

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 13, 2020

The Honorable Sanford Bishop
Chairman
Subcommittee on Ag-Rural Development-FDA
Committee on Appropriations
2362-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jeff Fortenberry
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Ag-Rural Development-FDA
Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Bishop and Ranking Member Fortenberry,

Thank you for your continued support for agricultural research at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA-NIFA). As you meet to consider funding for Fiscal Year 2021, we respectfully request that the Committee continue to include language similar to section 762 of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2020.

The Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 farm bill) reauthorized and amended the many research, education, and extension programs implemented by USDA. Included in these amendments were revisions of many matching requirements. Although matching requirements for most programs included discretionary waiver authority for USDA, two programs were not provided such authority—the Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI) and Emergency Citrus Disease Research and Extension program (ECDRE).

Section 762 of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2020 provides the needed waiver authority by authorizing the Secretary of Agriculture to waive the matching funds requirements under Section 421(g) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998. Waiver authority for SCRI and ECDRE is important because it allows additional institutions to compete for funding for vital research programs that otherwise would be unable to compete for lack of a match.

We are grateful to the committee restoring this waiver authority in the FY2020 Omnibus Appropriations Act and would request that we continue to include language in subsequent agriculture appropriations legislation until the Farm Bill is next reauthorized or a permanent fix is enacted.

We appreciate that continued support of our nation's agriculture economy providing the resources farmers need to bring their crops from their farms to kitchen tables across the country. Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,



Kim Schrier, M.D.
Member of Congress



Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress

Al Lawson, Jr.

Al Lawson, Jr.
Member of Congress

Ted S. Yoho

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Member of Congress

Josh Harder

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Member of Congress

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**Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI) and Emergency Citrus Disease Research and Extension
Program Funding Request Letter to the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug
Administration, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Appropriations**

List of Signatories

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