

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 11, 2020

Chairwoman Nita Lowey  
Committee on Appropriations  
H-307 The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member Kay Granger  
Committee on Appropriations  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Chairman Sanford Bishop, Jr.  
Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Agricultural, Rural Development, FDA, &  
Related Agencies  
2362-A Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member Jeff Fortenberry  
Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Agricultural, Rural Development, FDA, &  
Related Agencies  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Lowey, Chairman Bishop, Ranking Member Granger and Ranking Member Fortenberry:

Thank you for your continued support for competitive agricultural research at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA-NIFA). As you meet to consider funding for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021, we urge you to sustain this critical effort by supporting research, education and extension programs that help to ensure that the United States can remain globally competitive in food and agriculture.

NIFA's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) is a vital competitive grants program that focuses on six priority areas outlined by the Farm Bill that include plant and animal health, production and products; food safety, nutrition and health; bioenergy, natural resources and environment; agriculture systems and technology; economics and rural communities. Increased investments in these key areas of research will drive the technological change that is critical to maintaining the United States ability to spur innovation for the future.

In Fiscal Years 2012-2016, the USDA-NIFA Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) review process identified \$4.9 billion in grants worthy of funding. However, with a limited annual budget, the program could only award \$1.3 billion—about a quarter of the science that the program's expert panels deemed worthy. Grants provided by AFRI are important to research institutions of all types, not only providing critical funding to land-grant universities, but also to public non-land-grant universities, private colleges and universities, private research foundations, industry and individuals. Together these entities continue the to achieve the program's goals of

funding research that protects, secures and improves our food and agriculture and natural resources systems to meet our growing agricultural needs and managing efficient food systems.

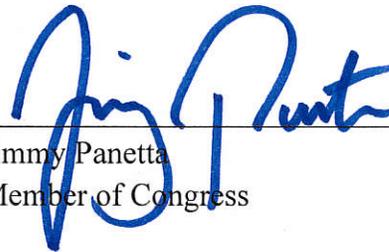
Agriculture research only accounts for about 2 percent of federal research and development spending, however the rate of return on these public investments in agricultural research range from 20 to 60 percent. In FY2020, the House-passed appropriations bill included \$460 million for AFRI, and ultimately was enacted at \$425 million. Considering the President's FY2021 budget request of \$600 million for AFRI, an increase of \$175 million above the enacted levels, we respectfully request further robust increases to build on the important work made possible by the Committee's prior support.

Thank you for your leadership in ensuring that the necessary funds to protect animals, crops, and people will continue to be available and that this important research can continue.

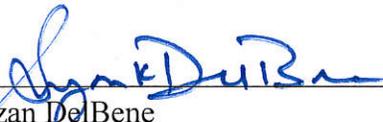
Sincerely,



Rodney Davis  
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta  
Member of Congress



Suzan DelBene  
Member of Congress



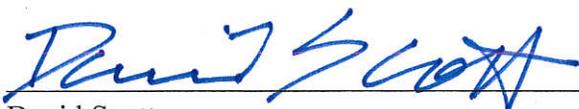
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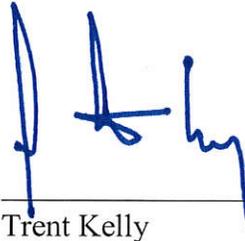
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Member of Congress



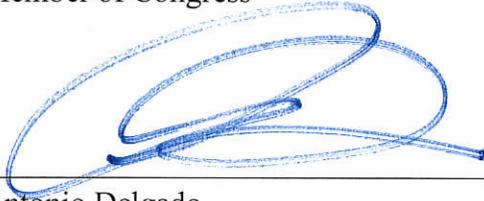
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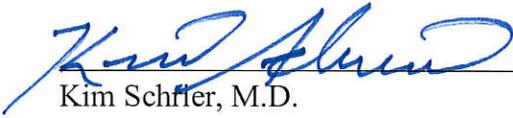
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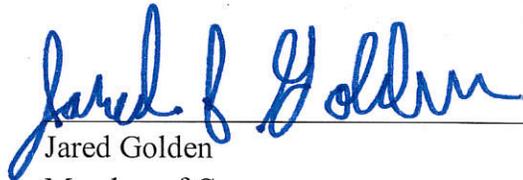
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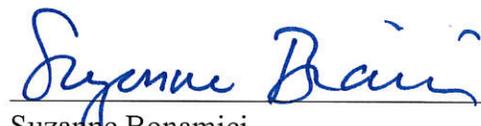
  
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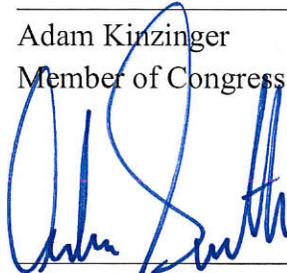
  
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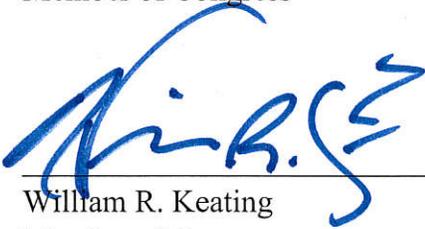
  
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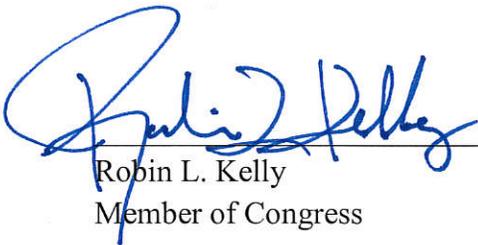
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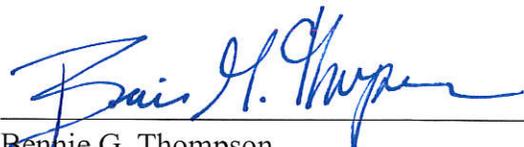
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