

April 11, 2023

The Honorable Martin Heinrich  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Agriculture,  
Rural Development, FDA, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable John Hoeven  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Agriculture,  
Rural Development, FDA, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Andy Harris.  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Agriculture,  
Rural Development, FDA, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sanford Bishop Jr.  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,  
FDA, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Heinrich, Chairman Harris, Ranking Member Hoeven, and Ranking Member Bishop,

The undersigned food, farm, conservation, and rural organizations appreciate your commitment to continued investment in the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program. As you work to develop agriculture appropriations legislation for fiscal year (FY) 2024, we write to highlight the importance of continued investment in agriculture research and to urge your support for increasing SARE funding to \$60 million.

Administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), SARE has been a leader in addressing key sustainability challenges facing agriculture for over 30 years and remains USDA's only farmer-driven research program. It has helped create more innovative organic and conservation farm practices that are adopted by farmers on the ground than any other competitive agricultural research program. Thus, SARE is uniquely positioned to help producers meet the increasingly urgent imperative to adopt systems and practices that make their operations more resilient to climate disruption and reduce net greenhouse gas emissions.

All SARE projects address sustainability and focus on improving farmer profitability, stewardship, and quality of life. The program is one of the first in the country to address management practices that help sequester carbon and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in agriculture using a holistic approach rather than undergoing one practice change at a time. SARE

projects also include improvements to local and regional food systems, including farmer access to markets, increasing food sovereignty in Tribal communities, integrated livestock, agroforestry, perennial cropping systems, and renewable energy, to name a few. The program's continued emphasis on practical, in-field research, farmer-to-farmer knowledge sharing, and farmer-researcher collaboration ensures that its research priorities are constantly evolving and responding to the challenges that farmers and ranchers face every day. SARE also provides grants, training, and resources to agriculture professionals to build their knowledge and skills through its Professional Development Program. This includes professionals from the Cooperative Extension Service and USDA. For years SARE has supported graduate students which helps establish the pipeline of future agricultural scientists who are needed to make the next breakthroughs in agriculture.

In addition, the program is expanding its outreach to historically underserved farmers and ranchers by providing sponsorship funds to support education and training activities and has also devoted resources to addressing inequities in funding and personnel support for 1994 and 1890 Land Grant Institutions. Over its 35-year history, SARE has awarded over \$377 million to over 8,000 initiatives focusing on farmer-led research and education in every state across the country. Yet despite SARE's long-standing record of helping farmers and ranchers develop and adopt innovative practices and systems, the program has yet to reach its full authorized amount of \$60 million. As a result of this under-funding, SARE review panels can award only a fraction of the highly qualified and innovative proposals submitted each year. Without increased investments, farmers will not be able to meet future productivity challenges and remain competitive, and they will lack the easily accessible and regionally appropriate research that they need to develop sustainable and climate resilient farming systems. In light of this, ***we support full funding for SARE at its authorized level of \$60 million, mirroring the President's Budget Request for FY 2024.*** We believe this funding will boost research in soil health and climate resilience, expand investments in research to support farmers, especially farmers of color, and help rural communities thrive.

We thank you for your strong support of SARE and efforts to increase SARE funding in previous years, as well as your continued support for our nation's farmers.

Sincerely,

American Society of Agronomy  
American Sustainable Business Network  
California Climate and Agriculture Network (CalCAN)  
Carbon180  
CISA  
Climate Land Leaders

Crop Science Society of America  
Cultivate Kansas City  
Earthjustice  
Environmental Working Group  
Farm Action Fund  
Farm Aid  
Farmworker Association of Florida  
Food Animal Concerns Trust (FACT)  
Friends of the Mississippi River  
Fruit Fair Supermarket  
Greater Kansas City Food Policy Coalition  
Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities  
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy  
King Arthur Baking Company  
Land Stewardship Project  
Maine Farmland Trust  
MegaFood  
Midwest Cover Crops Council  
National Association of Plant Breeders  
National Center for Appropriate Technology  
National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research  
National Organic Coalition  
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition  
National Wildlife Federation  
National Young Farmers Coalition  
Naturepedic Organic Mattresses & Bedding  
New Entry Sustainable Farming Project  
Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT)  
Northwest Center for Alternatives to Pesticides  
Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association  
Oregon Climate & Agriculture Network  
Oregon Tilth  
Organic Farmers Association  
Organic Seed Alliance  
Pasa Sustainable Agriculture  
Practical Farmers of Iowa  
PVHC  
Renewing the Countryside  
Rural Advancement Foundation International-USA  
Rural Coalition

Soil Science Society of America  
Spark Climate Solutions  
Sustainable Food Center  
Synergistic Hawaii Agriculture Council  
The Breakthrough Institute  
Union of Concerned Scientists  
Women, Food and Agriculture Network  
ZEGO