

April 4, 2022

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Objection to rescissions to USDA funds

Dear Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, Leader McConnell, and Leader McCarthy:

Today we write to express our concern about the proposed rescission of \$1.65 billion to key Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs in the pending House COVID-19 Supplemental. As introduced, H.R.7007 - COVID Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2022, proposes to rescind \$1 billion from section 1001 of USDA American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds and \$650 million from USDA Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act' (CARES Act) funds to pay for the continued management of the COVID-19 pandemic. From the ongoing supply chain challenges and mounting inflation, it is clear that the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are still present and that further investments in more just, equitable, and resilient food production and supply chains remain essential to facilitating our national recovery. Undercutting these ongoing investments in USDA programs now will diminish the ability of our food and farm system to respond to future disasters and crises.

The U.S. food and farm system - and the millions of farmers, ranchers, and food system workers who make it possible - is vitally important to the daily lives and livelihoods of every individual in our nation. That is why programs administered through the ARPA and the CARES Act were specifically designed to support the health, welfare, and economic opportunities of these essential workers - many of whom were impacted by the closure of schools, institutions, restaurants, and markets. Eliminating these programs will endanger not only their well-being but also the resilience of our food and farm system.

The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the multiple vulnerabilities of our highly consolidated food system and even after years of robust federal response, supply chain disruptions continue, and rising food prices put more families at risk of nutrition insecurity. As advocates, farmers, ranchers, farmworkers, and food system workers, we acknowledge that a robust, 'whole of government' federal response to the COVID-19 pandemic remains essential in creating a just, equitable, resilient, and environmentally sustainable food system. However, this response, and

the resources to sustain it, must not come at the expense of supporting the farmers, ranchers, and workers who make the current and future food and farm system possible.

Ultimately, the \$1.65 billion proposed rescission will impact the most vulnerable among us - particularly through cuts to programs that required more time to design and feature longer open grant windows to ensure more equitable access and greater participation by Black, Indigenous, and other people of color producers. The proposed rescission will leave USDA without resources to respond to supply chain disruptions exacerbated by the instability in Europe and attendant market and input price disruptions.

As the Administration and Congress chart a path to fund the COVID-19 Supplemental, we urge you to continue to honor your investments in a more just, equitable, and resilient food and farm system - particularly to the historically underserved people and communities who comprise it.

Sincerely,

Farm Action

National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition

Natural Resources Defense Council

Rural Coalition

Union of Concerned Scientists

3 Visions Farm

350 Eugene

Agrarian Trust

Agricultural Justice Project

Alabama State Association of Cooperatives

Alianza Nacional de Campesinas, Inc.

American Agriculture Movement

American Farmland Trust

American Federation of Government Employees, Local 3354, AFL-CIO

American Grassfed Association

American Indian Mothers Inc

Animals Are Sentient Beings Inc

Atrisco, NM

BackCountryExcursions

Bend Farmers Market

Black Family Land Trust, Inc.

Bull City Farm

California Climate & Agriculture Network (CalCAN)

Carolina Farm Stewardship Association

Catskill Mountainkeeper  
Center for an Agricultural Economy, VT  
Center for Biological Diversity  
Certified Naturally Grown  
Chicago Food Policy Action Council  
CISA (Community involved in Sustaining Agriculture)  
Climate + Energy Project  
Co-op Hudson Valley  
Coastal Enterprises, Inc.  
CofED  
Community Alliance with Family Farmers  
Community Food and Justice Coalition  
Connecticut Farmland Trust  
Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport  
CURE  
Detroit Food Policy Council  
Earth Action, Inc.  
Earth Guardians  
Earthjustice  
Eastern Market Partnership  
Educators Strategies Network Inc  
Environmental Working Group  
Fair Food Network  
Family Farm Defenders  
Farm Aid  
Farm to Table - New Mexico  
Farmers Market Coalition  
Farmworker Association of Florida  
FEDERATION OF SOUTHERN COOPERATIVES LAND ASSISTANCE FUND  
Fertile Ground  
Florida Organic Growers and Consumers Inc  
Food Animal Concerns Trust (FACT)  
Food Connects  
Food Insight Group  
Food Roots  
Friends of the Earth, U.S.  
Grounded Earth Farm  
Grow Food Northampton  
Hand, Heart, and Soul Project  
He Dog Community

Health Care Without Harm  
Hempstead Project Heart  
Ho'oulu Lahui  
Hudson Valley AgriBusiness Development Corp  
Illinois Stewardship Alliance  
Indiana Farmers Union  
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy  
Island Grown Initiative  
Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future  
Johns Hopkins University  
JuahKumbah farm  
Kansas Rural Center  
Kitchen Table Consultants, Inc.  
La Semilla Food Center  
Land For Good  
Land Loss Prevention Project  
Land Stewardship Project  
League of Conservation Voters  
LunchAssist  
Main Street Alliance  
Massachusetts Farm to School  
Michael Fields Agricultural Institute  
Minnesota Farmers' Market Association  
Missouri Rural Crisis Center  
MOSES - Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service  
Mujeres Luchadoras Peogresistas  
National Family Farm Coalition  
National Farm to School Network  
National Latino Farmers & Ranchers Trade Association  
National Young Farmers Coalition  
New Entry Sustainable Farming Project  
NH Community Loan Fund  
No More Empty Pots  
NOFA-NH  
North East / Millerton  
Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance  
Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York  
Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont  
Northeast Organic Farming Association-Interstate Council  
Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group

Now New Mexico  
Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association  
Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project, Inc.  
Oregon Environmental Council  
Oregon Farm to School & School Garden Network  
Oregon Organic Coalition  
Organic Farmers Association  
Organic PLANet LLC  
Organizacion en California de Lideres Campesinas, Inc.  
Ottawa County  
Pasa Sustainable Agriculture  
PCUN  
Pesticide Action Network  
Premier Tech Solutions  
Protect All Children's Environment  
Real Food Media  
Red Rabbit  
Renewing the Countryside  
RI Food Policy Council  
Rural Advancement Foundation International-USA (RAFI-USA)  
Rural Advancement Fund of the National Sharecroppers Fund, Inc.  
Rural Development Leadership Network  
RuralOrganizing.org Education Fund  
Santa Cruz Climate Action Network  
Schaefer Global Management LLC  
Seven Generations Ahead  
Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt, New York  
Solar Wind Works  
Sooner Food Group  
State Innovation Exchange (SiX)  
Texas Coalition of Rural Landowners  
Texas Mexico Border Coalition CBO  
The Alliance for the Great Lakes  
The Carrot Project  
The Farmworker Association of Florida  
The Good Acre  
They Keep Bees  
Umpqua Valley Farm to School  
Urban Tilth  
VAIPL

Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund  
Virginia Association for Biological Farming  
VT FEED-Shelburne Farms  
Wallace Center at Winrock International  
WANDA: Women Advancing Nutrition Dietetics and Agriculture  
Waterkeepers Chesapeake  
Waterway Advocates  
WCSHC  
Willamette Farm & Food Coalition  
Willmar Area Climate Action Group  
Wisconsin Farmers Union  
Women Food and Agriculture Network (WFAN)  
World Farmers, Inc

CC: Secretary Vilsack, Senator Stabenow, Senator Boozman, Representative Scott,  
Representative Thompson, Senator Leahy, Senator Shelby, Representative DeLauro,  
Representative Granger