

April 15, 2026

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Patty Murray
Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Andy Harris
Chairman, Subcommittee on Agriculture
House Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Sanford Bishop, Jr.
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Agriculture
House Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable John Hoeven
Chair, Subcommittee on Agriculture
Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Agriculture
Senate Committee on Appropriations

Dear Chairs and Ranking Members:

Thank you for all the work you do to support American agriculture and our rural communities. As you know too well, our nation's farmers and ranchers are enduring severe economic conditions caused by extreme weather events and natural disasters, along with unprecedented fuel and input cost spikes tied to global instability and trade disruptions. These conditions have sharply intensified market volatility across nearly all agricultural sectors, constraining farm income and threatening the viability of producers across the country.

As Congress and the Administration considers any legislative package that includes relief for America's farmers, **we urge you to ensure that such relief includes funding for local and regional procurement of domestically produced agricultural products from family farmers and ranchers.** Local and regional supply chains are not only a cornerstone of rural economic resilience—they are essential to national food security in a time of geopolitical uncertainty.

Recent experience has demonstrated the power and effectiveness of local and regional procurement strategies. Under USDA's Local Food Purchase Assistance (LFPA) and Local Food for Schools (LFS) programs, states, Tribes, and territories were able to purchase approximately \$850 million worth of locally grown food from more than 15,000 farmers and ranchers. Together, these programs strengthened and diversified regional supply chains, stimulated nearly \$1.6 billion in economic activity, and generated lasting market relationships among farmers, schools, distributors, and community food providers. These programs created stable, predictable demand for small and midsize producers and delivered nutritious food to communities across the country.

Congress should take the opportunity to invest in stable domestic and regional markets by funding a local and regional procurement program as part of an economic relief package. Federal funding for local and regional food

procurement will help deliver market relief to family farmers and ranchers who might otherwise be left out of an aid package, while strengthening national food security and supporting rural economies.

Several Members of Congress have already taken the first step in this direction by introducing bipartisan and bicameral legislation to establish and invest in local and regional food procurement; these bills include the Strengthening Local Food Security Act (S. 2338) and the Local Farmers Feeding our Communities Act (H.R. 4782).

We urge you to provide funding for such programs and to direct USDA to implement a local and regional procurement program modeled after those included in these bills as part of any farmer economic relief package.

Thank you for your consideration as you work to support the economic viability of family farmers and ranchers. We look forward to working with you on this important priority.

Sincerely,

American Farmland Trust
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Farmers Union
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition

Cc:

The Honorable Glenn "GT" Thompson, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture

The Honorable Angie Craig, Ranking Member, House Committee on Agriculture

The Honorable John Boozman, Chairman, Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar Ranking Member, Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee