



For Immediate Release:

May 14, 2026

Contact:

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Klobuchar, Colleagues Raise Concerns about the USDA Research, Education, and Economics Mission Area Reorganization

WASHINGTON – Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, is leading 23 of her colleagues in raising strong concerns about the reorganization of the Research, Education, and Economics (REE) mission area at the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

“We write with strong concern regarding the reorganization and restructuring of the Research, Education, and Economics (REE) mission area at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA),” wrote the Senators. **“While we support actions to improve efficiencies and enhance service, this effort will erode the capacity of USDA’s research agencies and threaten their ability to deliver innovation and timely economic data for farmers, ranchers, and rural communities.”**

“In order to address these concerns, we ask that you provide a detailed description of actions the Department has taken to minimize disruptions to farmers, ranchers, and ag researchers and adhere to recommendations as outlined by GAO regarding agency reorganizations,” the Senators continued. **“As strong supporters of USDA’s research agencies, it is our goal to make sure the REE mission functions as Congress intends – focused on helping farmers, ranchers, and rural communities overcome the challenges they face through scientific innovation and complex data analysis.”**

Along with Klobuchar, the letter was signed by Senators Angela Alsobrooks (D-MD), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Dick Durbin (D-IL), John Fetterman (D-PA), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Angus King (I-ME), Ben Ray Luján (D-NM), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Patty Murray (D-WA), Alex Padilla (D-CA), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Adam Schiff (D-CA), Chuck Schumer (D-NY), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH),

Elissa Slotkin (D-MI), Tina Smith (D-MN), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Raphael Warnock (D-GA), Peter Welch (D-VT), and Ron Wyden (D-OR).

The full letter is available [here](#) and below.

Dear Deputy Secretary Vaden:

We write with strong concern regarding the reorganization and restructuring of the Research, Education, and Economics (REE) mission area at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). While we support actions to improve efficiencies and enhance service, this effort will erode the capacity of USDA's research agencies and threaten their ability to deliver innovation and timely economic data for farmers, ranchers, and rural communities.

Previous relocations of the Economic Research Service (ERS) and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) in 2018 and 2019 resulted in dramatic staff losses, as outlined in a December 2022 report from the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO). In their publication, GAO noted that this relocation resulted in ERS and NIFA losing over half their staff, with the USDA failing to engage employees, Congress, and stakeholders throughout the relocation process or follow best management practices.

Agencies of the REE mission area were also impacted by dramatic staff losses in 2025, including a loss of over 30 percent of staff within the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). These staff losses have real and immediate impacts on farmers, with many stakeholders now questioning the reliability of USDA's own data reports. The REE reorganization and restructuring announced this April proposes to relocate REE mission area staff to over 27 different locations within months, but specific details of the relocations remain unclear. This could result in decreased agency capacity, further deteriorating the Department's ability to conduct research, administer funding, and produce timely and reliable data products.

In order to address these concerns, we ask that you provide a detailed description of actions the Department has taken to minimize disruptions to farmers, ranchers, and ag researchers and adhere to recommendations as outlined by GAO regarding agency reorganizations. Additionally, we ask that you detail your engagement with REE mission area staff, including plans to engage with staff covered by existing collective bargaining agreements as well as non-bargaining unit employees. Proactive and ongoing engagement with these employees will be necessary to prevent major disruptions to research, data collection, and education.

As strong supporters of USDA's research agencies, it is our goal to make sure the REE mission functions as Congress intends – focused on helping farmers, ranchers, and rural communities overcome the challenges they face through scientific innovation and complex data analysis. Thank you for your attention to this issue, and we look forward to receiving your response within 30 days.

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