

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 2, 2026

The Honorable Brooke Rollins
Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Rollins,

We write to express our strong opposition to the USDA's recent decision to cancel \$300 million of funding awarded under the Increasing Land, Capital, and Market Access Program. These funds were provided through Section 22007 of the Inflation Reduction Act. By law, USDA is required to use the funds to take action to ensure underserved producers have the tools, programs, and support they need to succeed. Your decision to terminate these awards directly undermines that mandate. This action threatens the stability of agricultural communities across the country. It reverses urgently needed progress toward addressing long-standing barriers that prevent farmers—especially beginning and underserved producers—from accessing and retaining farmland.

Land access continues to be a significant barrier for farmers. According to USDA data, in 2025 the United States average farm real estate value reached a record \$4,350 per acre. This represents a \$180 per acre increase from 2024. These trends make it nearly impossible for beginning and underserved farmers—who already face limited capital, credit barriers, and discrimination in lending—to enter agriculture without targeted support. At a time when the cost of farmland is reaching record highs, pulling back this assistance is incredibly short-sighted and irresponsible.

The challenges do not end with land acquisition. Farmers who already operate land face mounting pressures. USDA data notes that farm debt is expected to increase, with solvency worsening in 2026. An Economic Research Report notes, “farm real estate debt is expected to reach \$404.3 billion in 2026, a 4.8-percent increase in nominal dollars (2.8-percent increase in inflation-adjusted dollars) from 2025. Farm non-real estate debt is expected to reach \$220.4 billion in 2026, a 6-percent increase in nominal terms and a 4-percent increase in inflation-adjusted dollars.”¹ This is on top of significant economic challenges farmers are facing due to trade wars and increasing natural disasters. This disproportionately affects beginning and underserved farmers who often lack financial buffers.

One in three farmers are at or over retirement age, while only 8 percent of farmers are under the age of 35. Meanwhile, farmland consolidation continues to grow. Investing in the next generation of farmers is essential to our national security, rural economic stability, and ensuring we can feed our growing population. The Increasing Land, Capital, and Market Access Program was created to help stabilize farm operations by supporting land retention, cooperative development, and access to markets—tools that help farmers remain viable in a rapidly changing agricultural economy. Eliminating this support will only accelerate consolidation, drive more producers out of agriculture, and make it even harder for a new generation of farmers.

Awardees spent time and resources developing partnerships, hiring staff, and preparing to implement projects based on USDA's award announcements. The abrupt cancellation of these funds wastes time and resources, undermines trust in USDA grantmaking processes, and ultimately leaves American farmers without the support

¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. (2026, February 5). *Farm sector income & finances: Assets, debt, and wealth*.

they urgently need. It also sends a deeply damaging message to farmers, nonprofits, and community partners that USDA cannot be relied upon to honor its commitments.

We urge USDA to reinstate the funding awards or work with awardees to make modifications that allow these projects to move forward and preserve the program's core purpose. USDA should reverse this decision immediately.

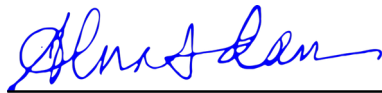
Sincerely,



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Shontel M. Brown
Member of Congress



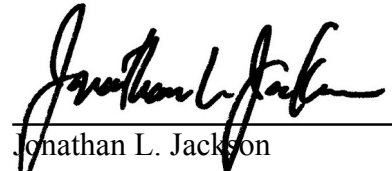
Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress



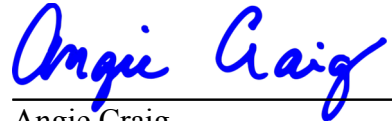
Jim Tokuda
Member of Congress



Eric Sorensen
Member of Congress



Jonathan L. Jackson
Member of Congress



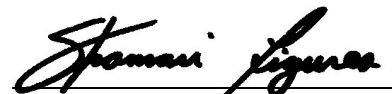
Angie Craig
Member of Congress
Ranking Member, Committee on
Agriculture



David Scott
Member of Congress



Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress



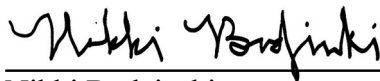
Shomari Figures
Member of Congress



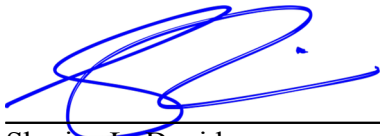
Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress



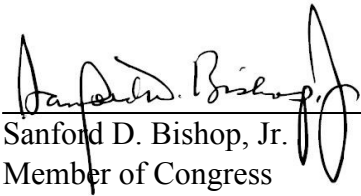
Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



Nikki Budzinski
Member of Congress



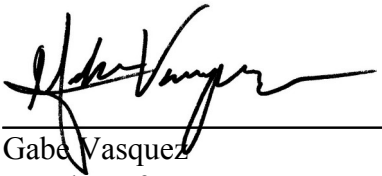
Sharice L. Davids
Member of Congress



Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress



Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress



Gabe Vasquez
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress