

April 10, 2019

RE: To Address the Climate Crisis, the Green New Deal Must Transform Our Food System and Revitalize Rural America

Dear Representative,

On behalf of our millions of members and supporters across America, we are writing today to urge you to consider the following policies and principles as the 116th Congress debates climate change legislation and momentum builds for a Green New Deal. Rapid action is urgently needed as scientists worldwide confirm we have 12-15 years to avert catastrophic and irreversible climate upheaval.

Our nationwide coalition of more than 300 food, farming, fishing, worker, environmental, public health and public interest organizations urges Congress to advance a Green New Deal that reflects the central role of food and agriculture in our climate crisis and its solutions. As the Green New Deal moves forward with proposals to combat the climate crisis while creating millions of jobs and ensuring a just transition to a sustainable future, America's farmers, ranchers, fishers and workers who feed the nation must be at the center of this policy agenda, not on the sidelines.

The food sector is America's largest employer and a top source of climate-harming emissions. At the same time, farmers, fishers, farmworkers, food-chain workers, rural and urban communities and food companies are all greatly harmed by climate change's weather disasters and disruptions. Climate upheaval also threatens our nation's food security, and is costing taxpayers, farmers and food companies tens of billions of dollars a year at a minimum.

Agriculture and industrial food production generate nearly one-quarter of all global climate-change emissions, making the food sector a leading producer of carbon dioxide, methane and other greenhouse gases.¹ These emissions stem from industrial agriculture's systemic reliance on energy-intensive toxic pesticides and chemical fertilizers, intensive tillage in large monocrop farming systems, immense confined animal feeding operations, land use change, and food processing, transport and waste.

This highly consolidated industrial food system is rapidly depleting vital soil and water resources and biodiversity upon which our food future depends. It is producing widespread poverty, inequality, hunger and public health crises, and an economic crisis in which rural farming communities are losing thousands of family farms each year. In addition, our industrial, chemical-intensive food production system puts farmers, farmworkers and rural communities at increased risk of exposure to pesticides linked to chronic and life-threatening diseases and increases the likelihood of workplace injuries.

Fortunately, there are solutions — well-demonstrated, effective and profitable agricultural practices at all scales in all regions of the country — that can help reduce pollution and repair our environment and climate while revitalizing communities across the states and U.S. territories. By embracing the policies and principles outlined below within the Green New Deal, Congress can promote a rapid and just transition to an American food system that is ecologically sustainable and resilient to climate upheaval, and that ensures good jobs, healthy food and better health outcomes for all communities.

The original New Deal helped America's farmers survive the Great Depression and feed our nation while restoring farmlands and soil. The Green New Deal can do even better: restoring our climate by regenerating soil and biodiversity while ensuring fair prices and family-sustaining livable wages for the farmers, ranchers, fishers and workers who bring food to our tables.

To reduce emissions and bolster our nation's resilience in the face of the climate crisis, we must enact policies that transform unsustainable industrial agriculture, reduce food sector consolidation and empower farmers and ranchers to adopt organic and agroecological practices. These policies must support diversified and ecologically regenerative farming techniques that reduce greenhouse gases and other pollution, boost soil health and sequester carbon in soil — enhancing local and regional food security, economic well-being and biodiversity. With these policies and support, farmers and ranchers can increase their income, and spur new jobs and businesses that are meeting the growing demand for local, healthy, pasture-based, plant-based and organic foods.

Congress, as well as state and local governments, can expand these benefits by adopting healthy and climate-friendly food procurement and tax policies, anti-trust measures that help reverse food sector consolidation, and fair markets and compensation for the farmers, fishers and workers who produce the food and fiber we all depend on. These policies will enable food producers to help restore the climate and revitalize the food future we all share.

