

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 of 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 \$6 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 appropriated, that these funds would support any move other than one 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