

May 12, 2025

The Honorable John Hoeven  
Chair  
Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and  
Drug Administration, and Related Agencies  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and  
Drug Administration, and Related Agencies  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Andy Harris, M.D.  
Chair  
Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and  
Drug Administration, and Related Agencies  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and  
Drug Administration, and Related Agencies  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Hoeven, Ranking Member Shaheen, Chairman Harris, Ranking Member Bishop:

We, the undersigned food and agriculture organizations, thank you for all your work to promote a vibrant and sustainable food and farm system. We particularly appreciate your recent support to ensure the USDA Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production received funding in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024 (P.L. 118-42) and the recently passed FY2025 continuing resolution to fund the office. This funding is essential to sustain the growing momentum of the Office as it responds to demand from countless communities and growers nationwide.

As you work to develop the FY2026 agriculture appropriations bill, we strongly support funding the Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production and related activities at its authorized level of \$25 million, and the urban agriculture data collection initiative at \$5 million.

Urban agriculture generally refers to the cultivation, processing, and distribution of agricultural products in urban, suburban, and municipal settings, while innovative production includes utilizing new technologies and growing methods like controlled environment agriculture (CEA). Urban agriculture and innovative production are longstanding practices that maximize production with less acreage and take many different forms across the country, including high-tech greenhouses, indoor vertical farms, community gardens, and rooftop farms, utilizing a variety of growing methods including hydroponics, aquaponics, aeroponics and soil-based systems. Ultimately, agriculture in these settings produces an array of economic and social benefits beyond urban city centers.

The Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production (OUAIP) offers programs and services that support the development of urban, indoor, and other emerging agricultural methods in urban, suburban, and rural settings. Since OUAIP received its first appropriation in FY2020, it

has quickly responded to nationwide interest by investing over \$85 million through 199 grants and 146 cooperative agreements that increase the capacity of urban agriculture, innovative producers, and municipal composting initiatives in local communities across 43 states and Puerto Rico. This funding supports a wide range of activities, such as operating and scaling high-tech indoor farming systems, incubator farms and community gardens, providing job training and education on emerging technologies, increasing food production and availability in limited access areas, developing business plans, planning and implementing municipal composting and food waste reduction plans, and updating local zoning. These activities foster engagement, economic development, and environmental resiliency in local communities nationwide. Growers engaged in these projects have connected with new market opportunities, such as mobile markets and food pantries, implemented season extension practices, and diversified their on-farm revenue. For many beginning farmers, urban and suburban agriculture is one pathway to start farming, gain experience, and expand operations into rural communities.

Our ability to fully quantify the prevalence of urban and innovative agricultural operations and their economic impact is only as good as the data that supports it. Unfortunately, this ability has been hindered by the stalled implementation of the Data Collection on Urban, Indoor, and Emerging Agricultural Production Initiative, which has yet to be funded since its authorization in the 2018 Farm Bill.

Demand for OUAIP programs has steadily increased since 2020 with only roughly 15% of eligible proposals being funded. **Due to the overwhelming interest in the program, we recommend that full funding of \$25 million be included in the FY2026 agriculture appropriations bill** to provide the Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production with the resources necessary to fund more than just a handful of projects in a few select states. **Furthermore, we recommend an additional \$5 million for the urban agriculture and innovative production data collection initiative** to better understand the number of growers utilizing these practices and quantify the economic impact.

We appreciate the opportunity to speak to the importance of the Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production. Thank you for taking time to consider this request, and we look forward to partnering with you in the future to promote urban agriculture, innovative production, and reduce food loss and waste.

Sincerely,

### **National Organizations**

Bread for the World  
California Certified Organic Farmers  
Catholic Rural Life  
CEA Alliance

Center for Rural Affairs  
Certified Naturally Grown  
Ecological Farming Association  
Farm Aid

FoodCorps  
FoodRecovery.org  
Hmong National Development Inc.  
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy  
Interfaith Sustainable Food Collaborative  
International Fresh Produce Association  
Izaak Walton League of America  
National Association of State Departments  
of Agriculture  
National Center for Appropriate Technology  
National Farm to School Network  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
New Entry Sustainable Farming Project  
Organic Farming Research Foundation  
Organic Seed Alliance  
Rural Advancement Foundation  
International

### **State and Regional Organizations**

A Simple Gesture  
Ag & Food Lab  
Agriculture and Land Based Training  
Association  
Alaska Food Policy Council  
Angelica Village  
Appalachian Sustainable Development  
Appetite For Change  
Arizona Food Systems Network  
Brightmoor Artisans Collective  
C.A.S.A. del Llano (Communities Assuring  
a Sustainable Agriculture)  
California FarmLink  
Change Today Change Tomorrow  
Chesapeake Bay Foundation  
Chicago Food Policy Action Council  
Clark University  
Community Alliance with Family Farmers  
Community Health Innovations of Rhode  
Island

