

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 16, 2018

Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen
Committee on Appropriations
H-305 Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Nita Lowey
Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth Building
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Robert Aderholt
Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture
Rural Development, FDA, & Related Agencies
2362-A Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Sanford Bishop
Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture
Rural Development, FDA, & Related Agencies
1016 Longworth Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen, Chairman Aderholt, Ranking Member Lowey and Ranking Member Bishop:

Thank you for your previous 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) 2019, we urge you to sustain this critical effort. Your leadership will make a difference in helping to ensure that U.S. agriculture remains competitive globally and our country continues to lead the way in food and agriculture innovation.

Since 1948, total U.S. agricultural output more than doubled. Over the same period, the U.S. population also more than doubled. The ability of the farm sector to feed far more people today while using less farmland than six decades ago is attributed to increases in agricultural productivity.

The major driver of growth in agricultural productivity is innovation. Average rates of return to public investments in agricultural research range from 20 to 60 percent.

Investments in public agricultural research are the major factors driving technological change that leads to growth. In the 1940s, almost 40 percent of American research and development spending was focused on agriculture. Today, agriculture research only accounts for 2 percent of federal research and development spending. According to the USDA, total agricultural production has slowed significantly since the turn of the century.

In Fiscal Years 2012-2015, the USDA-NIFA Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) review process identified \$3.85 billion in grants worthy of funding. However, with a limited

annual budget, the program could only award \$950 million—less than a quarter of the science that the program's expert panels deemed worthy.

In order to continue the important work made possible by the Committee's prior support, we request robust funding in FY 2019. The Nation's economic prosperity and security depend on our dedication to developing innovative, science-based solutions to meet our growing agricultural needs and managing efficient food systems.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests. We are grateful for your leadership in ensuring that the necessary funds to protect animals, crops, and people will continue to be available.

Sincerely,



Rodney Davis
Member of Congress



Suzan DelBene
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



Will Hurd
Member of Congress



Mike Bost
Member of Congress



Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



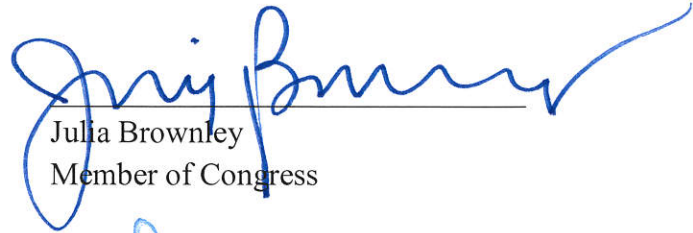
David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress



Tulsi Gabbard
Member of Congress




Stacey E. Plaskett
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Julia Brownley
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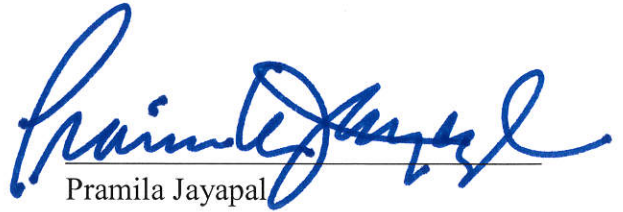
Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
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Tim Walz
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Pramila Jayapal
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Dave Loebsack
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Salud Carbajal
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Glenn 'GT' Thompson
Member of Congress



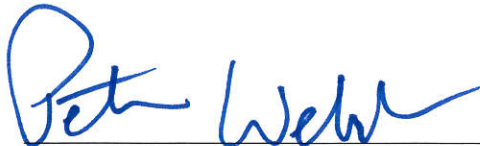
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Scott H. Peters
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Michelle Lujan Grisham
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Peter Welch
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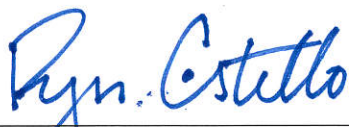
Keith Ellison
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Mark Takano
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Kevin Cramer
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Ryan Costello
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Suzanne Bonamici
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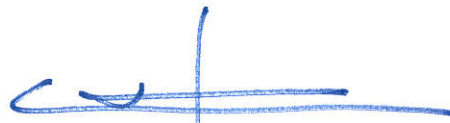
Frank Lucas
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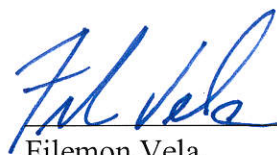
David Scott
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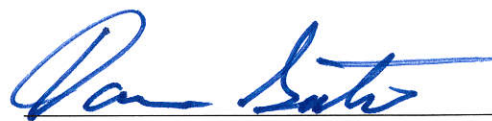
Danny K. Davis
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Colleen Hanabusa
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Filemon Vela
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Darren Soto
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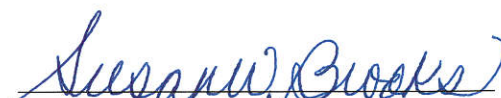
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Ralph Abraham, M.D.
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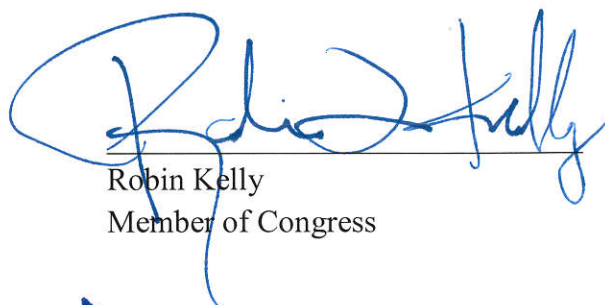
Mike Thompson
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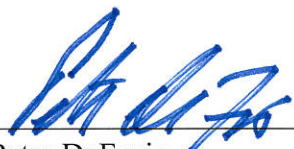
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Sam Graves
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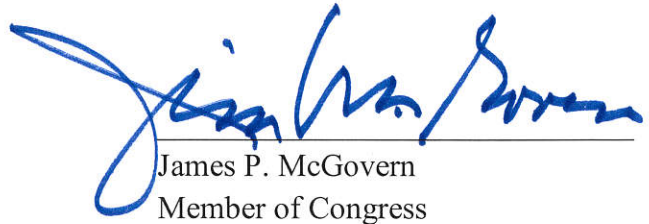

