

September 6, 2018

The Honorable Mike Conaway
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture
U. S. House of Representatives
1301 Longworth House Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Collin C. Peterson
Ranking Member, Committee on
Agriculture
U. S. House of Representatives
1305 Longworth House Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Pat Roberts, Chairman
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition,
and Forestry
United States Senate
328A Russell Senate Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Ranking Member, Committee on
Agriculture Nutrition, and Forestry
United States Senate
192 Russell Senate Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert B. Aderholt
Chairman, Subcommittee on Agriculture,
Rural Development, FDA & Related
Agencies Appropriations
U. S. House of Representatives
2362-A Rayburn House Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Sanford D. Bishop Jr.
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA
& Related Agencies Appropriations
U. S. House of Representatives
1016 Longworth House Office Bldg
Washington, DC

The Honorable John H. Hoeven III
Chairman, Subcommittee on Agriculture,
Rural Development, FDA, & Related
Agencies Appropriations
United States Senate
129 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Jeff A. Merkley
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA,
& Related Agencies Appropriations
United States Senate
190 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg
Washington DC 20510

Dear Chairs and Ranking Members:

On behalf of the undersigned agricultural research stakeholders, we write to express our serious concerns with the Administration's proposal to move the National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) outside of the national capital region (NCR), and would urge Congress to delay the proposed relocation until the questions and concerns raised by NIFA's stakeholders can be fully addressed.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2018, Congress provided USDA with \$4 million for initial expenses associated with relocating the agency after its current lease expires in December 2019. There was

no indication at the time the funds were requested, to either Congress or stakeholders, that these funds would support any move other than within the National Capital Region. The recent announcement and subsequent federal notice soliciting Expressions of Interest for Potential Sites for Headquarters Office Locations (published on August 15) came as a surprise to not only the research community and policymakers alike, but also to agency personnel themselves.

With only 30 days for interested parties to submit bids for the new location, this rapid timeframe has left the research stakeholder community little time to digest the implications of relocating NIFA. Given the importance of scientific research and education to our nation's entire agricultural economy, we believe the Department should first solicit public comment from its stakeholders prior to soliciting bids for expressions of interest for a new location to ensure that this important decision truly reflects the needs of all of NIFA's stakeholders within the agricultural community.

Some of the questions and concerns which have been raised within the research community and which must be addressed before any subsequent funding is appropriated for relocation, include:

- How will any proposed relocation affect NIFA's relationship with its stakeholders and the scientific community?
- How will any proposed relocation affect NIFA's relationship with other federal research agencies and policymakers?
- How will any proposed relocation impact NIFA's staff recruitment and retention, as well as the core functions of the agency?
- How will any proposed relocation affect NIFA's budget, and ultimate cost to taxpayers, in both the short and long-term?

Additional questions that have been raised and must also be addressed can be viewed at: <https://bit.ly/2NeS52D>.

Furthermore, the short timeframe of the announcement and request for Expression of Interest has placed many of the nation's land-grant institutions in an untenable position. As these are state institutions, many LGU administrators will feel obligated to submit EOIs or support state EOIs. At the same time, as administrators of scientific research, they also question the impact relocation of NIFA may have on its' future role and strength. By asking for the EOI prior to allowing for input on the potential relocation of NIFA outside of the NCR, the Department has placed university administrators in the impossible position of risking the elimination of their state as a potential future site should they choose to publicly express concerns about moving NIFA away from the NCR.

For this reason, we have asked the Secretary for an extension of 60 days on the EOI and for the opportunity to provide public input on whether to relocate NIFA outside of the NCR. We ask your Committees to secure a delay of this proposed relocation and withhold any subsequent appropriations for relocation expenses so that full thought and consideration can be given to the costs and benefits of the proposal.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Agricultural & Applied Economics Association
Agricultural Experiment Station, New Mexico State University
Agricultural Experiment Station, University of Idaho
American Association for the Advancement of Science
American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences
American Association of Mycobacterial Diseases
American Dairy Science Association
American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC)
American Institute of Biological Sciences
American Phytopathological Society
American Samoa Community College Land Grant Program
American Seed Trade Association
American Society for Microbiology
American Society for Nutrition
American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers
American Society of Agronomy
American Society of Animal Science
American Society for Horticultural Science
American Society of Plant Biologists
American Statistical Association
APLU Board on Agriculture Assembly
APLU Board on Human Sciences
Arkansas State University
Arkansas Tech University
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
C. V. Riley Memorial Foundation
California Polytechnic State University
California Polytechnic State University, College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental

Sciences

College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, New Mexico State University

College of Agriculture, Biotechnology, and Natural Resources, University of Nevada, Reno

College of Human Sciences, Oklahoma State University

College of the Environment and Life Sciences, University of Rhode Island

College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, University of Hawai'i at Manoa

Consortium of Social Science Associations

Council for Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching

Crop Science Society of America

Division of Agriculture, Life and Veterinary Sciences, and Cooperative Extension; College of

Agriculture & Life Sciences, Arizona Experiment Station

Ecological Society of America

Entomological Society of America

FASS, Inc

Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology

First Americans Land-Grant Consortium

Global Harvest Initiative

Illinois State University, Department of Agriculture

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy

Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida

Kentucky State University, College of Agriculture, Communities and Environment

McNeese State University- Dripps School of Agricultural Sciences

Michael Fields Agricultural Institute

Michigan State University, AgBioResearch

Michigan State University, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources

Michigan Technological University, School of Forest Resources and Environmental Science

Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals Multistate Initiative

National Association of University Fish and Wildlife Programs

National Association of University Forest Resources Programs

National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research

National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition

National Turfgrass Federation
National Young Farmers Coalition
Non-land-grant Agriculture and Renewable Resources Universities
Ohio Farm Bureau Federation
Oregon State University College of Agricultural Sciences
Oregon State University Extension Service
Organic Farming Research Foundation
Penn State University College of Agricultural Sciences
Sam Houston State University, Department of Agricultural Sciences
Society of American Foresters
Soil Science Society of America
South Dakota State University
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
Tennessee State University, College of Agriculture
The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, New Haven
The Ohio State University Agriculture, Research, and Development Center
The Ohio State University, College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences
The University of New Hampshire
Union of Concerned Scientists
University of Alaska, Fairbanks
University of California Berkeley
University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources
University of California, Davis
University of California, Riverside
University of California, Santa Cruz, Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems
University of Central Missouri
University of Connecticut College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources
University of Guam, College of Natural and Applied Sciences
University of Idaho Extension
University of Illinois, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences
University of Kentucky, College of Agriculture, Food, and Environment

University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Center for Agriculture, Food and the Environment
University of Minnesota Extension
University of Minnesota, College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences
University of Nevada, Reno
University of North Texas
University of Tennessee at Martin, College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences
University of Tennessee, Institute of Agriculture
University of Vermont Extension
University of Vermont, Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources
University of Washington, School of Environmental and Forest Sciences
US Dairy Forage Research Center Stakeholder Committee
Utah State University Quinney College of Natural Resources
Warner College of Natural Resources, Colorado State University
Washington State University - College of Agricultural, Human and Natural Resource Sciences
Washington State University - College of Veterinary Medicine
West Virginia University, College of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Design
Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation

Cc: The Honorable Sonny Perdue, Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture