February 21, 2017

Senate Budget Committee Chair Mike Enzi
Senate Budget Committee Ranking Member Bernard Sanders
624 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

House Budget Committee Interim Chair Diane Black
House Budget Committee Ranking Member John Yarmuth
U.S. House of Representatives
207 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Senate Appropriations Committee Chair Thad Cochran
Senate Appropriations Committee Ranking Member Patrick Leahy
Room S-128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

House Appropriations Committee Chair Rodney Frelinghuysen
House Appropriations Committee Ranking Member Nita Lowey
H-305, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

The undersigned organizations, representing America’s agriculture, nutrition, conservation, rural development, finance, forestry, energy, trade, local government, plant/animal health, agricultural sciences and veterinary medicine, labor, outdoor recreation, equipment manufacturing, cooperatives, hunters, anglers and crop insurance sectors, strongly urge you to reject calls for additional cuts to policies within the jurisdiction of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry or the House Committee on Agriculture.

Almost three years ago, Congress passed a bipartisan farm bill that made a significant contribution to deficit reduction. This bipartisan legislation was estimated to contribute $23 billion to deficit reduction over 10 years at the time of passage. This was the first time a farm bill voluntarily reduced spending before Congress began considering the bill. It was the only reauthorization bill in that Congress that voluntarily offered savings. These difficult cuts resulted from hard choices made to reform and reduce the farm safety net, conservation initiatives, and nutrition assistance.

In fact, the Congressional Budget Office’s (CBO) January 2017 baseline estimates that the 2014 Farm Bill has cost far less than projected. According to CBO, nutrition and crop insurance alone will spend nearly $100 billion less, while mandatory federal spending outside the Agriculture Committees’ jurisdiction has risen over the same time period.
We have all begun preparing for the 2018 Farm Bill and recognize that passing a bill with additional funding reductions would be extremely difficult, if not impossible. Therefore, as the Senate and House Agriculture Committees begin preparing for the 2018 Farm Bill, it is imperative that the committees not be hamstrung by further budget or appropriations cuts to any farm bill program. Instead, we strongly encourage you to recognize the substantial savings already achieved, which far exceed expectations, and to provide the committees the opportunity to complete their work through regular order, without arbitrary budget cuts or caps. With the agriculture and rural economy struggling, households across the country struggling to meet their basic needs for nutrition, and farm income down 46 percent from only three years ago, it would be perilous to hinder development and passage of the 2018 Farm Bill with further cuts.

During consideration of the 2014 Farm Bill, the Agriculture Committees made the difficult choices necessary to deliver a bipartisan bill. Budget cuts made in that bill should be recognized as Agriculture’s contribution to deficit reduction. We know the committees will once again face challenging budgetary and policy choices in the development of the 2018 Farm Bill. That is why it is so important you ensure the committee process for the farm bill can proceed with some budget flexibility.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Ag Processing Inc
AgChoice Farm Credit
AgCountry Farm Credit Services
AgCredit
AgFirst Farm Credit Bank
AgGeorgia Farm Credit, ACA
AgriBank, FCB
Agriculture Energy Coalition
AgStar Financial Services, ACA
Alabama Farmers Federation
Alabama Food Bank Association
Alabama Peanut Producers Association
Alabama Soybean & Corn Association
Alaska Food Coalition
Aldo Leopold Foundation, Inc.
Algae Biomass Organization

