



September 20, 2022

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow, Chair  
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition,  
and Forestry  
328A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable John Boozman, Ranking  
Member  
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition,  
and Forestry  
328A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington DC 20510

Dear Senators Stabenow and Boozman:

The National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) is extremely encouraged that the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry has scheduled a confirmation hearing of Ms. Alexis Taylor to serve as Under Secretary of Agriculture for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs and Dr. Jose Emilio Esteban to serve as Under Secretary for Food Safety.

NASDA supports President Biden's nomination of both of these highly experienced and well-qualified individuals and asks you to quickly approve their nominations.

NASDA works closely with the senior leadership of the U.S. Department of Agriculture in support of safe food and expanded trade opportunities for the products of American agriculture and has consistently advocated for the appointment of highly qualified candidates to serve in these critical positions.

In her current role as Director of the Oregon Department of Agriculture and a distinguished member of NASDA, Director Taylor has devoted her time and attention to expanding market opportunities not only for Oregonians but for farmers and ranchers across the country. She has been particularly instrumental in developing opportunities for female food and beverage entrepreneurs to reach new markets for their products.

In her previous role as Deputy Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services, Director Taylor worked on agricultural trade policy by promoting ways to open new markets and improving the competitive position of U.S. farm goods in the global marketplace.

Director Taylor has the experience to promote US agriculture across the globe and the passion, demeanor, and diplomacy to succeed.

In addition to Director Taylor, I have had the opportunity to work personally with Dr. Esteban, currently Chief Science Officer of the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service. I have always found him to be excellent with all things science, but also very adept at communicating that

science effectively as it intersects with all other aspects of the Food Safety and Inspection Service. He has worked on domestic and international issues, served in times of strife and difficulty (e.g. disease breakouts), and has always maintained an excellent and professional outlook toward the work at hand.

Our nation is facing considerable challenges within the supply chain, inflation, failing infrastructure, climate, diversity and inclusion, trade, workforce, and many others. The USDA needs knowledgeable and experienced leaders at the helm to navigate through these challenges and implement bipartisan solutions.

NASDA supports the nomination of Director Alexis Taylor and Dr. Jose Emilio Esteban and asks the committee to quickly advance their nominations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ted A. McKinney". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Ted McKinney  
Chief Executive Officer