

August 29, 2018

Senator Pat Roberts  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Agriculture

Senator Debbie Stabenow  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Agriculture

Representative Michael Conaway  
Chairman  
House Committee on Agriculture

Representative Collin Peterson  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Agriculture

Dear Chairmen Roberts and Conaway and Ranking Members Stabenow and Peterson:

As agriculture leaders working to conference the House and Senate-passed Farm Bills, American farmers and families are looking to you to deliver a stronger, more resilient, more sustainable, and more equitable food and farm system. The over 300 undersigned organizations ask that, as leaders of the 2018 Farm Bill Conference Committee, you invest in farmers and rural and urban communities by providing permanent funding for the Local Agriculture Market Program (LAMP).

The LAMP proposal comes at a critical juncture. Earlier this year, the USDA Economic Research Service (ERS) predicted that farm sector profits would continue to decline through 2018.<sup>1</sup> ERS has also reported that food insecurity rates remain well above what they were just a decade ago.<sup>2</sup> Supporting LAMP in the 2018 Farm Bill would provide all farmers, including beginning farmers, with the critical tools they need to navigate these uncertain times. LAMP would also encourage equitable access to healthy and sustainable food in thousands of communities across the country by supporting local food and farm businesses.

During the prolonged downturn in the farm economy, farmers and food producers that have participated in the local and regional food sector have experienced a strong return on investment. The potential of this growing marketplace is not merely anecdotal—data from the 2007 and 2012 Agriculture Censuses show that farmers who market food directly to consumers have a greater chance of remaining in business than similarly sized farms that market through only traditional channels<sup>3</sup>. A follow-on survey to the National Census of Agriculture revealed that in 2015 over 167,000 U.S. farms produced and sold food locally through food hubs and other intermediaries, direct farmer-to-consumer marketing, or direct farm to retail<sup>4</sup>. These sales resulted in \$8.7 billion in revenue for producers<sup>5</sup> and according to USDA, the local and regional food sector is expected to reach \$20 billion in sales by 2019<sup>6</sup>.

This economic growth has been fueled in part through policies and programs established in previous Farm Bills, including the Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP), Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP), and Value-added Producer Grants Program (VAPG). While these programs have been essential to creating the foundation for resilient local and regional food economies, the House version of the farm bill does not provide them permanent mandatory funding. The lack of permanent funding for these programs not only harms farmers – it will also limit access to healthy, local food for thousands of American communities.

Expanding local markets for farmers and food producers through programs like FMPP, LFPP, and VAPG also helps to make healthy foods more readily available to consumers. This is particularly important in low-income communities with limited access to fresh, high-quality produce. In 2017, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participants spent \$22.4 million in benefits at nearly 7,400 farmers markets nationwide—

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<sup>1</sup> [Farm Income Forecast](#), February 2018. U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Economic Research Service (ERS).

<sup>2</sup> [Household Food Security in the United States in 2016](#), September 2017. USDA ERS.

<sup>3</sup> [Farmers that Sell Directly to Consumers May Stay in Business Longer](#), April 2016, ERS.

<sup>4</sup> [Local Food Marketing Practices Survey](#), December 2016, USDA National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS).

<sup>5</sup> [Local Food Marketing Practices Survey](#), December 2016, USDA NASS.

<sup>6</sup> [Statement by Thomas Vilsack Secretary of Agriculture Before the House Committee on Agriculture](#), February 2016, USDA.

representing a 130 percent increase from 2012.<sup>7</sup> Many farmers markets are also home to nutrition education and healthy food incentive programs that work to help shoppers purchase and consume more fruits and vegetables grown by local producers. For example, the Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) program, which operated at nearly 1,000 farmers markets in 2015, resulted in an estimated 16 to 32 million additional servings of fruits and vegetables for SNAP households.<sup>8</sup> The success of FINI at farmers markets rests, in part, on a foundation that was built over many years utilizing federal programs such as FMPP.

In LAMP, the Senate Farm Bill offers an opportunity to more efficiently target these valuable yet underfunded federal resources in order to deliver better outcomes. LAMP provides permanent funding for local food and farm programs by streamlining existing programs in order to more efficiently grow farm and food-based value-added businesses, local and regional markets, and strengthen local supply chains that support farm profitability. Bringing these tools and others, including food safety cost share assistance, together builds on the strengths of past Farm Bills while delivering results for farmers and communities across the country.

We, the undersigned organizations, ask you to support permanent funding for the LAMP in the 2018 Farm Bill to create a food and farm system that gives farmers the freedom to thrive and improves access to healthy food. American farmers and communities deserve nothing less.

Thank you for your consideration,

### **National Organizations**

American Farmland Trust  
California Certified Organic Farmers  
Catholic Rural Life  
CDFI Coalition  
Center for a Livable Future  
Center for Community Self-Help  
Certified Naturally Grown  
ChangeLab Solutions  
Chef Ann Foundation  
Fair Food Network  
Family Farm Defenders  
Farm & Ranch Freedom Alliance  
Farm Aid  
Farmer Market Coalition  
Food Policy Action  
Food & Water Watch  
FoodCorps  
Health Care Without Harm  
Healthy Food America  
I-Collective  
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy  
Iroquois Valley Farms REIT PBC  
Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future  
Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food, Education, & Policy, Program in Nutrition, Teachers College, Columbia University  
National Association of Regional Councils  
National Center for Frontier Communities

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<sup>7</sup> [Comparison of SNAP Authorized Farmers and Markets FY2012 and FY2017](#), July 2018, USDA.

