



OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

June 9, 2026

THE HONORABLE AMY KLOBUCHAR
Ranking Member
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
United States Senate
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Ranking Member Klobuchar,

Thank you for your May 14, 2026, letter, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) planned reorganization and restructuring of the Research, Education, and Economics (REE) mission area. The Department is undertaking this reorganization to strengthen its ability to serve America's farmers, ranchers, foresters, and rural communities.

Consistent with President Trump and Secretary Rollins' priorities, restructuring and reorganizing REE will improve organizational effectiveness and operational efficiency. The relocation of employees will move specific REE positions to areas closer to the farmers and ranchers we serve, which strengthens our ability to deliver actionable research, trusted data, and innovative solutions by aligning our teams more closely with agricultural producers across the country. It ensures the Department's work remains relevant, responsive, and grounded in the needs of American farmers.

The Department's reorganization reflects a broader strategic effort to position REE Agencies where they can have the greatest impact. USDA remains committed to maintaining continuity of operations throughout implementation of the reorganization and ensuring farmers, ranchers, researchers, and other stakeholders continue to receive the high-quality services, data, analysis, and research support they rely upon.

I reject the premise that bringing personnel closer to agricultural stakeholders will diminish the Department's research enterprise. Relocating personnel outside of Washington, D.C., provides opportunities for employees to work in more modern and collaborative office environments, while benefiting from a significantly lower cost of living in many of these communities. This approach is also informed by the Department's experience managing aging research infrastructure. For example, the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC) has accumulated a substantial deferred maintenance backlog, estimated at more than \$1 billion, highlighting the challenges of concentrating research resources in aging facilities far removed

from many of the producers and partners USDA serves. By relocating USDA's presence closer to regional hubs and agricultural stakeholders, the Department can better leverage partnerships, improve access to modern research facilities, and ensure taxpayer resources are directed toward mission delivery and agricultural innovation.

The Department is implementing this transition in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and collective bargaining obligations. USDA continues to engage employees and bargaining units throughout the process and is committed to providing timely information as implementation proceeds.

As you note, the REE mission area plays an important role in advancing agricultural innovation, delivering trusted economic and statistical information, and supporting American agriculture through research and education. The Department remains fully committed to those responsibilities. This reorganization is designed to strengthen those capabilities by ensuring Department resources are organized around mission execution, stakeholder engagement, and providing quality service to America's farmers and ranchers.

Thank you, again, for your letter. All stakeholders – including USDA employees, members of the agricultural and research communities, and Capitol Hill offices – are encouraged to visit USDA's REE reorganization website for further information.¹

If you have additional questions, please have your staff contact USDA's Office of Congressional Relations at (202) 720-7095 or ocr@usda.gov. We provided your colleagues with a copy of this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Stephen Alexander Vaden". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Stephen" being the most prominent.

Stephen Alexander Vaden
Deputy Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture

¹ REE Reorganization website, available at: <https://www.usda.gov/ree/reorganization>.