Rural Coalition  
Savanna Institute  
Slow Food USA  
The Climate Reality Project  
The Conservation Fund  
The National Center for Frontier  
Communities  
The United States Composting Council  
The Xerces Society for Invertebrate  
Conservation  
Union of Concerned Scientists- Food and  
Environment Program  
Wild Farm Alliance  
Women Food and Agriculture Network  
Zero Food Waste Coalition

Community Involved in Sustaining  
Agriculture  
Crop Swap LA  
Cultivate Kansas City  
Dakota Rural Action  
Dietrick Institute for Applied Insect Ecology  
Eastern RI Conservation District  
Eat Drink Rhode Island  
Equity Advocates  
Family Network of Wyoming  
Farm School NYC  
Farm to Table - New Mexico  
Farm2People  
Florida Organic Growers  
Food in Neighborhoods Community  
Coalition  
FoodCycle  
Friendly Hmong Farms  
GoFarm  
GrassWorks

Greater Chicago Food Depository  
Greater Louisville Food Council  
Greater Twin Cities United Way  
Groundwork Center  
Groundwork Somerville  
Harvest Food Systems & Tamarack Holdings  
Headwater Food Hub  
Illinois Farm to School Network  
Illinois Stewardship Alliance  
Jefferson County Food Policy Council  
Jefferson County, KY Soil & Water Conservation District  
Just Food of Douglas County, Kansas  
Kaizen Food Rescue  
Kansas Rural Center  
Kent County Essential Needs Task Force  
Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture  
Land Stewardship Project  
Los Angeles Food Policy Council  
Maine Farmland Trust  
Marbleseed  
MI Farm Cooperative  
Michael Fields Agricultural Institute  
Michigan Farmers Market Association  
Michigan Food & Farming Systems  
Michigan Organic Food and Farm Alliance  
Milwaukee Food Council  
Missouri Coalition for the Environment  
MN Farmers Market Association  
Montana Organic Association  
Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society  
New Jersey Food Democracy Collaborative  
New Mexico Food & Agriculture Policy Council  
Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance  
Northeast Organic Farming Association of CT

Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont  
Northern California Recycling Association  
Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society  
Northwest Center for Alternatives to Pesticides  
Nourish Colorado  
NoVasta  
Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association  
Oregon Tilth  
Pasa Sustainable Agriculture  
Pinnacle Prevention  
Plant Chicago  
Puertas Abiertas INC  
Regenerative Agriculture Coalition  
Renewing the Countryside  
RI Food Policy Council  
Rock Rose Food Justice Project  
Share My Meals  
Southeastern Massachusetts Agricultural Partnership  
Sprout  
Streams of Hope  
Strength to Love II  
Sun Valley Kitchen + Community Center  
Syracuse-Onondaga Food Systems Alliance  
The Alliance for Collective Action  
The Giving Grove  
The Land Connection  
The Southwest Collective  
Tri County Community Action Agency  
Virginia Association for Biological Farming  
We Don't Waste  
WellFed Community  
West Grand Neighborhood Organization

## **Farmers and Businesses**

Belmar Farm  
Botanical Bites & Provisions, LLC  
Boys Grow Corp  
Brave Ground LLC  
Catalyst Collaborative Farm  
Cedar Ring Greens  
Crossroad Farm Organics  
Earley Farm  
Farm Alliance of Baltimore  
Fleur-de-lis Farms LLC  
Fox Haven Farm & Learning Center  
From the Sole Farm  
Fruit Fair  
Garden Variety Harvests LLC  
Granata Farms  
Green Solution Roots LLC  
Grow & Eat Inc  
HOPE GARDENS  
Idyllwood farms  
Juniper Gardens Training Farm  
Kentuckiana Backyard Farms  
Kinfolk Gardens  
Longfellow Farm  
Metafoodx  
MLP Farms, LLC  
Naff Farm  
NSA Farm  
Project Sweetie Pie  
Queen City Farms  
Rock Steady Farm  
Rooted and Reaching LLC  
Rude Becky Farm  
Sanctuary Farms  
Savage Acres LLC  
Seedfolx Farm  
Simple Roots Farm  
Switch Gears Farm  
Taste the Local Difference

The Inspired Garden  
Vivaria Ecologies  
WJP Urban Farms  
Yogaville Farm  
Young Family Farm