

The Honorable John Garamendi
2438 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

April 10, 2018

Dear Mr. Garamendi,

The undersigned organic farmers and businesses in the Third Congressional District of California write to urge you to cosponsor the Organic Farmer and Consumer Protection Act of 2017 (H.R.3871) and to support the attached organic priorities in the 2018 Farm Bill.

Organic agriculture, food processing, and distribution continues to thrive in your district. The Sacramento Valley includes over 188,510 certified organic acres of rice, mixed vegetables, tomatoes, and other crops.

Introduced by Rep. Faso with bipartisan support, H.R. 3871 would strengthen USDA National Organic Program (NOP) oversight of the global organic supply chain. Now a \$50 billion a year sector of the U.S. economy, the success of organic depends upon consumer trust in the integrity of the USDA organic seal. NOP has an effective enforcement infrastructure to oversee a complex, global supply chain; however, NOP needs sufficient resources and staff to quickly conduct investigations overseas.

Specifically, H.R.3871 would:

- Authorize a small annual increase for NOP funding to keep pace with the growth of the organic sector (10% over the life of the farm bill above the \$15 million per year authorization in the 2014 Farm Bill).
- Mandate the same one-time funding that NOP received in the 2014 Farm Bill (\$5 million for NOP to upgrade its enforcement technology systems).
- Ensure robust, collaborative fraud investigations across all responsible agencies, including U.S. Customs and Border Protection.
- Require annual compliance reports to Congress on domestic and overseas enforcement.

Thank you for your consideration of organic farm bill priorities. To cosponsor H.R. 3871, please contact Rep. Faso's office. For more information about CCOF and organic farm bill priorities, please contact CCOF Director of Policy & Government Affairs Kelly Damewood at kdamewood@ccof.org.

Sincerely,

Jim Durst
Durst Organic Growers

Fritz Durst
Fritz Durst Farm



Rachel Kasa
Casa Rosa Farms

Wayne Barrios
Barrios Bros Inc.

Lorraine Walker
Eatwell Farm



Ben Lyons
Lockwood Acres

Jaswant S. Bains
Sacramento Packing, Inc. / Valley View Foods, Inc. / Bains Farming, LP

Juan Jose & Eve Domingo
Filaki Farms

Carrie Sparrevohn & John Ham Jr.
John T. Ham Jr. Ranch

Alan Pryor
Pryor Farms LLC

Marta Macbeth
Be Love Farm LLC

Craig McNamara
Sierra Orchards



CCOF

Organic Certification

Education & Outreach

Political Advocacy

Promotion

Organic Priorities for the 2018 Farm Bill

✓ Strengthen the USDA National Organic Program

Support the Organic Farmer and Consumer Protection Act of 2017—H.R. 3871.

ISSUE

The USDA National Organic Program (NOP) needs sufficient funding and authority to oversee the domestic and international organic supply chain. The success of the \$50 billion U.S. organic sector depends upon consumer trust in the integrity of the USDA organic seal. NOP has an effective infrastructure but needs enforcement resources to keep pace with the growth and complexity of a global organic supply chain.

SOLUTION

Introduced by Rep. Faso (R-NY) with bipartisan support, H.R. 3871 would:

- Authorize a small annual increase for NOP funding to keep pace with the growth of the organic sector (10% over the life of the farm bill above the \$15 million per year authorization in the 2014 Farm Bill).
- Mandate the same one-time funding that NOP received in the 2014 Farm Bill (\$5 million for NOP to upgrade its enforcement technology systems).
- Ensure robust, collaborative fraud investigations across all responsible agencies, including U.S. Customs and Border Protection.
- Require annual compliance reports to Congress on domestic and overseas enforcement.

✓ Establish Baseline Funding for Organic Research

Support the Organic Agriculture Research Acts—H.R. 2436 and S. 2404.

ISSUE

The Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (OREI) funds research to develop biologically-based inputs and organic management practices. In addition, OREI creates jobs and training opportunities for students who study organic systems. At its current funding of \$20 million per year, OREI does not have permanent funding. Agricultural researchers need stable funding to manage ongoing organic research programs.

SOLUTION

Introduced by Rep. Pingree (D-ME) with cosponsors Rep. Newhouse (R-WA) and Rep. Panetta (D-CA), the Organic Agriculture Research Act of 2017 would establish baseline for OREI and ensure that it is a permanent part of the farm bill by funding the program at \$50 million annually. Sen. Casey (D-PA) introduced a companion bill with cosponsor Sen. Collins (R-ME).



✓ **Protect Organic Crop Price Data and Reports**

Support funding for the Organic Production Market and Data Initiatives (ODI).

ISSUE

ODI is USDA's flagship organic data initiative that collects information to set organic crop insurance prices, track production trends, and increase exports. Before Congress allocated funding to ODI, organic producers did not have routine access to organic price data. ODI is the only source of publicly available organic crop data and is critical for a stable market.

SOLUTION

Continue to fund ODI with the same mandatory funding as provided in the 2014 farm bill—one-time mandatory funding of \$5 million—and authorize an additional \$5 million annually.

✓ **Retain the National Organic Certification Cost Share Program**

Support efforts to protect mandatory funding for NOCSP.

ISSUE

California's regulatory costs are putting small to mid-scale organic growers out of business and impacting everyone's bottom lines. The National Organic Certification Cost Share Program (NOCSP) is the only program that provides relief to organic producers by reimbursing 75 percent of their certification expenses up to a maximum of \$750 per scope. NOCSP is especially important for California producers who are the only organic producers in the country paying state-level organic fees, which were recently made eligible for NOCSP reimbursement.

SOLUTION

Protect mandatory funding for the NOCSP at \$11.5 million annually.