As Congress develops this bold and urgently needed plan to confront climate change and create millions of jobs, it must recognize that the farmers, ranchers, fishers, workers and rural communities that produce America's food endure some of the worst impacts of the interconnected climate and economic crises — suffering severe losses to their crops, livestock, land, fisheries and income. These communities, the backbone of America's food system, often experience climate-related droughts, flooding, extreme heat, massive wildfires, seasonal disruptions, ocean acidification, and weather-related natural disasters such as hurricanes — compounding the poverty, health and economic crises they already face.

For the Green New Deal to be effective, the people who make our meals possible — America's farmers, ranchers, fishers, farmworkers, and food industry workers — must be at the negotiating table. Additionally, solutions must be community-driven, equitable, regionally specific and appropriate, and must promote the leadership of frontline communities disproportionately burdened by our climate crisis and by the unsustainable industrial food system. The food system's profound ecological, social justice and economic problems are interconnected and cannot be addressed piecemeal. The Green New Deal presents a unique opportunity to address the climate crisis and the deep inequities that are a fundamental threat to us all.

Green New Deal Food and Agriculture Policy Priorities

Following are key policy priorities and principles that the undersigned organizations strongly urge Congress to consider as part of the Green New Deal and climate change legislation:

Carbon reduction, sequestration and climate resilience:

- Replenish farm soils and sequester carbon by supporting farm owners and workers in a rapid, just transition from chemical- and energy-intensive industrial monoculture production and over-tillage, shifting to organic, diversified, and regenerative farming and perennial agriculture practices that protect water quality, biodiversity and pollinator habitats. By investing in resources and training for farmers and workers, including policy incentives such as expanded conservation support, research programs and technical assistance, the Green New Deal could unleash farm-field innovation, leading to healthier soils, which by definition will sequester more carbon.
- Rapidly reduce agriculture's greenhouse gas emissions — by restricting methane emissions from concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) and reducing federal supports (such as loans, research, public purchasing, insurance subsidies, and conservation payments) for industrial animal and monocrop agriculture. In addition, enact policies to help farmers reduce the use of chemical fertilizers and the conversion of native habitats to cropland, and instead encourage targeted restoration of ecologically critical land.

- Require all recipients of government support to implement rigorous, cost-effective conservation, greenhouse gas reduction, and carbon sequestration practices — backed by significant investment in technical assistance to help farmers and ranchers implement these practices that reduce risks of crop failure, ensure long-term soil health and reduce water and air pollution.
- Reduce public purchasing of industrially-produced animal products — and promote sustainably produced, climate-friendly plant-based foods — in all public procurement programs, including USDA school lunch programs as well as municipal purchasing, public prisons and hospitals, and other public institutions. Research demonstrates that reducing industrial meat consumption and expanding sustainably produced plant-based foods significantly cuts greenhouse gas emissions, saves water, and reduces diet-related diseases, ensuring better long-term health outcomes and cost savings.ⁱⁱ Furthermore, promoting well-managed, regenerative animal agriculture, including rotational grazing practices can enhance soil, protect biodiversity, store carbon, and build resiliency — a key climate solution and healthier alternative to CAFOs.

Fair prices for farmers, ranchers and fishers — and family-sustaining living wages for workers:

- Enable America’s family farmers to thrive while practicing or transitioning to organic, diversified, and regenerative agriculture — through policies ensuring parity pricing (fair minimum prices for farmers and fishers), supply management, and equitable access to land, credit and markets. These policies must also address economic and racial inequities endured by African American, Native American, Asian American, Pacific-Islander, Latinx and other historically disadvantaged farmers.
- Ensure fair, family-sustaining living wages and safe, humane working conditions for farmworkers, fishers, and other food industry workers. The Green New Deal must equalize labor laws to provide farmworkers with full legal rights, and ensure that all food system workers have a voice in food production, access to healthy food, and the freedom to organize and unionize without retaliation.

