



August 20, 2018

Honorable Pat Roberts
Chairman
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
109 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-1605

Honorable Deborah Stabenow
Ranking Minority Member
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
731 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-2204

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Mr. Thomas Grumbly

Dear Chairman Roberts and Ranking Member Stabenow:

I write as President of the Supporters of Agricultural Research (SoAR) Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization founded in 2014 by Dr. William Danforth to improve the quantity and quality of publicly funded agricultural research. We appreciate all you have done to bolster research in the last few years, and we look forward to continuing to work with you and your staff toward this important goal.

On August 8, 2018, the Secretary of Agriculture announced a plan to revamp the Research, Education, and Economics (REE) area of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This reorganization proposes to realign the Economic Research Service (ERS) under the Chief Economist as well as to move the headquarters of both ERS and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) from Washington, D.C. to as of yet unannounced location(s) by the end of 2019.

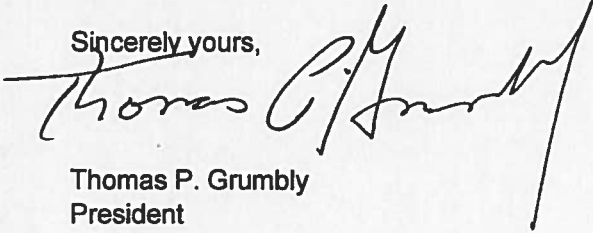
These are major decisions that will surely affect many hundreds of staff and the operations of over \$1 billion in annual programming. We strongly request that you explore the basis of this decision during the upcoming confirmation hearings for a new Under Secretary for REE, since Dr. Hutchins would have to implement these changes to the mission area. The food and agricultural research community would benefit greatly from a detailed justification of these proposed changes from the Department and from Dr. Hutchins prior to his confirmation.

We need to understand the basis of the claims made in the August 8, 2018 press release that these changes, particularly to NIFA, will save money for the government. We need to understand the process the Department intends to use for relocation and what its expectations are about how this relocation will benefit the important federal research programs under NIFA. We need to be sure that any actions advance the important science in agriculture and not inhibit it in an era where our obligations to our farmers and consumers are growing.

I recognize that you currently have numerous priorities, including the completion of the Farm Bill and other major Senate actions, but hope you will schedule a confirmation hearing for the Under Secretary before adjourning this fall.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas P. Grumbly". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Thomas P. Grumbly
President