



Statement for the Record

U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

RE: Farmers and Foresters: Opportunities to Lead in Tackling Climate Change

March 11, 2021

Submitted by: Barbara P. Glenn, Ph.D. Chief Executive Officer

On Behalf of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA), we appreciate the opportunity to submit this statement outlining the priorities of state departments of agriculture on policies related to climate resilience. We request that this statement be included in the record of the upcoming, March 11th hearing of the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry focusing on “Farmers and Foresters: Opportunities to Lead in Tackling Climate Change”.

NASDA represents the commissioners, secretaries, and directors of the state departments of agriculture in all 50 states and 4 U.S. territories. State departments of agriculture are responsible for a wide range of programs including food safety, combating the spread of disease, and fostering the economic vitality of our rural communities. Conservation and environmental protection are also among our chief responsibilities.

In November 2020, NASDA along with several other national organizations representing farmers, ranchers, forest owners, the food sector, and environmental advocates formed the Food and Agriculture Climate Alliance (FACA). This alliance is dedicated to working together to define and promote shared climate policy priorities. On November 17, 2020, FACA released more than 40 policy recommendations to guide the development of federal climate legislation.

Many of the FACA recommendations are reflective of NASDA priorities and we would ask that the Committee on Agriculture consider the following as part of any future legislative or oversight activities of the Committee:

- *NASDA asks that any legislative or oversight activities undertaken by the Congress related to climate focus on advancing science-based outcomes.*
- *NASDA asks that any legislative or oversight activities undertaken by the Congress promote fairness and equity within the agriculture community through climate solutions.*

- *NASDA encourages Congress to enact and fund voluntary, incentive-based climate smart agricultural programs as part of the farm bill and other legislative vehicles that consider agriculture's unique role in building resiliency and climate adaptation.*
- *NASDA asks that the Congress fund research programs and forecasting tools that will help agriculture adapt to the effects of a changing climate, including increased pests and disease, changes in suitable cropping systems and increases in extreme weather events.*
- *NASDA supports expanding federal tools, including the soil health provisions of the 2018 farm bill, to incentivize and measure soil health improvements. Soil health incentives can encourage farmers to adopt practices that improve soil health and increase carbon sequestration. Improved protocols for measuring the gains in soil carbon from soil health improvements can support development of markets for soil carbon capture and storage.*
- *NASDA asks that the Congress enact policies that credit ongoing efforts of many farmers and ranchers that have previously adapted climate smart strategies to reduce emissions, sequester carbon, and improve resiliency.*
- *NASDA supports the creation of voluntary, incentive-based climate smart agricultural programs.*

NASDA stands ready to assist this Committee in any way possible as it carves a path forward on this important policy issue.

Please contact Zachary Gihorski (Zach.Gihorski@nasda.org) if you have any questions or would like any additional information.