Diversified, resilient local and regional food economies anchored by family farmers, ranchers and fishers that ensure healthy, sustainable food for all:

- Policies should shift our public investments away from subsidizing wealthy agribusiness along with commodities used mostly for fuel and livestock feed. This money should be redirected to support small and medium-sized farmers (especially beginning and historically disadvantaged farmers) who are sequestering carbon in the soil, reducing pollution, diversifying production, growing healthy food for communities, and paying food system workers a family-sustaining living wage. These investments will make communities across the United States far more economically stable, food-secure and resilient to climate upheaval.
- Anti-trust and other policies need to rigorously combat consolidation in the food and farming sector and reverse the rapid loss of farmers and deterioration of farmland. This includes ensuring that big chemical, seed, and meat companies are not the ones writing the rules for local rural communities, so that workers and farmers are able to thrive. By reversing consolidation, we can bolster rural economies’ food and farming diversity and resilience to climate change.
- Invest in urban and rural food and agriculture programs and businesses that promote local and regional food security and community food sovereignty to ensure healthy food for all. When communities produce more of their own food, farming systems are more diversified and resilient in the face of economic and climate change.
- Expand local and regional food infrastructure — such as processing and distribution for local and regional markets — to promote the shift from monocrop commodities and industrial livestock operations to diversified and ecologically regenerative farming oriented to local and regional markets.

Avoid “false solutions” that delay progress:

- As we promote forward-looking policies to repair our food system and climate, we must avoid “false solutions” that cause great harm by delaying progress. Some proposals put forth by agribusiness interests may sound helpful, but in fact cause serious harm by perpetuating our current industrial

monoculture-based food system and further delaying the vital solutions outlined above. We urge extreme caution regarding agribusiness-sponsored proposals that do nothing to address the systemic causes of our climate crisis.

We understand and honor the challenge before us all. Humanity is facing the existential threat of the climate crisis with no time to lose. The Green New Deal offers a profoundly important opportunity to protect our common shared future, and making fundamental changes to our food and farming systems will be central to stabilizing our climate and ensuring food security.

Congress has the tools to transition our society away from harmful, inequitable and polluting industrial agriculture to an equitable, healthy and truly sustainable food system that restores our climate and nourishes present and future generations. We look forward to working with you to meet this critical and urgent challenge.

Sincerely,

Abundance NC
ActionAid USA
Adobe House Farm
Agatston Urban Nutrition Initiative
Agrarian Trust
Agricultural Justice Project
Agroecology Research-Action Collective
Al-Siddique Trading Ventures
Alaska Food Hub
Allamakee County Protectors - Education Campaign
Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
American Grassfed Association
Anacostia Watershed Society
Animal Protection League of New Jersey
Animals Are Sentient Beings, Inc.
Another Gulf Is Possible
Arise For Social Justice
As You Sow
Avaaz
Backbone Campaign
Berks Gas Truth
Berkshire Environmental Action Team (BEAT)
Beyond Pesticides
Beyond Toxics
Big Reuse
Biodiversity for a Livable Climate
Bionutrient Food Association
Bioscience Resource Project
Blue River Law, P.C.
Blue Sky Biochar
Bread for the World Central Florida
Bucks County Sierra Club
Bucks Environmental Action
California For Progress
Californians for Pesticide Reform

Campaign for Renewable Energy
CATA - El Comite de Apoyo a los Trabajadores Agricolas
Cayuga Lake Watershed Network
Center for Biological Diversity
Center for Environmental Health
Center for Environmental Transformation
Center for Environmentally Recycled Building Alternatives
Center for Food Safety
Central Florida Jobs with Justice
Central Maryland Beekeepers Association
Chiron Communications
Church Women United in New York State
Citizens Coalition for a Safe Community
Citizens United for Renewable Energy (CURE)
Citizens' Environmental Coalition
Clean Label Project
Climate Action Mondays
Community Alliance for Global Justice
Community Ecology Institute
Community Environmental Council
Community Farm Alliance
Community to Community
Concerned Health Professionals of New York
Conscious Kitchen
Cook Inletkeeper
Cornucopia Community Advocates
Corporate Accountability
Cottingham Farm
Cottonwood Environmental Law Center
Crawford Stewardship Project
Croatan Institute
Cuatro Puertas
CUESA
Cumberland County (ME) Food Security Council
Dakota Resource Council
Delaware Ecumenical Council on Children and Families
Dogwood Alliance
Don't Spray California
Earth Day Environmental Justice Conference Planning
Earth Day Network
Earth Ethics, Inc.
Eastern Shore Food Hub
Eco-Justice Ministries
Eco-Poetry.org
Ecological Farming Association
Edgesville Permaculture Farm
Endangered Habitats League
Endangered Species Coalition
Environmental Health Strategy Center
Equal Exchange
Eugene Interfaith Earthkeepers

