

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 24, 2025

The Honorable Stephen Vaden
Deputy Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Deputy Secretary Vaden:

Thank you for your July 30 appearance before the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry to testify on the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) recent announcement of its Department-wide reorganization plan. While we were encouraged by USDA's decision following the hearing to seek public comments on the reorganization, USDA should provide additional time for agriculture groups, employees, conservation groups, and others to submit thoughtful comments and analysis for consideration and should use a transparent process that allows for open and public feedback.

According to your own testimony, the reorganization plan is not settled and even the decision on which regional facilities will close is subject to change. This lack of clarity makes it difficult to formulate relevant comments on the proposal, especially if USDA is making changes to the reorganization plan without updating Congress or relevant stakeholders.

In addition, while USDA has made available an initial 26-day e-mail option for submitting comments, it has not provided further information on how those comments will be used, shared so other commenters can react to them, responded to, or whether there are options for commenters to remain anonymous. Our offices have already heard from constituents expressing concern about how their comments will be reviewed and want to ensure that USDA will consider and respond to their feedback.

Therefore, we request that USDA provide at least 60 days for feedback on the proposal after the major initial elements of the proposal have been set and that USDA publish any full, updated proposal on its website along with a more detailed comment and feedback system that allows USDA customers, employees, and agricultural groups to provide meaningful feedback. Providing clarity on the specific plan, sufficient time to formulate comments, and a transparent, familiar process will improve the final outcome and provide confidence that all opinions were considered.

We look forward to further details on the proposal and process for input.

Sincerely,



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator
Ranking Member, Committee
on Agriculture, Nutrition, and
Forestry



Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Raphael Warnock
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



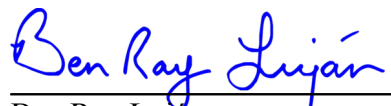
Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Angela D. Alsobrooks
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator