

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