

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 14, 2025

Dear Secretary Rollins and Acting Administrator Ehikan,

We are writing to express our concern over the Department of Government Efficiency's (DOGE) intended lease terminations of nine California USDA field offices in Bakersfield, Blythe, Los Angeles, Madera, Mt. Shasta, Oxnard, Salinas, Woodland, and Yreka. These USDA offices span the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Farm Service Agency (FSA), Forest Service, and Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS).

California is the nation's largest agricultural state. In 2023 alone, California's farms received \$59.4 billion in cash receipts for their output. Closure of these offices would severely hamper USDA's ability to support farmers imperative to California's agricultural success. Further concerning and confusing is how the closure of this FSA office in Bakersfield contradicts with USDA's commitment to not closing FSA offices.^{1,2}

For instance, it was recently announced that DOGE is discontinuing the lease of the FSA building in Bakersfield. Each year, farmers in Kern County produce billions of dollars worth of produce. Farmers will now be forced to drive over an hour to Lancaster or Visalia, the next nearest FSA offices, to access USDA programs.

These terminations come at a time when farmers are already navigating an uncertain agricultural economy due to USDA funding freezes and cancellations as well as the impact of tariffs. USDA field offices play a vital role in providing services to agricultural communities across the state, providing loans, grants, and technical assistance. These offices provide farmers with a place to meet face-to-face with USDA staff to discuss services and programs they rely on. Closing these vital centers will make it more difficult for farmers to access the essential resources farmers must be able to rely on.

We are also deeply concerned about the staffing cuts associated with these closures. For those who staff these offices, closures would mean uprooting their lives. It would also put additional stress on the remaining USDA workforce that is already experiencing significant losses due to terminations and early retirement. Beyond that, closing USDA county offices harms the local economies of rural regions across the country by disrupting USDA employees' contribution to their communities and inhibiting farmers' ability to access USDA programs.

Our alarm is exacerbated by the deep proposed cuts in the FY26 President's Budget. Drastic cuts to USDA agencies - National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Rural Development, the Forest Service, and others – pose serious risks to California producers and agricultural communities who benefit from activities including, but certainly not limited to, research, pest management, conservation, rural assistance, and wildfire mitigation – supported by USDA.

For the reasons listed above, we urge you to reconsider the termination of these leases. Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your expeditious response.

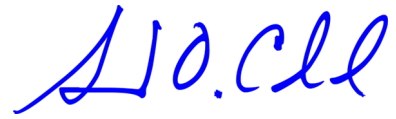
Sincerely,

¹ <https://www.turnto23.com/news/in-your-neighborhood/bakersfield/doge-to-close-kern-countys-farm-service-agency-office>

² <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/rollins-says-usda-not-planning-close-any-farm-service-agency-offices-2025-05-06/>

A blue ink signature of Adam B. Schiff, written in a cursive style.

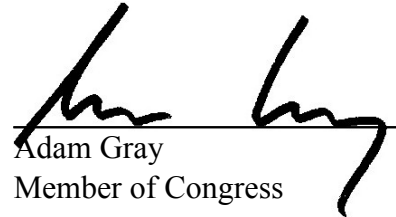
Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator

A blue ink signature of Salud Carbajal, written in a cursive style.


Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress

A blue ink signature of Jim Costa, written in a cursive style.

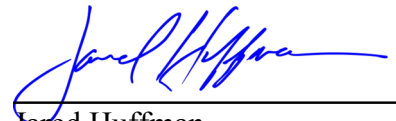
Jim Costa
Member of Congress

A black ink signature of Adam Gray, written in a cursive style.

Adam Gray
Member of Congress

A blue ink signature of Jimmy Panetta, written in a cursive style.

Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress

A blue ink signature of Jared Huffman, written in a cursive style.

Jared Huffman
Member of Congress

A black ink signature of Sydney Kamlager-Dove, written in a cursive style.

Sydney Kamlager-Dove
Member of Congress

A blue ink signature of Zoe Lofgren, written in a cursive style.

Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress