

United States Senate

December 15, 2022

The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20250

The Honorable Terry Cosby
Chief, Natural Resources Conservation Service
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack and Chief Cosby,

We write to you in response to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) request for information on implementation of climate-smart funding in the *Inflation Reduction Act* (P.L. 117-169). As you work to finalize details, we urge the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to specifically incentivize the adoption of conservation practices that, while combatting climate change, can simultaneously mitigate the impacts of drought.

As you know, the *Inflation Reduction Act* invested \$20 billion through key conservation programs to ensure that the agricultural sector plays a central role in combatting the climate crisis. As USDA finalizes criteria for priority projects and activities that address greenhouse gas emissions, reduce nitrogen losses, and improve soil carbon, we urge you to pay special attention to practices that also address drought, including enhancing groundwater recharge, reducing salinity, improving irrigation efficiencies, reducing pumping, and utilizing organic practices. These and other practices will help meet climate goals while also helping Western farmers currently facing the worst megadrought in 1,200 years.

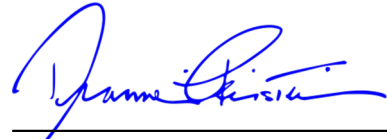
Farmers and ranchers know better than most that our ability to feed the nation – and to support family farmers and farmworkers alike – depends on clean air, clean water, and land stewardship. In order to truly support the farmers, ranchers, and farmworkers who feed our nation in adopting and expanding climate-smart activities and systems, we must ensure that the historic funding in the *Inflation Reduction Act* for emissions reductions also bolsters drought resilience.

We thank you for your consideration of this request, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



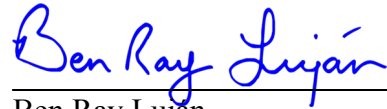
Alex Padilla
United States Senator



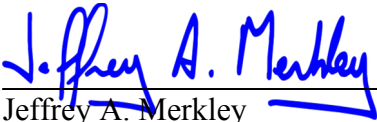
Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



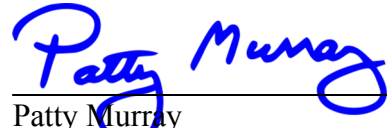
Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator