

May 19, 2023

The Honorable Martin Heinrich  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural  
Development, Food and Drug Administration,  
and Related Agencies  
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations  
S-128, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Andy Harris  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural  
Development, Food and Drug Administration,  
and Related Agencies  
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations  
2362-A Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Hoeven  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural  
Development, Food and Drug Administration,  
and Related Agencies  
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations  
S-128, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sanford Bishop  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural  
Development, Food and Drug Administration,  
and Related Agencies  
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations  
2362-A Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Heinrich, Chair Harris, Ranking Member Hoeven, and Ranking Member Bishop,

As Congress begins its consideration on the Fiscal Year 2024 (FY 2024) Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies (Agriculture) Appropriations bill, we write to request that you include \$3.4 million for USDA's Office of Pest Management Policy (OPMP). This modest increase over FY2023 funding levels will ensure our nation's farmers, ranchers, and other pesticide users will have a strong technical expert representing the need for access to vital pest management tools and practices.

U.S. farmers, ranchers, as well as public health, residential, recreational, and industrial users need pest management tools and practices to produce a safe, abundant, and affordable supply of food, fuel, and fiber, and to reduce the threat of vector borne disease and maintain an environment free of damaging pests and disease. Pesticides are also vitally important for maintaining important conservation practices, such as reduced tillage and cover crops, preserving vital public infrastructure, and protecting communities from pests that pose public health risks. While the importance of these tools is clear, the science, law, and regulation surrounding pesticides is quite complex. It is essential we have effective technical expertise within the U.S. government that understands these various user perspectives and can represent these positions in policy conversations. OPMP provides that expertise.

OPMP regularly coordinates with the producer and user community to best ensure the various uses and benefits of pesticides are understood and considered by coregulators. The program also regularly engages with EPA and other agencies, provides comments on regulatory proposals, and helps identify solutions to policy challenges that can preserve vital pest management needs. For example, EPA is implementing pesticide label changes related to the Endangered Species Act in a way that will likely have a profound impact on agricultural and other users. OPMP has helped to aggregate and communicate these impacts to EPA and other regulators to make certain they are considered in regulatory decisions.

While OPMP provides an enormous benefit to producers, the user community, and the public, it has faced challenges. Given that the program has only one technical expert in various scientific areas (e.g. toxicology, weed science, entomology), their capacity and ability to engage with coregulators can be greatly impacted when a staffer departs the program. To retain OPMP's capability as an effective advocate for agricultural and other user perspectives, we strongly support providing the program \$3.4 million for FY2024 in the Agriculture Appropriations legislation. This level of funding will help ensure the program can provide consistent, reliable

expertise to coregulators on agricultural perspectives and better guarantee all pesticide users are well represented in ongoing pesticide regulatory discussions.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Retailers Association  
American Farm Bureau Federation  
American Horse Council  
American Mosquito Control Association  
American Seed Trade Association  
American Soybean Association  
American Sugar Alliance  
American Sugarbeet Growers Association  
Aquatic Plant Management Society  
California Citrus Mutual  
California Fresh Fruit Association  
California Specialty Crops Council  
Council of Producers and Distributors of Agrotechnology  
CropLife America  
Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association  
Golf Course Superintendents Association of America  
Illinois Soybean Association  
International Fresh Produce Association  
National Agricultural Aviation Association  
National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants  
National Association of Landscape Professionals  
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture  
National Association of Wheat Growers  
National Cattlemen's Beef Association  
National Corn Growers Association  
National Cotton Council  
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives  
National Milk Producers Federation.  
National Onion Association  
National Pest Management Association  
National Potato Council  
National Turkey Federation  
North Central Weed Science Society  
North Dakota Grain Growers Association  
Northern Weed Science Society  
RISE (Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment)  
Southern Weed Science Society  
U.S. Durum Growers Association  
USA Rice  
Washington State Potato Commission  
Weed Science Society of America  
Western Society of Weed Science