Experimental Farm Network
F/V Rimrack
Fair Farms
Fair Share Farm
Fair World Project
Family Farm Defenders
Farm Worker Ministry Northwest
Farmworker Association of Florida
Farmworker Justice
Federation of Southern Cooperatives/ Land Assistance Fund
Fertile Acres
Fertile Acres
Food & Ag Policy Group, Goldman School of Public Policy, University of Berkeley California
Food and Water Watch
Food Chain Workers Alliance
Food Democracy Now!
Food for Maine's Future
Food Integrity Campaign/Government Accountability Project
Food Revolution Network
Forever Wild Seafood
Forum of Fishers, Fishworkers, and Fishmongers of North America
Frack-Free Frostburg, Maryland
Franciscan Action Network
Frenchtown Heritage Hub
Friends of Milwaukee's Downtown Forest
Friends of Navdanya
Friends of the Earth
Fruit Belt Advisory Council
Gap Mountain Goats
Gasp
Genesis Farm
Georgia Organics
Global Exchange
GMO Free Florida
GMO Free USA
Golden Ponds Farm
Grassroots Environmental Education
Grassroots Gardens of Western New York
Green Education and Legal Fund
Green Heron Tools, LLC
Green Plate Catering
GreenFaith
GreenFaith Bergen Circle
Greenpeace US
Gregory Wilder
Groundswell Center for Local Food & Farming
GROW North Texas
Haverford College Arboretum/HaverFarm
Hawai'i SEED
Headwater Food Hub
HEAL (Health, Environment, Agriculture, Labor) Food Alliance

Health Care Without Harm
Heartstone Center for Earth Essentials
Heartwood Farm
Hidden Acres Farm, Inc.
Higher Octaves Farm
Hispanic Federation
Holy Cow! Advisors
Honeydew Energy Advisors
Howling For Wolves
Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Inc.
Hunger Action Network of New York State
Hunt Country Vineyards
Idaho Sporting Congress, Inc.
Institute for Food and Development Policy/Food First
Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement
Jayhawk Audubon Society
Jefferson County Farmers & Neighbors
Jupiter Ridge Farm
Just Food
Kanalani Ohana Farm
Kiss the Ground
Labor Justice Now
Labour, Health and Human Rights Development Centre
Land for Good
Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food, Education & Policy, Teachers College Columbia University
League of United Latin American Citizens (District #1/Florida)
Linn County Farmers and Neighbors
Los Alamos Study Group
MAFO, Inc.
Main Street Farms
Mangrove Action Project
Maryland Conservation Council
Maryland Pesticide Education Network
Massachusetts Avenue Project
Mercy for Animals
Mermaid's Garden
Mid-Missouri Peaceworks
MLK Coalition of Greater Los Angeles
MOM's Organic Market
Moms Across America
Moosewood, Inc./ Moosewood Restaurant
Multicultural Exchange for Sustainable Agriculture (MESA)
National Center for Frontier Communities
National Family Farm Coalition
National Farm Worker Ministry
National Latino Farmers & Ranchers Trade Assn
Nature Coast Conservation
New Jersey Skylands Sunrise Hub
Newark Science and Sustainability Inc.
No Spray Zone
Non Toxic Communities