Alliance to End Hunger
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Agri-Women
American Agriculture Movement Inc.
American Association of Avian Pathologists
American Association of Bovine Practitioners
American Association of Crop Insurers
American Association of Mycobacterial Diseases
American Bankers Association
American Cotton Shippers Association
American Crystal Sugar Company
American Dairy Science Association
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Farm Bureau Insurance Services, Inc.
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<tr>
<th>BEARTOOTH FERTILIZER INC</th>
<th>Delaware Farm Bureau</th>
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<td>Biotechnology Innovation Organization</td>
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Maryland Hunger Solutions
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Massachusetts Law Reform Institute
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Michigan Bean Shippers
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Mid-Ohio Foodbank
Mid-West Dairymen's Co.
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Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service- MOSES
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National Association of Professional Insurance Agents
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National Association of Retired ASCS/FSA Office Employees
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
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National Black Growers Council
National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative
National Cattlemen's Beef Association
National Christmas Tree Association
National Co+op Grocers
National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research
National Conservation District Employees Association
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National Cottonseed Products Association
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National Council on Aging
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National Parks Conservation Association
National Peach Council
National Pork Producers Council
National Potato Council
National Sorghum Producers
National Sunflower Association
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National Wild Turkey Federation
National Wildlife Federation
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National Young Farmers Coalition
NAU Country Insurance Company
NC Forestry Association
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Oregon Food Bank
Oregon Small Woodlands Association
Organic Trade Association
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel St. Vincent dePaul Society
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Panhandle Peanut Growers Association
Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon
PennFuture
Pennsylvania Farm Bureau
People’s Community Church
Personal Ag Management
Pheasants Forever
Pinchot Institute for Conservation
Pollinator Partnership
Prairie Rivers Network
Producers Cooperative Association
Project Bread
Public Health Institute
PYCO Industries, Inc.
Quail Forever
Rain and Hail Insurance Society
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Rio Grande Valley Sugar Growers
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Rural Advancement Foundational International
Schlitz Audubon Nature Center
School Nutrition Association
Second Harvest Food Bank CCL
Second Harvest Food Bank of North Central Ohio
Second Harvest Food Bank of the Mahoning Valley
Select Milk Producers, Inc.
Share Our Strength
Shared Harvest Foodbank
Shoesole Management Team
Silveus Insurance Group
SNF Agriculture
Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior
Society of American Foresters
Society of St. Andrew
Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Cleveland
Soil and Water Conservation Society
Soil Science Society of America
South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center
South Carolina Farm Bureau
South Carolina Peach Council
South Dakota Farm Bureau
South Dakota Soybean Association
South Dakota Wildlife Federation
South East Dairy Farmers Association
Southeastern Lumber Manufacturers Association
Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative
Southern Peanut Farmers Federation
Southern States Cooperative
Southwest Council of Agribusiness
Southwest Georgia Farm Credit
Soyfoods Association of North America
Stewardship Alliance of Northeast Elko
Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative of Florida
Sustainable Northwest
Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation
Tennessee Justice Center
Tennessee Pork Producers Association
Tennessee Soybean Association
Texas Agricultural Cooperative Council
Texas Farm Bureau
Texas Grain and Feed Association
The American Chestnut Foundation
The American Phytopathological Society
The Community Pantry
The Conservation Fund
The Fertilizer Institute
The Food Depot
The Food Trust
The Foodbank, Inc.
The Hardwood Federation
The Izaak Walton League of America
The Jewish Federations of North America
The Lyme Timber Company
The Nature Conservancy
The Trust for Public Land
The Wetlands Initiative
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
TN Environmental Council
Trout Unlimited
U.S. Apple Association
US Canola Association
U.S. Cattlemen's Association
US Dry Bean Council
U.S. Sweet Potato Council
USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council
Union of Concerned Scientists
United Egg Producers
United Fresh Produce Association
United Way Worldwide
US Rice Producers Association
USA Rice
Utahns Against Hunger
Vermont Foodbank
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West Virginia Rivers Coalition
Western Center on Law and Poverty
Western Growers Association
Western Landowners Alliance
Western Peanut Growers Association
Western Society of Weed Science
Western United Dairymen
Wholesome Wave
Wildlife Management Institute
Wildlife Mississippi
Windmark Crop Division, City Bank Texas
Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation
Wisconsin Pork Association
Women Involved in Farm Economics
WoodWorks - Wood Products Council
Wyoming Farm Bureau
World Wildlife Fund
Wyoming Wildlife Federation