



May 16, 2019

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leaders McConnell, McCarthy, and Schumer:

On behalf of National Farmers Union's nearly 200,000 family farmer, rancher and rural members, we continue to be alarmed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) plans to relocate the Economic Research Service (ERS) and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), and to realign ERS. Congress must take decisive action now to halt USDA's relocation process, which has already caused substantial disruption to functions at ERS and NIFA.

The process to relocate ERS and NIFA has proceeded without adequate public input, and despite multiple calls from members of Congress and stakeholders across the country for the Department to provide robust justification for its proposal. USDA has recently announced its "short list" of locations for relocation and has signaled its intention to make its final selection soon, with relocation being completed as early as autumn or winter 2019. We urge Congress to take all necessary steps to halt relocation.

Our concern, which NFU first shared in a letter to USDA in September 2018, is that the proposed relocation and realignment will serve to undermine the quality of research conducted by ERS and NIFA, research that is vital to helping farmers and ranchers improve productivity, steward our natural resources, and access export markets. The USDA proposal does not adequately address how the Department will improve the agencies' effectiveness in serving family farmers and ranchers. Additionally, the relocation process has already been incredibly disruptive to the function of the two agencies.

We thank you for considering this urgent call to action. And, we stand ready to work with you to prevent the current proposal from moving forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roger Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Roger" being more prominent than the last name "Johnson".

Roger Johnson
President