

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 31, 2023

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Agriculture
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Hoeven
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Agriculture
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Heinrich and Ranking Member Hoeven:

We write to express our support to the Committee to provide discretionary funding of \$10 Million for FY 2024 for the Farming Opportunities Training and Outreach Program (FOTO), established in Section 12301 of the 2018 Farm Bill. The FOTO program merged the authorities for the Beginning Farmer and Ranchers Development Program (BFRDP) and the Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers (also known as 2501). The \$10 million funding request would meet increased needs for the effective combination of education and training models designed to support new farmers and historically underserved producers and also help to address USDA's lack of cultural competency to understand beginning farmers' and historically underserved farmers' operations

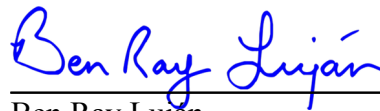
To ensure a future for our agricultural economy and food system, we need more farmers and ranchers throughout our nation. In this era of consumer local food demands, global market disruptions, and environmental challenges due to climate change, combined with the rising costs of farm inputs and supplies, historically underserved, veteran, and beginning farmers and ranchers require immediate access to the latest agricultural related technologies, management strategies, and conservation practices. The FOTO program, as created in the 2018 Farm bill, will utilize an efficient funding and program management technique designed to ensure that the training and technical assistance needs of farmers will be addressed in a comprehensive manner.

As Senators with historically underserved, veteran, and beginning farmers and ranchers in our States, we look forward to working with the subcommittee to ensure that adequate funds for these important programs are included in the final FY 2024 Agriculture Appropriations bill.

Sincerely,



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator



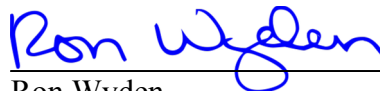
Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



Raphael Warnock
United States Senator



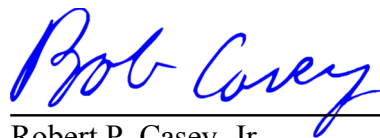
Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



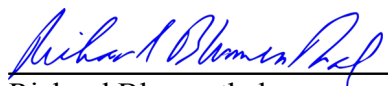
Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



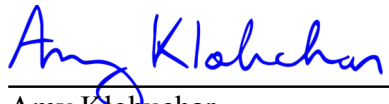
Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Jon Ossoff
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator