



The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
Chairwoman  
Senate Agriculture Committee

The Honorable Glenn “GT” Thompson  
Chairman  
House Agriculture Committee

The Honorable John Boozman  
Ranking Member  
Senate Agriculture Committee

The Honorable David Scott  
Ranking Member  
House Agriculture Committee

September 20, 2023

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow, Ranking Member Boozman, Chairman Thompson, and Ranking Member Scott:

On behalf of the National Young Farmers Coalition and the 175 undersigned national, regional, and state organizations, corporations, and local businesses, **we are writing to call for you to make a historic investment in land access in the 2023 Farm Bill by including and funding the *Increasing Land Access, Security, and Opportunities Act* (H.R.3955, S.2340).**

Land access, retention, and transition are critical to the success of the future of agriculture in this country. Yet, access to land is the [number one challenge](#) facing young farmers in the United States. Given the systemic challenges in finding secure land tenure, this barrier is even greater for Black, Indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC) farmers. Finding affordable land to purchase is the top challenge for this new generation, regardless of geography, number of years in farming, or whether or not they are first generation farmers. With the average age of U.S. farmers approaching 60 years old and nearly half of U.S. farmland expected to change hands over the next two decades, the 2023 Farm Bill is our best chance at creating real and lasting policy solutions to this daunting trend that keeps farmland out of reach for so many, while at the same time jeopardizing our country’s food security and threatening the vitality of our urban and rural communities.

Land access is critical not only to farmer success but also the health and well-being of our environment, economy, and marginalized communities. Supporting equitable access to land means addressing the climate crisis, facilitating farm transition, investing in community-driven initiatives, and providing support to young farmers and ranchers to access capital, find markets, and strengthen their operations. Investing in equitable land access is an investment in the future of agriculture.

**We have an opportunity in the 2023 Farm Bill to answer the call of the upcoming generation of farmers with forward-thinking, equitable policy change. We are asking for your help and support**

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NATIONAL YOUNG FARMERS COALITION

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**in securing a key component of that necessary change: including and funding the *Increasing Land Access, Security, and Opportunities Act* (H.R.3955, S.2340).**

Over the past decade, land access has been our call to action. As a broad and diverse coalition of voices in shared ambition, we work together to drive progress in both incremental and systemic policy change. In 2021, together with generous funding and support from Chipotle, Young Farmers launched the [One Million Acres for the Future Campaign](#), calling on Congress to make a historic investment in the 2023 Farm Bill to facilitate equitable access to one million acres of land for the next generation of farmers. From the beginning of this campaign, we have been focused on bringing something new to the table: a programmatic function at the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) that would clearly address the deeply interconnected challenges in accessing land, capital, and markets.

USDA heard us and [launched the \*Increasing Land, Capital, and Market Access Program\* in August 2022](#)—the only USDA program that is designed as a flexible source of support and investment for eligible re-granting entities already immersed in the farming communities they serve to increase land, capital, and market access for farmers nationwide. An investment of this kind in secure access to land in the next Farm Bill will generate immense returns for taxpayers, increase food access, strengthen local supply chains, grow rural economies, and build climate resilience.

USDA recently announced 50 recipients of this funding—organizations spread across the country serving the needs of their communities through diverse and innovative projects. We know that there was much more demand for this program than there were funds available. We are thrilled about the decisions made to fund [these powerful land access and sustainability projects](#) and are determined to make opportunities like the *Increasing Land, Capital, and Market Access Program* permanent for farmers across the country.

Most recently, our collective voices have been heard by legislators in Congress on both sides of the aisle. Introduced by U.S. Representatives **Nikki Budzinski** (D-IL-13), **Zach Nunn** (R-IA-03), **Joe Courtney** (D-CT-02), and **Abigail Spanberger** (D-VA-07), and by Senator **Tina Smith** (D-MN), the [Increasing Land Access, Security, and Opportunities Act](#) (H.R.3955, S.2340), would authorize and expand USDA's *Increasing Land, Capital, and Market Access Program* with appropriations of \$100 million per year over five years.

