

August [XX], 2018

The Honorable Pat Roberts  
*Chairman*  
U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture,  
Nutrition, and Forestry  
328A Russell Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
*Ranking Member*  
U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture,  
Nutrition, and Forestry  
328A Russell Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Michael Conaway  
*Chairman*  
U.S. House Committee on Agriculture  
1301 Longworth Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Collin Peterson  
*Ranking Member*  
U.S. House Committee on Agriculture  
1301 Longworth Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

**RE: Include Native American Provisions in the Final Conference Committee 2018 Farm Bill**

Dear Chairman Roberts, Chairman Conaway, Ranking Member Stabenow, and Ranking Member Peterson:

On behalf of [INSERT TRIBE OR ORGANIZATION NAME], we would like to thank each of you, and each of the members of your U.S. House and Senate Agriculture Committees, for working with tribal leaders and Native producers across Indian Country to include a record number of key tribal provisions in both the Senate- and House-passed Farm Bills. These historic changes and additions, put forward by the more than 160 tribes who have joined together in the Native Farm Bill Coalition (NFBC), will promote the efforts of tribal governments, Native producers, and tribal communities to further the health, well-being, and economic prosperity of Native agricultural producers, consumers, and tribal communities. We request that each of you work together to ensure that the final 2018 Conference Committee bill include all of the tribal provisions we identify below to authorize these significant changes for Indian Country, so we can then turn our attention to working with you and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to effectively implement them.

With nearly 57 million acres of land in use, Native agricultural production is a growing, \$3.4 billion industry with diverse production that includes commodities, livestock, fruits and vegetables, and traditional foods. Tribal governments, many of which are located in rural and remote areas, are uniquely positioned to further the outreach and mission of the USDA to build infrastructure, rural business hubs, and strong food systems for all citizens in Indian Country and rural America with their having increased access and inclusion in USDA programs. Tribes can help effectively meet the needs of their own nations and neighboring communities in food access, infrastructure, education, research, and economic development with the changes put forward in the House and Senate Farm Bills.

In May 2018, members of the NFBC, including over sixty tribal leaders and representatives, came to Washington to share with Members of Congress how the pending House and Senate Farm Bills might be improved to better impact their tribal nations. The historic significance of this fly-in event cannot

be overstated, nor can each of your willingness to consider incorporating in the final Conference bill the provisions advocated for by tribal nations. Thank you!

In nearly every title of the 2018 House and Senate Farm Bills, there are changes of great importance to Native Americans. Some will help further food and agriculture production in Indian Country. Others will provide for the recognition of tribal government parity in programs on par with our state and local government counterparts. Still other provisions will allow new or increased access to USDA programs by tribes and tribal producers. With these provisions, the 2018 Farm Bill takes substantial steps forward to help tribal governments feed our citizens with tribally produced food in tribally developed food systems, all while providing economic and job opportunities throughout Indian Country.

Attached is a full list of all the tribal specific provisions in both the House and Senate Farm Bills which the NFBC has compiled. Our **[INSERT TRIBE OR ORGANIZATION NAME]** is in full support of these provisions and urge you to incorporate them in the final bill at Conference. As you begin to conference the Farm Bill, we would like to highlight the following top priority provisions which would empower tribes, tribal producers, and tribal consumers. As more fully described in the attachment, we ask that you produce a final conference bill that includes:

- **Conservation Title:** All provisions requiring alternative funding arrangements and tribal parity in eligibility for conservation program resources.
- **Forestry Title:** Tribal parity in Good Neighbor agreements and PL 93-638 tribal self-determination in forestry management.
- **Nutrition Title:** All FDPIR program administration improvements including the PL 93-638 self-determination demonstration project for food procurement, match and carry-over funding authority, and local food inclusion in the food package.
- **Research Title:** All provisions that create improved access to FRTEP and to education by supporting Tribal Colleges and Universities and other educational institutions.
- **Rural Development Title:** All provisions that improve tribal access to rural development business programs and infrastructure funding.
- **Miscellaneous Title:** Retain Office of Tribal Relations in the Office of the USDA Secretary and ensure that the beginning farmer and rancher and socially disadvantaged producer programs have permanent authority and funding, and guarantee tribal involvement, on par with state governments, in the regulation and production of hemp.

The above priorities do not exhaust the list of the farm bill provisions at conference which are very important to us and which we hope will be included in the final conference bill. **[In particular, we wish to ask your support for ... MAY ADD OWN TRIBE'S/ ORGANIZATION'S PRIORITIES HERE.]**

Thank you for all your work so far on 2018 Farm Bill on behalf of the American people and, in particular, on our behalf and on that of our tribal citizens. We would appreciate your support for adoption of all the Native American provisions identified in the attachments, which will give the USDA and tribes the tools to improve access to nutritious food, productive agriculture, healthy forests, and robust rural economic development in Native communities throughout Indian Country.

Sincerely,

[ADD SIGNATURE BLOCK AND SIGNATURE]

cc: House and Senate 2018 Farm Bill Conferees

Attachments