

Dear Chairman Boozman, Ranking Member Klobuchar, Chairman Thompson, and Ranking Member Craig:

On behalf of the National Young Farmers Coalition and the ### undersigned national, regional, and state organizations, corporations, and local businesses, **we are writing to call for you to ensure the next Farm Bill delivers on land access for the next generation of farmers, ranchers, and forest owners by including the *New Producer Economic Security Act* (H.R.2536, S.1237).**

Land access, retention, and transition are critical to the success of the future of agriculture in this country. Yet, finding and accessing affordable land is the number one challenge facing young farmers and ranchers in the United States, regardless of geography, number of years in agriculture, or whether or not they are first generation producers. With the average age of U.S. producers approaching 60 years old and nearly half of U.S. farmland expected to change hands over the next two decades, the next Farm Bill is our best chance at creating meaningful policy solutions to this daunting trend that keeps land out of reach for so many. If the next Farm Bill does not respond to these critical needs, not only is the success and economic security of young and beginning producers at risk, but so is the strength and security of our food and agricultural systems, and thus our national security.

The work of responding to the land access crisis has already begun on the ground, but needs policy support for lasting results. You have an opportunity in the next Farm Bill to answer the call of the upcoming generation of farmers with this policy support. Community-led land access efforts are underway across the country: creative financing models, market and infrastructure development, cooperative ownership models, and more. Our nation's producers need support that invests in community-led, locally-appropriate projects and recognizes that there is not a one-size-fits all solution. By including the bipartisan *New Producer Economic Security Act* (H.R.2536, S.1237) in the Farm Bill, Congress will ensure that the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) has the ability to resource locally-led, community-based projects that address the interrelated challenges of land, capital, and market access and secure our domestic food system.

Introduced by U.S. Representatives **Nikki Budzinski** (D-IL-13), **Zach Nunn** (R-IA-03), **Joe Courtney** (D-CT-02), **Don Davis** (D-NC-01), **Eric Sorenson** (D-IL-17), **Jill Tokuda** (D-HI-02), and **Gabe Vasquez** (D-NM-02) and by **Senator Tina Smith** (D-MN), the *New Producer Economic Security Act* (H.R.2536, S.1237), would establish a pilot program that offers flexible support for locally-controlled solutions to the land access, retention, and transition crisis. Specifically, as funds become available, the pilot program would:

- Make grants to and enter into cooperative agreements with State and Tribal governments, non-profit service providers, community lending institutions, farmer cooperatives, and other eligible entities to strengthen land, capital, and market access outcomes for beginning farmers, ranchers, and forest owners.
- Provide funding for direct assistance and services to help beginning farmers and ranchers afford and acquire land, cover closing costs and down payments, capitalize infrastructure and site improvements, acquire business technical assistance and farm viability training, and other activities.
- Prioritize projects that provide direct financial assistance to producers, involve collaborative networks or partnerships, facilitate transition of farmland from existing to new producers, and incorporate other factors that will compound the program's impact.
- Establish a stakeholder committee to develop a process for evaluating applications and distributing funds to ensure the program is responsive to the needs of farmers and ranchers.

Our nation must take action now to facilitate secure, affordable access to land for new producers – there is no time to wait. This is the moment for Congress to take action and ensure that the next Farm Bill delivers material benefits for the next generation of farmers, ranchers, and foresters striving to establish and grow their operations. The needs are clear and if we fail to make meaningful progress on land access in this Farm Bill, our communities, farm and food system, and national security will be at greater risk.

Please join us in supporting the inclusion of the *New Producer Economic Security Act* (H.R.2536, S.1237) in the next Farm Bill.

Sincerely,
 AfriThrive Inc
 Alaska Food Policy Council
 Ceres
 Colorado Blueprint to End Hunger
 The Conservation Fund
 Chicago Food Policy Action Council
 Dietrick Institute for Applied Insect Ecology
 Illinois Stewardship Alliance
 Farmers Rising
 Food Works
 Interfaith Sustainable Food Collaborative
 JSA Sustainable Properties LLC
 KC Farm School

King Arthur Baking Company
The Land Connection
Land for Good
Land Stewardship Project
Maine Farmland Trust
Michael Fields Agricultural Institute
Midwest Farmers of Color Collective
Mill City Farmers Market
Minnesota Farmers' Market Association
The Nashville Food Project
National Family Farm Coalition
National Young Farmers Coalition
New Mexico Healthy Soil Working Group
NJ Food Democracy Collaborative
Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance
Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Hampshire (NOFA-NH)
NWI Food Council
Organic Farmers Association
Renewing the Countryside
Roots Return Heritage Farm
San Diego Food Systems Alliance
Sierra Harvest
Union of Concerned Scientists