Specifically, the bill would authorize USDA to:

- Make grants to, and enter into cooperative agreements with, State and Tribal governments, non-profit service providers, community lending institutions, farmer cooperatives, and other eligible entities to strengthen land, capital, and market access outcomes for historically underserved farmers, ranchers, and foresters and for producers operating in high-poverty areas.
- Provide funding for direct assistance and services to help farmers and ranchers afford and acquire land, cover closing costs and down payments, secure clear title on heirs' property farmland, capitalize infrastructure and site improvements, acquire business technical assistance and farm viability training.
- Prioritize projects that provide direct financial assistance to producers through collaborative networks and partnerships, projects that utilize innovative land access and farmland protection and affordability tools, and projects that facilitate the transition of farmland from existing producers to the next generation.
- Establish a stakeholder committee to develop a participatory process for evaluating applications and distributing funds to ensure the program is responsive to the needs of farmers, ranchers, and their communities.

Our nation must take action now to facilitate secure, affordable access to land for underserved producers, there is no time to wait. This is the moment for Congress to take action and ensure that the 2023 Farm Bill delivers material benefits for historically underserved farmers, ranchers, and foresters striving to establish and grow their operations.

Though the challenges stacked against them are significant, many young farmers have reported that the fulfillment they feel from the act of farming, providing more healthful food for their communities, and stewarding natural resources has not diminished since their very first season. By and far, the majority of young farmers that participated in the 2022 National Young Farmers Coalition National Survey named one of their farm’s primary purposes as stewarding and regenerating natural resources. Further, the majority of young, BIPOC farmers find motivation for their farming work in antiracism. **We are asking for an investment in the next generation not only because it is the right thing to do, but because it will yield manifold economic, environmental, and social returns.**

This investment is critically important for the success of this new generation of farmers, ranchers, and foresters. If we fail to make a historic investment in land access in this Farm Bill, the health and vibrancy of both urban and rural communities, the strength and security of our food and agriculture systems, and thus our national security, will face greater uncertainty and risk. The role that local and regional food systems play, especially in times of crisis, is undeniable. The needs are clear, and the work of responding to and addressing those needs has already begun. **Community-led land access efforts are underway across the country, from creative financing models to market development and infrastructure work, cooperative ownership models, and more. To continue thriving and creating lasting change, these efforts need strong policy support and investment from our policymakers in Congress.**

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please join us in supporting the inclusion and funding of the *Increasing Land Access, Security, and Opportunities Act* (H.R.3955, S.2340) in the 2023 Farm Bill.

Sincerely,

The undersigned

### **National Organizations**

2020 Farmers Cooperative  
Agrarian Trust  
Alianza Nacional de Campesinas  
American Farmland Trust  
American Indian Mothers Inc.  
American Sustainable Business Network  
Applegate  
Ceres  
Chipotle  
Clif Bar & Company  
Climate Reality Project Regenerative Agriculture Coalition  
Crunchy Mama Box  
Daily Harvest  
Dtocs LLC

Earthjustice  
Ecco Bella  
Empower Next Generations  
Farm Aid  
Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance  
Farmers Market Coalition  
Food Animal Concerns Trust (FACT)  
GreenLatinos  
HEAL Food Alliance  
Health Care Without Harm  
Integrated Rural Strategies Group at Neighborhood Funders Group  
Intertribal Agriculture Coalition  
Intuitive Digital  
Johnny's Selected Seeds  
King Arthur Baking Company  
Kiss the Ground  
Kuli Kuli, Inc.  
Maple Valley Cooperative  
MegaFood  
MiiR  
National Co+op Grocers  
National Family Farm Coalition  
National Organic Coalition  
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition  
Native Farm Bill Coalition  
Natural Habitats America  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
North American Climate, Conservation and Environment (NACCE)  
Not Our Farm  
Organic Farming Research  
QUINN  
Resource Renewal Institute  
Rural Coalition  
Sustainable Agriculture and Food System Funders (SAFSF)  
Simple Mills  
Snooze an A.M. Eatery  
Spoiler Alert  
Steward  
Sustainable Futures Consulting  
SymBio  
The Circular Farm LLC  
The Conservation Fund  
Trust for Public Land  
Union of Concerned Scientists  
Whole Foods Market  
Women, Food and Agriculture Network

## **Regional Organizations**

Berkshire Grown  
Berkshire Natural Resources Council  
Black Dirt Farm Collective  
Braiding Seeds Fellowship  
Center for Land-Based Learning  
Coastal Enterprises, Inc.  
Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund  
Foodshed Capital  
Glynwood Center for Regional Food and Farming  
HOPE for Small Farm Sustainability  
Interfaith Sustainable Food Collaborative  
Land For Good  
Land Stewardship Project  
Northeast Farmers of Color Network  
Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance  
Northeast Organic Farming Association-Interstate Council  
Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group  
Northwest Forest Worker Center  
Renewing the Countryside  
Rincon-Vitova Insectaries, Inc.  
Rural Advancement Foundation International-USA (RAFI-USA)  
Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy  
World Farmers

