

Dear Chairman Heinrich, Ranking Member Hoeven, Chairman Harris, Ranking Member Bishop:

The undersigned food, farm, conservation, and rural organizations appreciate your commitment to continued investment in the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program. As you work to develop agriculture appropriations legislation for fiscal year (FY) 2025, we write to highlight the importance of continued investment in agriculture research and to urge your support for increasing SARE funding to \$60 million.

Administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), SARE has been a leader in addressing key sustainability challenges facing agriculture for over 30 years and remains USDA's only farmer-driven research program. It has helped create more innovative organic and conservation farm practices that are adopted by farmers on the ground than any other competitive agricultural research program.

All SARE projects address sustainability and focus on improving farmer profitability, stewardship, and quality of life. The program is one of the first in the country to address management practices that help sequester carbon and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in agriculture using a holistic approach rather than undergoing one practice change at a time. SARE projects also include improvements to local and regional food systems, including farmer access to markets; increasing food sovereignty in Tribal communities; integrated livestock, agroforestry, and perennial cropping systems; and renewable energy, to name a few.

The program's continued emphasis on practical, in-field research, on farmer-to-farmer knowledge sharing, and on farmer-researcher collaboration ensures that its research priorities are constantly evolving and responding to the challenges that farmers and ranchers face every day. SARE also provides grants, training, and resources to agriculture professionals to build their knowledge and skills through its Professional Development Program. This includes professionals from the Cooperative Extension Service and USDA. For years, SARE has supported graduate students, helping establish the pipeline of future agricultural scientists who are needed to make the next breakthroughs in agriculture. In addition, SARE is expanding outreach to historically underserved farmers and ranchers by providing sponsorship funds to support education and training activities and has devoted resources to addressing inequities in funding and personnel support for 1994 and 1890 Land Grant Institutions.

Over its 36-year history, SARE has awarded over \$398 million across 8,700 initiatives focusing on farmer-led research and education in every state across the country. Yet, despite SARE's long-standing record of helping farmers and ranchers develop and adopt innovative practices and systems, the program has yet to reach its full authorization of \$60 million. We were encouraged to see funding steadily increase toward SARE's fully authorized amount in FY2021, FY2022, and FY2023, and are concerned by the backward momentum of a 4% reduction from FY2023 levels in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024 (P.L. 118-42). Without increased investments, farmers will not be able to meet future productivity challenges and remain

competitive, and they will lack the easily accessible and regionally appropriate research that they need to develop sustainable and climate resilient farming systems.

In light of this, ***we support full funding for SARE at its authorized level of \$60 million for FY 2025.*** We believe this funding will boost research in soil health and climate resilience, expand investments in research to support farmers, especially farmers of color, and help rural communities thrive.

We thank you for your strong support of SARE and efforts to increase SARE funding in previous years, as well as your continued support for our nation's farmers.

Sincerely,

AG Noire BIPOC Urban Farming Assn
Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association
American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges
American Society of Agronomy
ArkeaBio
C.A.S.A. del Llano (Communities Assuring a Sustainable Agriculture)
California Climate Agriculture Network
California FarmLink
Carbon180
Carolina Farm Stewardship Association
Catholic Rural Life
CCOF
Center for Food Safety
Center for Rural Affairs
Certified Naturally Grown
CISA: Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture
Clagett Farm/Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Community Alliance with Family Farmers
Crop Science Society of America
Cultivate Kansas City
Dakota Rural Action
Dietrick Institute for Applied Insect Ecology
Earthjustice
Ecological Farming Association

Farm Aid
Farm to Table - New Mexico
Florida Organic Growers
Food Animal Concerns Trust (FACT)
FoodCorps
Friends of the Mississippi River
GrassWorks New
Greater Kansas City Food Policy Coalition
Hmong National Development, Inc.
Illinois Stewardship Alliance
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Interfaith Sustainable Food Collaborative
Izaak Walton League of America
Kansas Rural Center
King Arthur Baking Company
Land For Good
Land Stewardship Project
MAFO
Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association
Marbleseed
Michael Fields Agricultural Institute
Michigan Food & Farming Systems
Michigan Organic Food and Farm Alliance
Midwest Cover Crops Council
Missouri Coalition for the Environment
Montana Organic Association
My Grow Connect, LLC
National Association of Plant Breeders
National Bison Association
National Center for Frontier Communities
National Co+op Grocers
National Farmers Union
National Hmong American Farmers
National Organic Coalition

National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
Natural Resources Defense Council
National Young Farmers Coalition
Naturepedic Organic Mattresses
Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society
NESAWG
New Entry Sustainable Farming Project
No More Empty Pots
Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance
Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT)
Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society
Northwest Center for Alternatives to Pesticides
Nourish Colorado
Ohio Ecological Food & Farm Association
Oregon Climate and Agriculture Network
Oregon Tilth
Organic Farming Research Foundation
Organic Seed Alliance
Pasa Sustainable Agriculture
Practical Farmers of Iowa
Resource Renewal Institute
River Network
Rural Advancement Foundation International – USA
Savanna Institute
Silicate Carbon Limited
Slow Food USA
Soil Science Society of America
Southeastern Massachusetts Agricultural Partnership
Spark Climate Solutions
Sprout NOLA
Synergistic Hawaii Agriculture Council
The Breakthrough Institute
The Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture
The National Center for Appropriate Technology

Union of Concerned Scientists Food and Environment Program

Virginia Association for Biological Farming

Wild Farm Alliance

Women, Food and Agriculture Network (WFAN)

Yard Stick PBC