

April 4, 2022

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Re: Objection to rescissions to USDA funds

Dear Mr. President:

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