

October 14th, 2021

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader, United States Senate

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker, United States House of Representatives

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Speaker Pelosi:

As you face many decisions in the coming week concerning the Build Back Better human and climate infrastructure package, we ask that you **please prioritize and protect the vital investments in agricultural climate research, agricultural innovation, and agricultural research infrastructure**. The **\$7.75 billion agricultural research investment**, or just 0.2% of the proposed original total reconciliation package, underlies the tools necessary to build climate resilience and food security for all Americans.

Our agriculture and food system is highly vulnerable to climate change. From multi-year droughts, heat and forest fires to hurricanes and flooding, our farmers, ranchers, and foresters need innovative and powerful tools to weather the storms that are now arriving with greater force and frequency. R&D investments also impact American's access to a sustainable, equitable and healthy food supply.

A recent study found that U.S. public spending on food and agriculture R&D returns, on average, \$17 in benefits for every \$1 invested. Despite this incredible return, the United States' share of global agricultural R&D investment has decreased significantly in the last half-century, going from 20 percent to 8.9 percent.

These proposed investments are a generational down payment to fill critical R&D gaps and climate-proof our food system -- realizing agriculture's beneficial role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and supporting carbon sequestration. They provide funding for USDA research, the land grant colleges and universities, as well as tribal colleges and universities, historically Black colleges and universities, and Extension programs throughout the nation. Without these investments, we will face food supply shortages as well as an inability to mitigate climate change by storing carbon in our soils and forests.

Modern agricultural research and education facilities serve as the backbone of our nation's cutting-edge innovations, but unfortunately this research infrastructure has been woefully neglected for many years due to lack of sufficient funds. A recent study showed that 69% of buildings at U.S. colleges of agriculture are at the end of their useful life. This lack of investment stymies potential innovation and must be reversed so that our nation's top scientists can develop critical tools to enable our food system to weather climate change.

We look forward to working with you to make these critical investments for the agriculture and food sector.

Sincerely,

American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges
American Dairy Science Association
American Feed Industry Association
American Institute of Biological Sciences
American Malting Barley Association
American Mushroom Institute
American Phytopathological Society
American Samoa Community College, Agriculture, Community and Natural Resources Division
American Seed Trade Association
American Society for Microbiology
American Society for Nutrition

American Society of Agronomy
American Society of Plant Biologists
Amvac Chemical Corporation
Animal Health Institute
Aquatic Plant Management Society
ASCC-ACNR (Land Grant Program)
Associated Oregon Hazelnut Industries (AOHI)
Association of Northeast Extension Directors
Association of 1890 Research Directors
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU)
Biotechnology Innovation Organization
Colorado State University
Cooperative Extension System, Extension Committee on Organization and Policy
Corn Refiners Association
Cornell University
Council for Agricultural Science and Technology
Crop Science Society of America
CropLife America
Donald Danforth Plant Science Center
Entomological Society of America
Eversole Associates
Experiment Station Committee on Organization and Policy
Farm Journal Foundation
FASS
Ferguson College of Agriculture, Oklahoma State University
Food Producers of Idaho
Idaho Alfalfa/Clover Seed Commission
Idaho Alfalfa/Clover Seed Growers Association
Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts
Idaho Dairymen's Association
Idaho Hay & Forage Association
Idaho Honey Industry Association
Idaho Irrigation Equipment Association
Idaho Noxious Weed Control Association
Idaho Oilseed Commission
Idaho Onion Growers' Association
Idaho Wheat Commission
Idaho Wool Growers Association
Idaho-Oregon Fruit and Vegetable Association
Illinois Green Industry Association
Institute of Food Technologists
International Wheat Genome Sequencing Consortium (IWGSC)
Iowa State University
Land For Good
Lincoln University of Missouri

Louisiana State University, AgCenter
Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association
Michigan Food & Farming Systems (MIFFS)
Michigan State University, AgBioResearch
Michigan State University, College of Agriculture & Natural Resources
Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals – Multistate Initiative
National Barley Improvement Committee
National Bison Association
National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research
National Milk Producers Federation
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
New Entry Sustainable Farming Project, Beverly, MA
New Jersey Landscape Contractors Association
Nezperce Prairie Grass Growers Association
North American Millers' Association
North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University
North Carolina State University
North Central Regional Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors
North Central Weed Science Society
Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors
Northeastern Weed Science Society
Northern Marianas College
Oklahoma State University Agricultural Programs
Oregon Association of Nurseries
Oregon Cattlemen's Association
Oregon Dairy Farmers Association
Oregon State University, College of Agricultural Sciences
Oregon Women for Agriculture
Oregonians for Food and Shelter
Organic Farming Research Foundation
Penn State University
Pennsylvania Landscape & Nursery Assn.
Phytobiomes Alliance
Rochester Institute of Technology
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
Soil Science Society of America
Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors
Southern Idaho Potato Cooperative
Southern Weed Science Society
Supporters of Agricultural Research (SoAR) Foundation
Tennessee State University
Texas A&M AgriLife
The Breakthrough Institute
The Ohio State University
Tufts University

Union of Concerned Scientists
University of Arizona Division of Agriculture, Life and Veterinary Sciences, and Cooperative Extension
University of California System
University of California, Berkeley
University of California, Davis
University of California, Riverside
University of Florida
University of Guam
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources,
Agriculture Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service
University of Idaho
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences
University of Maine
University of Maine System
University of Maryland Eastern Shore
University of Maryland, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources – College Park
University of Puerto Rico Mayagüez, College of Agricultural Sciences
University of Tennessee
University of the Virgin Islands, School of Agriculture
University of Wisconsin, Madison College of Agricultural and Life Sciences and Division of Extension
University of Wyoming
US Dairy Forage Research Center Stakeholder Committee
Virginia Association for Biological Farming
Virginia Tech
Washington State University
Weed Science Society of America
West Virginia State University
West Virginia University
Western Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors
Western Extension Directors Association
Western Growers
Western Society of Weed Science

CC: The Honorable Debbie Stabenow, Chair, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry
The Honorable David Scott, Chair, House Agriculture Committee