

September 13, 2018

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

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

The Honorable Mike Conaway
Chair
House Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Colin Peterson
Chair
House Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Roberts, Ranking Member Stabenow, Chairman Conaway, and Ranking Member Peterson:

The undersigned representing national, state and local organizations urge you to support the provisions included in the Senate-passed Farm Bill that will expand support for urban, emerging agriculture production and its multitude of benefits.

We ask that you support the creation of the Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production and 15-member advisory committee within USDA. Additionally, we find the new authority to award competitive research grants to fund urban agriculture very helpful as well as the pilot projects geared toward making compost more accessible. We also support the new risk management opportunities and soil remediation tools. These provisions will provide urban farmers with the support they need to pursue additional economic opportunities that will result in greater assistance to bring their products to market.

As the undersigned organizations, we support farmers and their stakeholders in all regions of the country. Urban agriculture is a swiftly growing sector of farm development that uses innovative food production techniques to meet the growing consumer demand for fresh, accessible food. It can take place in many forms, such as greenhouse operations, farms on vacant city lots, in schoolyards, on rooftops, and through high-tech indoor vertical production. According to USDA, there are now 859,300 metropolitan farms in the United States, accounting for 40% of the total value of U.S. agriculture. However, the unique needs of urban farmers are often not served by current programs at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

With the proper support and funding, farming practices in urban and suburban areas have the potential to enhance the social and economic fabric of our nation's local communities and to inspire a new generation of young and beginning producers. Expanding support for urban agriculture will benefit the entire agriculture sector as well as create economic opportunity for both rural and urban communities. Rural agriculture benefits from the expansion of urban agriculture by bringing consumers and producers closer together through education, promotion, research, and innovation. To build stronger bonds among

all farmers—whether they live in rural, suburban, or urban areas—we support the addition of the Urban Ag provisions.

Together, we believe the expansion for urban agriculture in the Senate-passed Farm Bill will recognize and support the growing trends in how Americans choose their food. We look forward to a Farm Bill that benefits all. Thank you

Sincerely,

AeroFarms
AmericanHort
California Certified Organic Farmers
California Cut Flower Commission
California Farm Bureau Federation
Central Louisiana Economic Development Alliance
Chicago Food Policy Action Council
Concentric Ag Corporation
Culinaria Center for Food Law, Policy, and Culture
Eastern Market (Detroit)
Greater New Orleans Growers Alliance
My Halal Kitchen
National League of Cities
National Young Farmers Coalition
New Orleans Food Policy Advisory Committee
New York Farm Bureau Federation
Nisei Farmers League
Oakland Ave Community Garden
Ohio Farm Bureau Federation
Organic Trade Association
Recirculating Farms Coalition
River Queen Greens
Slow Food USA
The Farm Works
U.S. Conference of Mayors
Unilever
United Fresh Produce
Western Growers