

February 1, 2024

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Speaker Johnson, Minority Leader McConnell, and Minority Leader Jeffries:

The undersigned agricultural organizations are deeply invested in the well-being of our rural and agricultural communities, and we write today to urge you to prioritize and support the swift passage of a bipartisan farm bill this year.

Our nation's farmers and ranchers are facing numerous challenges that were unforeseen during the last farm bill authorization. A global pandemic, record-high inflation, rising supply costs, and global supply chain disruptions have all increased the uncertainty for farmers and ranchers who weather the market conditions to run their businesses. Every citizen in the country is reliant on agriculture's success so it is with great urgency that we ask you to protect and enhance the farm safety net.

The food and agriculture sector are critical to our economy, making up roughly one-fifth of U.S. economic activity, and directly supporting nearly 23 million jobs. When looking across the entire food and agriculture supply chain, the impact is even greater, supporting more than 46 million jobs.

The need for a modernized farm bill is clear; Congress should increase baseline funding for farm programs and expand risk management tools like crop insurance, commodity programs and resources that support the domestic production of food and fiber. We also call on Congress to maintain a unified farm bill that includes both nutrition programs and farm programs.

We strongly believe that enhancements to the farm safety net, support for all sectors of production and addressing other essential priorities across the farm bill require additional resources beyond the current baseline. We implore you to allow the committees of jurisdiction to work their will to responsibly address the significant needs of rural America.

The most recent World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates projects depressed commodity prices and interest as an expense on the farm has increased by more than 40 percent, or \$10 billion, in 2023, reinforcing the need to invest in the farm safety net, which includes Title I Commodity Programs and Title XI Crop Insurance. Agricultural goods produced in varying regions have different research, conservation, and trade needs. America's public investment in agricultural research has been remained flat for the past two decades and we now find ourselves outspent by both China and the European

Union. Meanwhile USDA's trade efforts are more important now than ever before, to build and strengthen markets for US crops and agricultural products across the globe.

Farm bill programs such as the suite of voluntary conservation programs and trade promotion, rural development, credit, and agriculture research programs have proven their value in addressing these diverse needs and must be reauthorized this year.

No matter where you live in America, we all count on our farmers', ranchers' and growers' economic sustainability in the midst of unpredictable and difficult times, growing the food, fiber, and fuel those in this nation rely on. Market forces and Mother Nature do not consider the economic vitality of America's farm families. Recall just a few short years ago families found empty store shelves because of the pandemic and associated supply chain disruptions. Fortunately, it was temporary because the men and women within the agriculture and food value chain were still working diligently for the American people; but we must not take their determination for granted.

The farm bill ensures a resilient, healthy, and safe food supply and we urge you to act.

Thank you for your leadership and continued efforts.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Retailers Association
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Seed Trade Association
American Soybean Association
American Sugar Alliance
CropLife America
Farm Credit Council
International Fresh Produce Association
National Association of Conservation Districts
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Corn Growers Association
National Cotton Council
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Grain and Feed Association
National Farmers Union
National Milk Producers Federation
National Sorghum Producers Association
The Fertilizer Institute
USA Rice