

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 16, 2019

The Honorable John Hoeven
Chairman
Senate Committee on
Appropriations
Subcommittee on Agriculture
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Agriculture
Washington, DC 20515

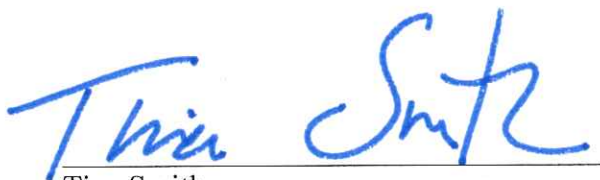
Dear Chairman Hoeven and Ranking Member Merkley:

We write to express our support to the Committee to provide discretionary funding of \$10 Million for FY 2020 for the new FOTO Program, established in Section 12301 of the 2018 Farm Bill. The FOTO program merged the authorities the Beginning Farmer and Ranchers Development Program (BFRDP) and the Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers (also known as 2501). The \$10 million funding request would restore both programs to historic levels and meet increased needs for the effective combination of education and training models designed to support new farmers, and historically underserved producers.

To ensure a future for our agricultural economy and food system, we need more farmers and ranchers throughout our nation. In this era of consumer local food demands, global market disruptions, and environmental challenges, minority, veteran, and beginning farmers and ranchers require immediate access to the latest agricultural related technologies, management strategies, and conservation practices. The Farming Opportunities Training and Outreach (FOTO) program, as created in the 2018 Farm bill, will utilize an efficient funding and program management technique designed to ensure that the training and technical assistance needs of farmers will be addressed in a comprehensive manner.

As Members of Congress with minority, veteran, and beginning farmers and ranchers in our States, we look forward to working with the subcommittee to ensure that adequate funds for these important programs are included in the final FY 2020 Agriculture Appropriations bill.

Sincerely,



Tina Smith
United States Senator



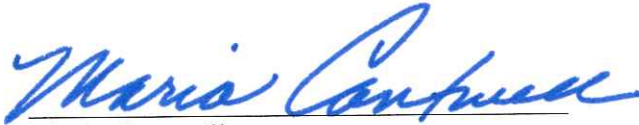
Doug Jones
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



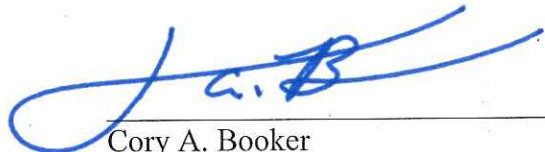
Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



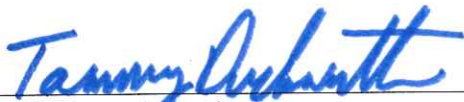
Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



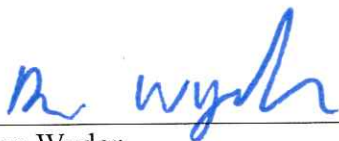
Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



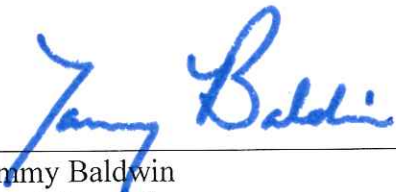
Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator