

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.*