

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 21, 2025

The Honorable Brooke Rollins  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Rollins:

As Members of Congress from the northeast, we write with serious concern about the U.S. Department of Agriculture's reorganization plan (SM 1078-015) released on July 24, 2025. This wrongheaded move, done without consultation with or even notification to Congress and without the consultation of key stakeholders, will significantly impact farmers and Americans who rely on modest federal nutritional assistance to feed their families.

USDA is one of the largest and most important departments within the federal government. The manner by which you have chosen to upend a federal department charged with supporting our nation's farmers, ranchers, consumers, hungry people, and food supply defies logic. The bare bones, 5-page memo contains very few details as to how all of this will be carried out and why a reorganization of this magnitude is justified. You have provided no details as to how this so-called "plan" will improve effectiveness, enhance services, or save the American people money.

In his testimony before the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry on July 30, 2025, Deputy Secretary Vaden attempted to justify this reckless plan by saying the Department is doing it to help employees and improve their quality of life. That ridiculous assertion causes us to wonder which federal employees were actually consulted in this process. To the best of our knowledge, the vast majority of employees – save a few at the very top, whose lives will not be disrupted – were not consulted and had no idea this plan was even being formulated.

One of the stated principles of the Department's reorganization plan is to "bring USDA closer to its customers..." However, the memo you released seemingly does exactly the opposite for our constituents living in the northeast. Given the scant details provided to the American People and to Congress, we are left struggling to understand how our constituents in the northeast will benefit from moving USDA offices out of the region.

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offices in our region work directly with our small-and-medium sized farms. They are on the ground, visiting and understanding the unique needs of producers in the northeast. And our farmers rely on the expertise of NRCS officials to produce an abundant regional food supply of diversified crops that feed our neighbors. We have serious concerns about the possibility of a reduction in the NRCS footprint in the northeast. Although, your new memo fails to make clear exactly which offices will be eliminated. Make no mistake, any attempt to reduce NRCS staff in our region will hurt our farmers.

We are also deeply concerned about the impacts this plan will have on the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), particularly with respect to the planned closure of the Northeast Regional Office

(NERO) which oversees the administration of our federal nutrition assistance programs. The closure of NERO, as well as the closure of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Office (MARO), leave the northeast region without critical FNS presence. USDA NERO staff have developed expertise in how state agencies in the northeast operate and have maintained close working relationships with key staff at those agencies. This expertise is especially critical at this moment as states grapple with how to implement the recently enacted changes to SNAP, including the new cost-share and time limits. And when it comes to program integrity, it's hard for us to come up with an argument as to how error rates and retailer compliance will improve if staff are moved further away from the state agencies and retailers they are tasked with working with.

How will farmers in the northeast be better served by staff hundreds, if not thousands, of miles away? What kind of expertise do staff stationed in the south or west have with the farming practices of farmers in the northeast? How will SNAP program integrity improve and new provisions be smoothly implemented if the knowledgeable people at the Department are not there to assist states? It seems like Deputy Secretary Vaden may agree with this point, given that he said in his July 30<sup>th</sup> testimony to Congress, "It makes sense to move the employees whose job it is to oversee the states into the states that they are overseeing..." Simply put, you can't have it both ways. You can't legitimately argue that staff need to be moved out of DC to be closer to the people, and in the same breath, move crucial USDA functions out of certain regions entirely.

This memo has left us with more questions than answers, which is surprising given you said in the press that you worked "six months on that plan" and "it's about 95 percent baked."<sup>1</sup> We request you respond to this letter, including a list of offices you plan to close and positions you plan to move out of the northeast, no later than Friday, August 29, 2025. Finally, we strongly urge you to immediately revoke this memorandum, which will negatively impact farmers and families living in the northeast.

Sincerely,



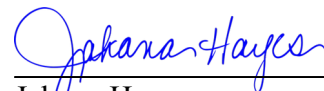
James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree  
Member of Congress




Rosa L. DeLauro  
Member of Congress



Jahana Hayes  
Member of Congress


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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.politico.com/newsletters/weekly-agriculture>



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John B. Larson  
Member of Congress




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Chris Pappas  
Member of Congress




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Maggie Goodlander  
Member of Congress



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Ayanna Pressley  
Member of Congress



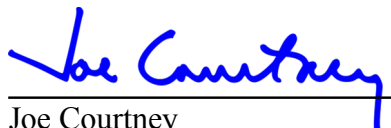
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Stephen F. Lynch  
Member of Congress



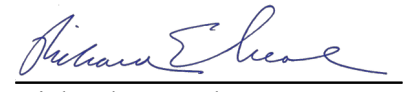
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Seth Moulton  
Member of Congress



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Joe Courtney  
Member of Congress



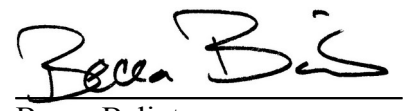
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Richard E. Neal  
Member of Congress




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Seth Magaziner  
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Becca Balint  
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Lori Trahan  
Member of Congress