

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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>ii</sup> 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 College<sup>9</sup>  
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

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<sup>i</sup> 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>

<sup>ii</sup> 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)