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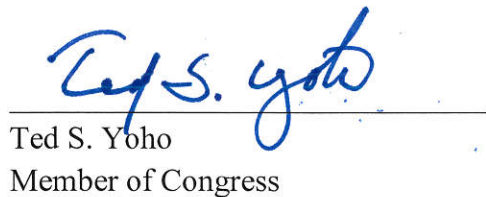

Ed Perlmutter
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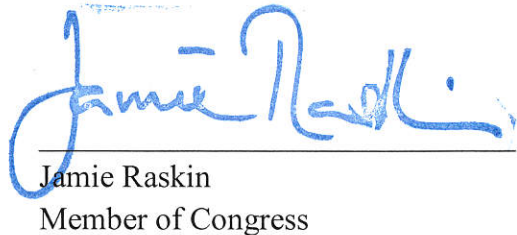

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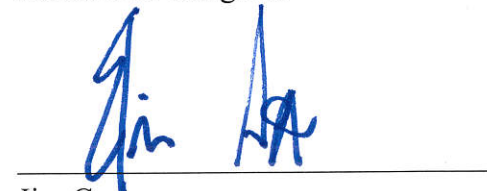

Brian Fitzpatrick
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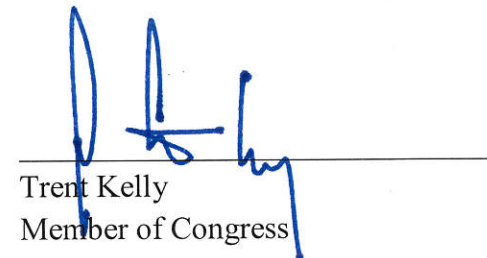

Cheri Bustos
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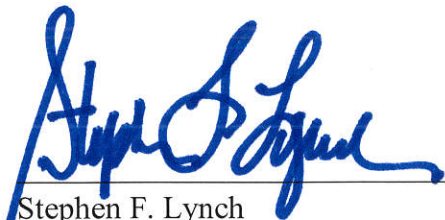

Trent Kelly
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Richard M. Nolan
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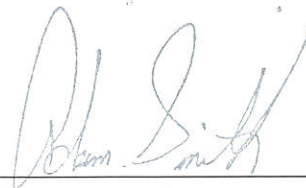

Andy Barr
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Kyrsten Sinema
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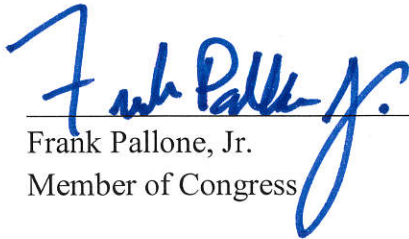

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Stephen F. Lynch
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Adam Smith
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Frank Pallone, Jr.
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Rod Blum
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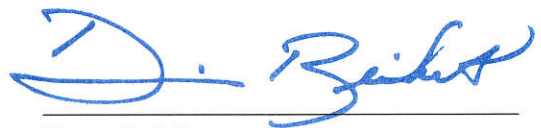
William R. Keating
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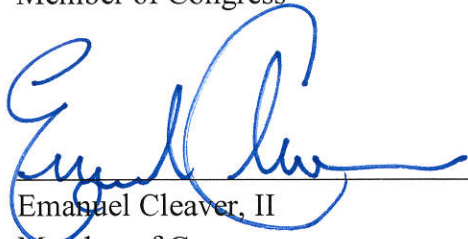
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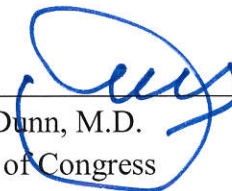
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Dave Reichert
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Emanuel Cleaver, II
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Neal P. Dunn, M.D.
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