



November 2, 2021

The Honorable Chuck Schumer,
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of
the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Leader Schumer and Speaker Pelosi:

The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) writes in appreciation of agricultural research, Extension, and research infrastructure funding in the Build Back Better bill and to request improvements to capitalize on the full strength of the land-grant system to further agricultural and climate related innovations. Specifically, we request additional funding for the Research Facilities Act program in the legislation that is also available to 1862 land-grant institutions.

APLU is extremely grateful for the \$1 billion in funding in the legislation to address significant need at 1890s and 1994s land-grant institutions, insular institutions, Alaskan and Hawaiian, and Hispanic serving institutions. Combined with other investments in agricultural research, it is a historic investment in capacity and competitive agriculture research and Extension programs. We are concerned, however, that failing to provide funding to modernize agriculture research facilities of 1862 land-grant institutions would be a significant missed opportunity and stunt needed scientific progress in tackling food security and climate change.

In March, Gordian, a firm with more than 30 yrs. of experience analyzing cost data and planning services for buildings, documented a need of at least \$11.5 billion in deferred maintenance at U.S. colleges of agriculture. The report estimated that 69 percent of the buildings are at the end of their useful life. Unfortunately, the challenges of infrastructure impact the caliber of U.S. agricultural science, threatening our ability to compete internationally. Scientists cannot perform optimally in facilities from the 1950s and 1960s. Modern agriculture research facilities will enable:

- controlled and contained research greenhouses, livestock feed mills, barns, and all laboratories to develop systems that mitigate greenhouse gases, limit spread of pests and diseases, and adapt to new climates.
- use of precision technologies, including remote sensing and sensor-based observations to advance sustainable agriculture and carbon sequestration.
- discovery of novel biobased innovations and agricultural systems that use less energy and water.

APLU appreciates the investments already provided in the legislation and your support for agricultural science. So much more can be accomplished by unlocking the full potential of the land-grant system to address the unprecedented challenges and opportunities the legislation is seeking to address.

Thank you for your consideration to additional funding and expansion of the RFA program. Please do not hesitate to let me know how APLU can be a resource.

Sincerely,



Peter McPherson
President
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities

CC: United States Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Chair, Debbie Stabenow and House Agriculture Committee Chair, David Scott

Effective, January 1, 2021, our new address is 1220 L Street NW, Suite 1000, Washington, DC 20005
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