

September 15, 2017

The Honorable Pat Roberts
Chairman
Senate Agriculture, Nutrition,
and Forestry Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Ranking Member
Senate Agriculture, Nutrition,
and Forestry Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Roberts and Ranking Member Stabenow:

On behalf of our nation's food and agricultural industry stakeholders, we look forward to the Committee's upcoming action to consider sub-cabinet nominations for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). We believe it is critically important that these individuals who have a genuine understanding of the breadth of programs and policy matters before the Department be put in place as quickly as possible. Therefore, we urge your support for the expeditious confirmation of these nominees and appreciate your dedicated leadership to the food and agricultural community.

Secretary Sonny Perdue has hit the ground running with a passion to ensure the Department is meeting its mission of providing economic opportunity through innovation, helping rural America to thrive, promoting agriculture production that nourishes the world, and preserving our natural resources. To be successful, though, the Secretary needs, and deserves to have, his team in place as soon as possible. With 29 agencies and offices and nearly 100,000 employees at more than 4,500 locations here and abroad, these sub-cabinet nominees will bring to the Department critical leadership, technical expertise and fundamental knowledge, and they will serve as invaluable assets in executing core mission areas.

Without sub-cabinet leaders in place and empowered to make decisions, some services and functions may languish. This significantly hinders the Department's ability to function properly, and, more concerning, potentially harms their ability to deal with crisis. As the Department works to implement major policy initiatives, gear up for the next farm bill, provide direction on active trade issues, and do its part to respond to the recent catastrophic natural disasters, it is vital and integral to our industry and the country that these positions be filled.

Again, thank you for your leadership and dedication to our nation's food and agricultural community. We look forward to the nominees advancing through the confirmation process.

Respectfully,

Agricultural Retailers Association
Amcot
American Cotton Shippers Association

AmericanHort
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Feed Industry Association
American Seed Trade Association
American Soybean Association
American Sugar Alliance
Calcot, Ltd.
California Association of Winegrape Growers
Corn Refiners Association
Cotton Growers Cooperative
Cotton Growers Warehouse Association
Crop Insurance Professionals Association
CropLife America
Food Marketing Institute
Grocery Manufacturers Association
Institute of Shortening and Edible Oils
International Dairy Foods Association
National Alliance of Forest Owners
National Association of Conservation Districts
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Barley Growers Association
National Cattlemen's Beef Association
National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research
National Corn Growers Association
National Cotton Council
National Council of Agricultural Employers
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Grain and Feed Association
National Milk Producers Federation
National Oilseed Processors Association
National Peach Council
National Pork Producers Council
National Potato Council
National Rural Electric Cooperatives Association
National Sorghum Producers
National Sunflower Association
National Turkey Federation
North American Meat Institute
Panhandle Peanut Growers Association
Pet Food Institute
Plains Cotton Cooperative Association
Renewable Fuels Association
SNAC International
Southern Peanut Farmers Federation
Southwest Council of Agribusiness

Staplcotn
The Fertilizer Institute
United Egg Producers
USA Rice Federation
U.S. Apple Association
U.S. Canola Association
U.S. Dry Bean Council
U.S. Sweet Potato Council
Western Peanut Growers Association