



May 17, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
U.S. Capitol Building, Room S-230
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
U.S. Capitol Building, Room S-221
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
U.S. Capitol Building, Room H-232
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
U.S. Capitol Building, Room H-204
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader McConnell, Speaker Ryan, Leader Schumer and Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of the nation's governors, legislators and chief state agricultural officials, we urge Congress to make enacting the next Farm Bill a priority prior to the current bill's expiration in 2018.

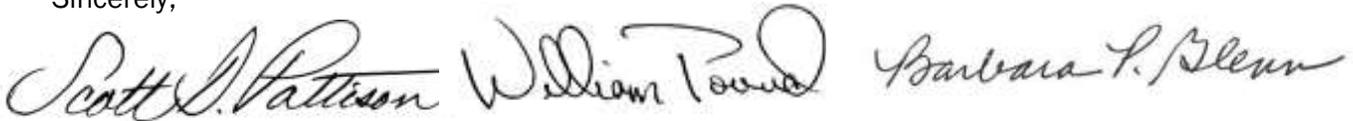
As the chief executives, elected representatives and agriculture officials in our states, we have long advocated for certainty and stability for our farmers and ranchers as they make long-term decisions impacting their communities that are important for our nation's economy and national security. We recognize the value of a healthy agricultural economy and the important role Congress plays by investing in American agriculture to provide producers the tools necessary for success. Amidst the farm economy downturn, federal investments in these programs remain especially crucial. As Congress considers legislation to define future agricultural, conservation, nutrition and forestry policy, we urge you to consider these principles:

- Provide sufficient resources to implement critical farm, conservation, forestry, pest and disease, and trade programs;
- Invest in the security of our farm economy by continuing to provide producers tools to mitigate and manage risks;
- Support essential research, especially on the safety and security of the food system and protection of our natural resources;
- Invest in voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs that are implemented in coordination with state and local intergovernmental partners;

- Ensure sufficient investment and stable resources for rural areas, including high speed internet;
- Minimize burdens on food producers, processors, and distributors so that they can continue to provide the safest, highest quality, and affordable food supply for consumers; and
- Provide states, as partners with the federal government, maximum flexibility and opportunity for innovation to create efficiencies, coordinate funds and achieve program priorities.

Governors, state legislators and state agricultural directors remain committed to a robust state-federal partnership, and look forward to working together on this critical legislation.

Sincerely,



Scott D. Pattison
Executive Director and CEO
National Governors Association

William T. Pound
Executive Director
National Conference of
State Legislatures

Barbara P. Glenn, Ph.D.
Chief Executive Officer
National Association of State
Departments of Agriculture

cc: Chairman Roberts, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
Ranking Member Stabenow, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
Chairman Conaway, House Committee on Agriculture
Ranking Member Peterson, House Committee on Agriculture
Chairman Enzi, Senate Budget Committee
Ranking Member Sanders, Senate Budget Committee
Chairman Diane Black, House Committee on the Budget
Ranking Member Yarmuth, House Committee on the Budget