for climate action are shifting their sights to a budget reconciliation bill. By bypassing the filibuster, reconciliation would provide Democrats with the opportunity to accomplish many of the Biden administration's more ambitious and partisan priorities. In all the excitement, however, agricultural research and development — a crucial climate mitigation strategy — is at risk of being overlooked.

Agricultural research and development may not be as flashy as other climate policy proposals, such as the establishment of a clean electricity standard or the Civilian Climate Corps, but it has a proven environmental track record, clear economic co-benefits and wide appeal. Agricultural innovations have shrunk agriculture's environmental footprint by enabling farmers to produce more food on less land, with fewer inputs and greenhouse gas emissions. Since the 1960s, innovation-driven productivity advances have enabled farmers to reduce land use by 9 percent and cut the carbon footprint per pound of milk and chicken by over 50 percent.

Unfortunately for the climate (and for agricultural producers, who benefit from productivity-enhancing and input-saving innovations), total public spending on agricultural research and development has stagnated, and much of our nation's agricultural research infrastructure is in disrepair. Agricultural Research Service (ARS) facilities have a $1 billion maintenance backlog; National Institutes of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) research facilities at colleges and universities are burdened by $11.5 billion in deferred maintenance; nearly 70 percent of facilities at schools of agriculture are at the end of their useful life, and public spending on agricultural R&D fell by almost 30 percent between 2002 and 2015.

Private firms are unlikely to fill this funding gap — USDA data reveals the private sector conducts very little agricultural research related to natural resources and the environment — since this environmentally and socially beneficial research is often pre-competitive, has a long payback period, or doesn't result in products that can be commercialized.

A renewed federal commitment to agricultural research is, therefore, necessary to unlock the environmental potential of innovations like more heat- and drought-tolerant crop varieties, methane-reducing livestock feeds and alternative proteins. According to a recent analysis from researchers at Purdue University and The Breakthrough Institute, where I work as an analyst, boosting U.S. agricultural research spending by nearly $40 billion over 10 years could prevent nearly 58 million acres of cropland conversion and around 154 million tons of carbon dioxide-equivalent of emissions annually by 2050.

To maximize the bang-per-buck of additional federal research funding, Congress will also have to address research infrastructure challenges. Conducting cutting-edge research requires modern facilities with climate-controlled environments, state-of-the-art equipment and sensor technologies. Currently, deferred maintenance, space limitations and equipment shortages threaten to cause delays, jeopardize research quality, and reduce facilities' research capacity. A sincere commitment to climate action in the reconciliation bill should, therefore, include money for agricultural research infrastructure improvements.

Because of the sheer scale of facilities' deferred maintenance, as well as the multitude of other worthy policy priorities, these investments will have to be made strategically. Congress can enhance the environmental and social benefits of agricultural research and infrastructure spending by directing USDA to develop a revitalization plan that prioritizes facilities conducting the most critical research and considers options to restructure the public research ecosystem to reduce redundancies and facilitate collaboration.

USDA has undertaken similar endeavors in the past — in 2012 the agency developed an ARS Capital Investment Strategy report, which used a data- and criteria-based process to identify 21 facilities for recapitalization over the following decade. Now, nearly a decade later, a budget reconciliation bill would present an ideal opportunity to direct USDA to develop a new 10-year infrastructure revitalization plan that reflects the urgency of the climate crisis.

Through budget reconciliation, Democrats are poised to make unprecedented investments in climate mitigation. Given the magnitude of the climate crisis, Congress should invest in a wide range of mitigation strategies, including embracing and expanding public agricultural research — which has reliably delivered environmental benefits for decades — and the infrastructure agricultural researchers depend on.

Caroline Grunewald is a food and agriculture analyst with The Breakthrough Institute.

More Ag Climate Solutions & Equity Needed in Reconciliation

August 26, 2021 Allison Johnson

NRDC and over 60 leading farming, environmental, and social justice organizations are calling on Congressional leaders to ramp up support for climate-friendly and equitable agriculture. Congress is drafting a once in a lifetime package of climate investments that would direct $135 billion to food and agriculture priorities, including conservation programs that help farmers and ranchers work in collaboration with nature, research to support food system resilience in a changing climate, nutrition programs to make sure no kid goes hungry, and debt relief and rural investments to stabilize our agricultural communities. Prioritizing sustainable farming and the needs of small-scale producers, workers, and farming communities will maximize the climate, health, and equity benefits of this package.

To support the truly diversified and climate-friendly approach to farming we need in the face of the climate crisis and to begin to remedy the deep inequities that plague our food system, Congress must commit to transformative support for organic and regenerative food systems and deliver overdue resources to small farms, including producers of color, who haven't received a fair share of public investments.

U.S. farm policy has marginalized small-scale farmers and failed to redress widespread discrimination against farmers of color. Decades of underinvestment have left small-scale farmers—especially farmers of color—struggling for survival. Skyrocketing land prices and limited access to capital also make it extremely challenging for the next generation of farmers and farmworkers - many of whom are strong advocates of climate-friendly regenerative and organic farming - to start farms of their own.

That's why NRDC, National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, American Sustainable Business Council, Earthjustice, Farmworker Association of Florida, National Family Farm Coalition, and Rural Coalition, among other groups, sent a letter to leadership specifically calling for a reconciliation package that directs significant funding to climate-friendly agriculture and resources for underserved producers, by providing **at least**:

- **$30 billion for conservation programs** with a focus on climate-friendly agricultural practices and systems that increase resilience to climate change, improve the health of workers, communities, and soil, protect water and air quality, increase biodiversity, and help store carbon in the soil
- **$5 billion for sustainable and organic agriculture research programs** focused on climate resilience related research, education, and extension programs with strong dedicated support for 1890s and 1994 Land Grant Institutions
- **$3 billion to support resilient rural development through investments in community-based infrastructure** focused on value-added agriculture, rural renewable energy, and infrastructure for local processing of crops and livestock to improve food system resilience and better support small and medium-scale farmers
- **$10 billion for debt relief** to stabilize the operations of producers who have not received a fair share of aid from recent federal support programs.

The package should also guarantee socially disadvantaged producers the opportunity to participate in, and be key beneficiaries of, any program funded through the package, regardless of past participation and without cumbersome application requirements. These resources should support the next generation of farmers, including beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, as well as farm workers desiring to enter farming as producers, and support them as they build on their knowledge of traditional ecological stewardship.

In addition, the package should fund an on-farm Civilian Conservation Corps program that:

- Trains the next generation of farmers to adopt climate-friendly practices, particularly in underserved regions;
- Creates job opportunities for beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and farmworkers that pay a living wage and provide pathways to long-term employment;
- Protects farmer and farmworker health, safety, and economic stability;
- Increases biodiversity, restores critical wildlife habitat, and increases carbon sequestration on working lands;
- Promotes rural entrepreneurship and rural economic development; and
- Prioritizes environmental justice for frontline communities

While significantly more funding is needed in the future to support healthy ecosystems, underserved producers and workers, food security, and climate resilience, these investments would offer immediate and tangible public health and environmental benefits and keep our small farms alive.