

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 5, 2017

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chairman
Agriculture Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriation
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sanford Bishop
Ranking Member
Agriculture Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriation
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Aderholt and Ranking Member Bishop,

We write to express our support for an increase of \$10 million for the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers Program (OASDVFR) program (also known as the 2501 Program), which would provide \$20 million in total funding for the program. This appropriation would restore total program funding to its historical levels and it would help meet the increased demand for outreach and technical assistance by military veteran farmers and ranchers, and other historically underserved producers.

For nearly three decades, OASDVFR has been USDA's primary tool to help our nation's historically underserved producers gain access to USDA's credit, commodity, conservation and other programs and services. The 2501 Program provides technical assistance to producers through community-based organizations, tribes and educational institutions, which are best prepared to reach and serve these communities.

OASDVFR also serves as the only Farm Bill program dedicated to addressing the needs of minority farmers and ranchers and was recently expanded to also serve military veterans. With additional demand for program resources from returning military veterans, Congress should scale up, not cut back, on support for our nation's most underserved communities.

Adequate funding for the OASDVFR program will increase economic development opportunities in rural communities, advance intergenerational land tenure, and promote familial and community wealth for socially disadvantaged and veteran producers. We therefore strongly urge Congress to provide an increase of \$10 million in discretionary funding for OASDVFR in FY18 in order to restore total program funding to previous total funding levels of \$20 million.

Thank you for your consideration and attention to the matter.

Sincerely,


Ben Ray Luján
Member of Congress


Michelle Lujan Grisham
Member of Congress

Tom O'Halleran

Tom O'Halleran
Member of Congress

Stacey E Plaskett

Stacey E. Plaskett
Member of Congress

Terri Sewell

Terri Sewell
Member of Congress

Gwen Moore

Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

Sean Patrick Maloney

Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress

Frederica S Wilson

Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress

J. Luis Correa

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Member of Congress

Linda T. Sanchez

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Judy Chu

Judy Chu
Member of Congress

David Scott

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Filemon Vela

Filemon Vela
Member of Congress

Tim Walz

Tim Walz
Member of Congress

Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan

Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
Member of Congress

Danny K. Davis

Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress

John Conyers, Jr.

John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress

Vicente Gonzalez

Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress

Salud Carbajal

Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress

Raul Grijalva

Raul Grijalva
Member of Congress



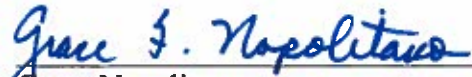
Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



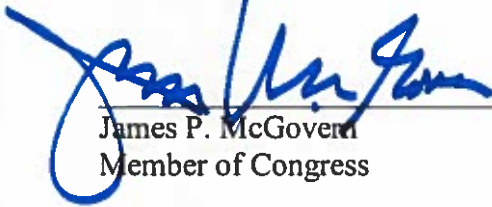
Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress



Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



Grace Napolitano
Member of Congress



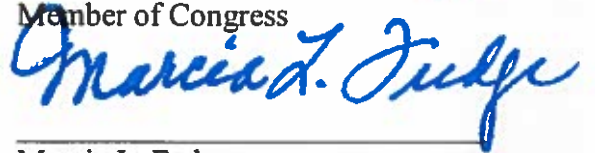
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



Elijah E. Cummings
Member of Congress



Marcia L. Fudge
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Keith Ellison
Member of Congress