## **State & Local Organizations**

Common Ground Farm Collective – Arizona  
Pinnacle Prevention – Arizona  
Project Roots – Arizona  
Agroecology Commons – California  
Bi-Rite Family of Businesses – California  
California Environmental Voters – California  
Community Alliance with Family Farmers – California  
Ecological Farming Association – California  
Natural Components – California  
Red Jen Ford Health & Wellness – California  
Resource Conservation District of Monterey County – California  
San Diego Food System Alliance – California  
Tierras Milperas – California  
Urban Soul Farmer – California  
Guidestone Colorado – Colorado  
Nourish Colorado – Colorado  
Poudre Valley Community Farms – Colorado

CT NOFA: Northeast Organic Farming Association of CT – Connecticut  
Guilford Agricultural Society Inc. – Connecticut  
Hungry Reaper Farm – Connecticut  
New CT Farmer Alliance – Connecticut  
Northwest Corner Farm – Connecticut  
Global Technology Education LLC – Florida  
Urban Oasis Project, Inc. – Florida  
Coastal Acres LLC – Georgia  
Central Illinois Young Farmers Coalition – Illinois  
Chicago Food Policy Action Council – Illinois  
Harvest OG – Illinois  
Illinois Stewardship Alliance – Illinois  
Northern Illinois Young Farmers Coalition – Illinois  
Southside Food Co-op – Illinois  
Hoosier Young Farmers Coalition – Indiana  
Feed Iowa First – Iowa  
Iowa Valley Resource Conservation and Development – Iowa  
Practical Farmers of Iowa – Iowa  
Sustainable Iowa Land Trust – Iowa  
Douglas County Food Policy Council – Kansas  
Kansas Black Farmers Association – Kansas  
Kansas Rural Center – Kansas  
Irish Town Farm, LLC – Louisiana  
Maine Farmland Trust – Maine  
Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association – Maine  
Narrative Food – Maine  
Lon Lon Agro LTD – Maryland  
Berkshire Agricultural Ventures – Massachusetts  
Grandmothers' Village Project – Massachusetts  
Michigan Food and Farming Systems (MIFFS) – Michigan  
The Zoo City Farm and Food Network – Michigan  
Urban Bush Sistah's – Michigan  
West Michigan Chapter of Young Farmers – Michigan  
Workin Rootz – Michigan  
Cultivate Kansas City – Missouri & Kansas  
Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Hampshire (NOFA-NH) – New Hampshire  
Cosmic Pit Family Farm – New Jersey  
Heublein Poultry Farm – New Jersey  
New Jersey Food Democracy Collaborative – New Jersey  
NM Healthy Soil Working Group – New Mexico  
Adirondack Council's Essex Farm Institute – New York  
Center for Agricultural Development and Entrepreneurship (CADE) – New York  
Deep Roots Farmers Market – New York  
East End Food – New York  
Genesee Land Trust, Inc. – New York  
Hidden Acre Farm – New York

Hudson Valley Food Systems Coalition – New York  
Hudson Valley Young Farmers Coalition – New York  
Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York (NOFA-NY) – New York  
Poughkeepsie Farm Project – New York  
Rooted Emergence – New York  
Woonton Family Farms, LLC – New York  
Toxic Free NC – North Carolina  
Triangle Land Conservancy – North Carolina  
Little Africa Food Cooperative – Ohio  
Rockfarm Beefalo – Ohio  
The Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association – Ohio  
Black Oregon Land Trust – Oregon  
Oregon Agricultural Trust – Oregon  
Wild Rose Healing – Oregon  
Dirtbaby Farm – Pennsylvania  
Greener Partners – Pennsylvania  
Pasa Sustainable Agriculture – Pennsylvania  
Soil Generation – Pennsylvania  
RI Food Policy Council – Rhode Island  
Kershaw County Farmers Market – South Carolina  
Light Spectrum Solutions LLC – Tennessee  
Plant It Forward – Texas  
Texas Small Farmers & Ranchers/CBO – Texas  
Addison County Relocalization Network (ACORN) – Vermont  
Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT) – Vermont  
Oak Grove Meadows LLC – Virginia  
Washington Farmland Trust – Washington  
New Roots Community Farm – West Virginia  
Healthy Way Market – Wisconsin