<sup>8</sup> [Year One of the USDA FINI Program: Incentivizing the Purchase of Fruits and Vegetables Among SNAP Customers at the Farmers Market](#), April 2017. Wholesome Wave.

National Cooperative Business Association  
National Farm to School Network  
National Farmers Union  
National League of Cities  
National Recreation and Park Association  
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition  
National Young Farmers Coalition  
Organic Farming Research Foundation  
Organization for Competitive Markets  
Patagonia  
Plainsong Farm & Ministry  
PolicyLink  
Presbyterian Church USA  
Rural Advancement Foundation International  
Rural Coalition  
Slow Food USA  
The Agrarian Trust  
The Conservation Fund  
The Food Trust  
The Good Food Brigade  
The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at The Ohio State University  
The Praxis Project  
The Wallace Center at Winrock International  
Union of Concerned Scientists  
Wholesome Wave

### **Alabama**

Alabama Sustainable Agriculture Network

### **Alaska**

Alaska Farmers Market Association

### **Arizona**

Community of Christ Faith Organization  
Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona  
Pinnacle Prevention

### **Arkansas**

Delta Land & Community

### **California**

Agricultural Institute of Marin  
Alchemist Community Development Corporation  
California Alliance of Farmers' Markets  
Children's Council of San Francisco  
Coastside Farmers' Markets  
Community Alliance with Family Farmers  
Ecological Farming Association  
Ecology Center  
Farm Fatales on Irish Ridge

Interfaith Sustainable Food Collaborative  
Los Altos United Methodist Church  
Mt. Shasta Farmers' Market  
Northern California Community Loan Fund  
Russian River Deanery, Episcopal Diocese of Northern  
California  
Shomrei Torah Congregation  
United Church of Christ Petaluma  
Visalia Farmers Market Association  
Wesley United Methodist Church

## **Colorado**

350 Metro Denver  
Boulder County Farmers Markets  
Chaffee County Public Health  
Children's Farms of America  
City of Golden  
Colorado Interfaith Power and Light  
Colorado Springs Food Rescue  
Colorado State University Extension  
Denver Food Rescue  
Denver Urban Gardens  
Fleischer Family Farm LLC  
Fresh Food Hub  
Garfield County Public Health - Double Food Bucks Program  
Green Cities Local Food Coalition  
Healthier Colorado  
Healthy Community Food Systems  
Helping Hand Lending  
Hunger Free Colorado  
Hunt or Gather  
Jefferson Conservation District  
Jefferson County Public Health  
Jovial Concepts  
LiveWell Colorado  
Mancos FoodShare  
Mile-High Farmers  
Montbello Organizing Committee  
Peak to Plains Food Distribution  
Pikes Peak Farm to School  
Plant The Seed Project  
Ranch Foods Direct  
Rocky Mountain Farmers Union  
Slow Food Denver  
Sprout City Farms  
Star Acre Farms, LLC  
The Golden Backpack Program

The Healthy People Project  
Tower View FarmYard  
Tri-County Health Department  
UpRoot Colorado  
Valley Food Partnership

### **Connecticut**

Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative  
New Haven Farms

### **District of Columbia**

Community Foodworks  
DC Greens  
Ward 8 Farmers Market, Inc.

### **Florida**

Florida Organic Growers  
Root & Tail Farm

### **Georgia**

Georgia Organics  
Little Ones Learning Center  
The Common Market Georgia  
Wholesome Wave Georgia

### **Idaho**

Inland Northwest Food Network

### **Illinois**

Advocates for Urban Agriculture  
Enlace Chicago  
Green City Market  
Illinois Stewardship Alliance  
Northbrook Farmers Market Association  
Openlands  
Seven Generations Ahead  
The Land Connection  
The Lumpkin Family Foundation

### **Indiana**

Hoosier Farmers Market Association  
Linton Farmers' Market  
Food Council of Northeast Indiana

### **Iowa**

Lutheran Services in Iowa  
Sustainable Iowa Land Trust

### **Kansas**

Kansas Farmers Union  
Kansas Rural Center  
KC Healthy Kids

### **Kentucky**

Central Appalachian Network  
Community Farm Alliance  
Food in Neighborhoods Community Coalition  
Grow Kentucky  
New Roots Inc

### **Louisiana**

Delcambre Seafood & Farmers Market  
New Orleans Food Policy Advisory Committee

### **Maine**

Coastal Enterprises, Inc.  
Maine Farmland Trust  
Maine Federation of Farmers' Markets  
Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association

### **Maryland**

Charles Koiner Center for Urban Farming  
Crossroads Community Food Network  
Edmonson Village Farmers Market  
Fair Farms  
Future Harvest - CASA

