

February 1, 2019

The Honorable Sanford Bishop
Chair, Appropriations Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and
Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Hoeven
Chair, Appropriations Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and
Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeff Fortenberry
Ranking Member, Appropriations
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug
Administration, and Related Agencies
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Ranking Member, Appropriations
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug
Administration, and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairs Hoeven and Bishop and Ranking Members Merkley and Fortenberry,

We thank you for the pending conference report language accompanying your FY19 spending bills regarding the proposed moves of the Economic Research Service (ERS) and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) outside of the National Capital Region and the realignment of ERS out of the USDA Research, Education, and Economics (REE) mission area.

The language directly addresses our fundamental concern that the proposed relocation and realignment is likely to undermine the quality and breadth of the work these agencies support and perform – work that is vital to informing and supporting the US agriculture, food and rural economies and US food security. We also believed the rationale provided by the USDA for the relocation failed to identify problems substantive enough to justify such a disruption of ERS's and NIFA's operations and were deeply troubled that USDA acted without stakeholder and congressional input.

We also appreciate that you heard our concerns about the proposed transfer of ERS to the Office of the Chief Economist by directing the USDA to indefinitely delay it.

We strongly support the adoption of this language with the final 2019 appropriations bill and trust that USDA will abide by its directives and halt any further action on relocation or reorganization. Thank you again for your leadership on and attention to this issue.

Sincerely,
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Agricultural and Applied Economics Association
American Association for Public Opinion
Research
American Association of Mycobacterial Diseases
American Dairy Science Association

American Educational Research Association
American Malting Barley Association
American Phytopathological Society
American Public Health Association
American Society for Nutrition
American Society of Animal Science

American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers
American Sociological Association
American Statistical Association
Antibiotic Resistance Action Center, The George Washington University
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges
Association of Population Centers
Carolina Farm Stewardship Association
Center For Foodborne Illness Research & Prevention
Center for Rural Affairs
Center for Science in the Public Interest
Charles Valentine Riley Memorial Foundation
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Consumer Federation of America
Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics
Decision Demographics
FASS
Food & Water Watch
Food Animal Concerns Trust
Food Research and Action Center
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future
Keep Antibiotics Working

Maine Farmland Trust
Michael Fields Agricultural Institute
Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals Multi-State Initiative
National Barley Improvement Committee
National Farmers Union
National Organic Coalition
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
National WIC Association
National Young Farmers Coalition
Natural Resources Defense Council
North American Regional Science Council
Northeast Organic Farming Association
Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association
Oregon State University Center for Small Farms & Community Food Systems
Organic Farming Research Foundation
Organic Seed Alliance
Pinnacle Prevention
Population Association of America
Restaurant Services, Inc.
Rural Sociological Society
Southeast Michigan Census Council
Union of Concerned Scientists
US Dairy Forage Research Center Stakeholders
World Perspectives, Inc.
Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation

CC: Member, House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies

NB: An identical version of this letter was sent to the chair and ranking members of the House and Senate Appropriation Committees.