

October 16, 2026

The Honorable John Thune  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito  
Chair  
Committee on Environment & Public Works  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Environment & Public Works  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Lee  
Chair  
Committee on Energy & Natural Resources  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Energy & Natural Resources  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

**RE: Bipartisan American Affordability and Jobs Act of 2026**

Dear Leaders Thune and Schumer, Chair Capito and Ranking Member Whitehouse, Chair Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich:

As organizations representing the United States' agriculture industry and businesses who are proud to call Rural America home, we write to communicate our support for the Bipartisan American Affordability and Jobs Act of 2026 (BAAJA) and to urge the Senate to take up this important legislation as soon as possible.

American agriculture depends on affordable energy, modern infrastructure, and a permitting system that allows farmers, ranchers, input producers, retailers, and other agribusinesses to make investments with certainty. The legislation takes important steps to improve the competitiveness of U.S. agriculture by modernizing the federal permitting process, reducing unnecessary delays, and supporting the infrastructure, manufacturing, and energy systems that underpin rural economies.

Key provisions in the bill for agriculture and Rural America include:

- **Clean Water Act permitting reform.** We appreciate the bill's reforms to Clean Water Act permitting, which affects farmers, ranchers, and others across agriculture and agribusiness who need approvals for water management, irrigation, drainage, and more. Focusing Section 401 certifications to water quality requirements, with firm review deadlines, and requiring notice-and-comment rulemaking for water quality criteria will bring needed clarity. We also thank you for extending NPDES and Nationwide Permit terms to ten years, which means fewer renewals for rural permit holders, and for limiting EPA's Section 404 veto to the formal review period.
- **Faster, more predictable federal reviews.** The bill's focus on enforceable deadlines for environmental reviews is especially important. Rural landowners, cooperatives, and agribusinesses have long been frustrated by open-ended reviews which increase project uncertainty and costs while delaying the benefits to rural communities. We also appreciate the bill's provisions on lead agency authority over scope, the ability to rely on state and other federal reviews instead of duplicating NEPA analysis, and the process for resolving interagency disputes.

- **Endangered Species Act consultation.** We commend the bill for shortening the base Section 7 consultation period to 60 days and requiring it to run alongside NEPA review. This is a common-sense provision that will maintain existing strong environmental protections. We also appreciate the option for states to assume consultation responsibilities, with an applicant opt-out and dedicated funding, which will help agricultural and rural projects that need a federal permit.
- **Certainty and limits on litigation.** The bill takes important steps in reducing permit uncertainty through important judicial reforms, including setting a 150-day window to sue and for many challenges requiring that plaintiff to have raised the issue during the public comment period and allege a direct harm. This encourages concerns to be raised while the agency can still address them. The bill also protects projects from being halted in court by technical flaws in one part of a review and prevents agencies from revoking, suspending, or modifying permits after issuance.

Farm and ranch families and agricultural businesses depend on the land and water they care for, which gives them every reason to protect it for the next generation. By making federal permitting more efficient and predictable, this bill supports both their stewardship and the rural communities that rely on agriculture, and we thank you for your leadership in bringing it forward.

These reforms will help strengthen the infrastructure and regulatory systems that underpin American agriculture while maintaining environmental protections and supporting economic opportunity throughout rural communities. We urge the Senate to take up this legislation in November.

Sincerely,

Agricultural and Food Transporters Conference

Agricultural Retailers Association

Agriculture Transportation Coalition

American Feed Industry Association

American Soybean Association

American Sugar Alliance

Dairy Business Association (WI)

Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative

National Aquaculture Association

National Association of Wheat Growers

National Cattlemen's Beef Association

National Cotton Council

National Council of Farmer Cooperatives

National Grain and Feed Association

National Grange

National Milk Producers Federation

National Sorghum Producers

Pacific Northwest Waterways Association

Public Lands Council

The Fertilizer Institute

The Hardwood Federation

USA Rice