### **Massachusetts**

Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture  
Mass in Motion  
Massachusetts Farmers' Markets Association  
New England Farmers Union  
Northeast Organic Farming Association - Interstate Council  
Springfield Food Policy Council  
World Farmers

### **Michigan**

Access of West Michigan  
Detroit Food Policy Council  
Ecology Center  
Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities  
Keep Growing Detroit  
Michigan Environmental Council  
Michigan Farmers Market Association  
Michigan Food and Farming Systems  
Muskegon County Food System Council  
St. Louis Farmers Market

## **Minnesota**

Appetite for Change  
Northside Fresh Coalition  
Hunger Solutions Minnesota  
Renewing the Countryside

## **Mississippi**

Mississippi Sustainable Agriculture Coalition

## **Missouri**

EarthDance Organic Farm School  
Greater KC Food Policy Coalition  
Missouri Coalition for the Environment

## **Nebraska**

Center for Rural Affairs

## **New Hampshire**

Greater Nashua Food Council  
Land for Good  
NH Farm to School

## **New Mexico**

Farm to Table New Mexico  
La Montanita Coop  
New Mexico Food & Agriculture Policy Council

## **New York**

Central New York Chapter, National Young Farmers Coalition  
Equity Advocates  
Food Bank of the Southern Tier  
Just Food  
Leviticus 25:23 Alternative Fund, Inc.  
Northeast Organic Farming Association  
Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group  
Oneida County Public Market  
WhyHunger

## **North Carolina**

Asheville Buncombe Food Policy Council  
Blue Ridge Women in Agriculture  
Carolina Farm Stewardship Association  
Charlotte - Mecklenburg Food Policy Council  
Feast Down East  
Forsyth Foodworks  
High Country Food Hub  
North Carolina Alliance for Health  
Orange County Food Council

PHARMN - Preserve Heritage, Agriculture & Regional Markets Now!

Reinvestment Partners

Three Eagles Sanctuary

Village Vision

Winston-Salem Urban Food Policy Council

## **Ohio**

Ashtabula Farmers Market

Ashtabula Local Food Council

Bexley Natural Market

Buckeye Harvest Market

Community Harvest Food Hub

Finance Fund Capital Corporation

Franklin County Local Food Council

Local Matters

Logan County Farmers Market

Mt. Vernon Farmer's Market

Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association

One Ingredient Consulting

Produce Perks Columbus

Produce Perks Midwest, Inc.

Tecumseh Land Trust

## **Oklahoma**

Lourrinda Enterprises LLC

Ms. Lou's Urban Harvest

## **Oregon**

16th Ave Farmers Market

Adelante Mujeres

Aloha Community Farmers Market

Briarpatch Botanicals

Corvallis-Albany Farmers' Markets

Cully Farmers Market

Lane County Farmers Market

Manzanita Farmers Market

Montavilla Farmers Market

Oregon Farm to School and School Garden Network

Oregon Farmers Markets Association

Oregon Food Bank

People's Farmers' Market

Portland Farmers Market

Spencer Creek Growers Markets

The Dalles Farmers' Market

Umpqua Valley Farmers Market

Willamette Farm & Food Coalition

## **Pennsylvania**

Black Urban Gardeners & Farmers  
Bridgeway Capital  
Clarion River Organics  
Easton Farmers' Market  
Farm to City  
Farm to City LLC  
Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture  
Pennsylvania Farmers Union  
The Common Market Mid-Atlantic  
Urban Tree Connection

## **South Carolina**

South Carolina Community Loan Fund

## **South Dakota**

Dakota Rural Action

## **Tennessee**

Morristown Farmers Market

## **Texas**

Brownsville Wellness Coalition  
CASA del Llano, Inc  
Coppell Farmers Market  
Farmers Market Friends  
Farmshare Austin  
Food Policy Council of San Antonio  
GROW North Texas  
J & K RGV Properties, LLC  
PEAS - Partners for Education Agriculture and Sustainability  
PPC Farms  
Slow Food Dallas-Fort Worth  
Sustainable Food Center  
Taylor Villas, LLC  
Texas Center for Local Food  
Texas Korean Women's Network  
Texas Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association  
The Common Market Texas  
The Montalvo House  
Waco Downtown Farmers Market  
West Texas Growers and Producers Association  
Wild West Farmers Market

## **Vermont**

Lydia B Stokes Foundation  
Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont

## **Virginia**

Arcadia Center for Sustainable Food & Agriculture  
Chesapeake Foodshed Network  
Independence Fanners Market  
Plenty!  
Virginia Association for Biological Farming  
Virginia Farmers Market Association

### **Washington**

Everett Farmers Market  
Jefferson County Farmers Markets  
Seattle Neighborhood Farmers Markets  
Shoreline Farmers Market Association  
Snohomish Farmer's Market  
The Greater Lewis County Farmers Market Association  
Washington State Farmers Market Association  
Wenatchee Valley Farmers Market  
Whatcom Farm-to-School

### **West Virginia**

West Virginia Food & Farm Coalition

### **Wisconsin**

Michael Fields Agricultural Institute  
REAP Food Group  
Wisconsin Farmers Union