

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 11, 2011

The Honorable Herb Kohl  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural  
Development and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural  
Development and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Kohl and Ranking Member Blunt,

As the Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development and Related Agencies continues its work on funding the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2011, we write to express our strong support for funding for research, extension, and teaching programs at the nation's land-grant universities.

The Full-Year Continuing Resolution, H.R. 1, adopted by the House of Representatives would reduce the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture's (NIFA) budget by \$217 million. Much of this reduction is due to the elimination of \$134 million in Congressionally-designated research and extension projects. Unlike most government programs that would retain these funds in broader areas to be allocated by an agency, H.R. 1 calls for the elimination of these projects within the USDA, which will mean the actual loss of these funds unless the subcommittee acts.

In Fiscal Year 2007, when faced with a similar elimination of Congressionally-designated funding, Congress wisely recognized the potential impact this would have on agricultural research and extension. As a result, many of these funds were retained and reallocated to the capacity research and extension programs at land-grant universities, averting what may have been a multi-year loss of funding baseline.

Combined with losses of nearly \$30 million in the Smith-Lever program and \$34 million in NIFA's flagship competitive research program, the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative, these reductions will have serious negative impacts on campuses across the nation, limiting their ability to carry out critical research and programs that are helping expand economic opportunities for our farmers, reduce obesity, protect our natural resources, and provide a safe and affordable food supply.

The 16 percent reduction imposed on these research and extension programs is much greater than other areas of government. We urge you to recapture funds lost with the proposed elimination of Congressionally-directed spending and provide the highest possible level of funding for the core research, extension, and teaching programs at the nation's land-grant universities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kirsten E. Gillibrand

Carol Levin

John F. Kerry

Jeffrey A. Merkley

Jane Harber

Adrian

Tom Harber

Ron Wyden