North American Climate, Conservation and Environment (NACCE)
Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York
Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont
Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group
Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance
NYC H2O
Occidental Arts & Ecology Center
Office of Social Justice, Christian Reformed Church in North America
Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition (OVEC)
One Meal a Day for the Planet
Oregon Climate and Agriculture Network
Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility
Organic Advocacy
Organic Consumers Association
Organize Florida
Oregon Rural Action
Partnership for Policy Integrity
People and Pollinators Action Network
People's Action
Peoples Climate Movement-NY
Pesticide Action Network North America
Pesticide Free Zone
Physicians for Social Responsibility
Physicians for Social Responsibility, Iowa Chapter
Physicians for Social Responsibility, New York Chapter
Physicians for Social Responsibility, Pennsylvania Chapter
Physicians for Social Responsibility, San Francisco Bay Area Chapter
Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste
Pittsburgh Food Policy Council
Planetary Health Inc./Amberwaves
Planting Justice
Pollinator Friendly Alliance
Pollinator Stewardship Council, Inc.
Protect All Children's Environment
Proud Pennsylvania
Public Citizen
QLatinx
Quaker Earthcare Witness
Rachel Carson Council
Real Food Media
Real Organic Project
Regeneration International
Regenerative Organic Alliance
Resilient Seeds
Rochester People's Climate Coalition
Rodale Institute
RootsAction.org
Rural Coalition
Santa Cruz Climate Action Network
Santa Cruz Permaculture
Saucy Flyer LLC

Save the Sound
Sea Forager
Seed the Commons
Seeding Sovereignty
Sequoia ForestKeeper®
SewGreen Inc.
Sierra Club
Sierra Harvest
Slow Food California
Slow Food USA
Solar Wind Works
Soul Fire Farm Institute, Inc.
South Asian Fund For Education, Scholarship and Training (SAFEST)
Stardust Market Garden
Student Physicians for Social Responsibility, Des Moines University
SumOfUs
Sunflower Alliance
Sustainable Agriculture Education (SAGE)
Sustainable Agriculture of Louisville
Sustainable Energy & Economy Network
Sustainable Living Systems
Sustainable Sanctuary Coalition
Sustainable Tompkins
Team Leadership Corp (TLC) at Awbury Arboretum
Terra Advocati
Texas Physicians for Social Responsibility
The Carbon Underground
The Ecology Party of Florida
The Land
The Leap
The Oakland Institute
The Organic & Non-GMO Report
Three Springs Farm
Tompkins County Climate Protection Climate Initiative
Toxic Free North Carolina
Toxics Action Center
Turning Green
UC Santa Cruz Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems
Unitarian Universalist Mass Action Network
United for Action
University of Oregon Climate Justice League
Urban & Environmental Policy Institute, Occidental College⁹
Urban Tilth
Urban Tree Connection
UrbanBee, San Francisco
Virginia Association for Biological Farming
WATCH Charlevoix
WE ACT for Environmental Justice
WeCount!
WESPAC Foundation, Inc.
Western New York Peace Center

Wild Hill Farm
Wild Salmon Nation
Wisconsin Environmental Health Network
Women's March Central Gulf Coast Florida
Woodleaf Farm
Worker Justice Center of NY
Xun Biosphere Project
Youth Farm Project
1000 New Gardens Missoula
100grannies.org
198 methods
350 Chico
350 Colorado
350 Eugene
350 Fairfax
350 MA-Berkshires
350 NYC
350 Sacramento
350 Triangle

ⁱ Environmental Protection Agency. (2017). Global Greenhouse Gas Emissions Data. Retrieved April 9, 2019, from <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/global-greenhouse-gas-emissions-data#Sector>

ⁱⁱ Hamerschlag, K. & Kraus-Polk, J. (2017). Shrinking the Carbon and Water Footprint of School Food: A Recipe for Combating Climate Change. *Friends of the Earth*. Retrieved April 9, 2019, from [https://1bps6437gg8c169i0y1drtgz-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/webiva fs_2/FOE_FoodPrintReport_7F.pdf](https://1bps6437gg8c169i0y1drtgz-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/webiva_fs_2/FOE_FoodPrintReport_7F.pdf)