

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer  
Senate Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Senate Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson  
House Majority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries  
House Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
Chairwoman, Senate Committee on  
Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry  
328A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Boozman  
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on  
Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry  
328A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Glenn Thompson  
Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture  
1301 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable David Scott  
Ranking Member, House Committee on  
Agriculture  
1010 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

November 14, 2024

Dear Leaders Schumer, McConnell, Johnson, and Jeffries; Chairs Stabenow and Thompson; and Ranking Members Boozman and Scott:

As you come together to reauthorize our nation's farm and nutrition programs, the below groups representing millions of supporters and members, write to share our concerns regarding the bill as it stands following passage from the House Committee on Agriculture. Simply stated, we cannot support the inclusion of provisions that undermine investments in critical conservation programs or anti-environmental riders, including those that undercut our nation's bedrock environmental laws.

**Forests/Public Lands-** We strongly support efforts to strengthen ecologically sound forest management programs in any final conference agreement, but H.R. 8467 includes direct threats to conservation, and science-based restoration and resilience, by establishing broad exemptions from our nation's environmental review processes. We are deeply concerned with multiple provisions, including several amendments added during committee markup, under Title VIII, that ignore science and undercut the foundations of our environmental protections: the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the National Historic Preservation

Act. As such, these provisions will likely exacerbate wildfires. This bill would cause irreparable harm to our public lands; the millions of Americans who depend on them for clean drinking water, subsistence, recreation, and economic benefit; and the wildlife that call them home. As it stands, several provisions in the bill recklessly apply broad and unprecedentedly large Categorical Exclusions to forest and so-called habitat management projects under the guise of wildfire prevention, forest management, and broadband and utility line maintenance. Another section guts the ESA by broadly exempting the Forest Service from the requirement to reinstate consultation when new information indicates that implementation of land management plans may be harming threatened or endangered species. These aforementioned provisions, and multiple others, will not protect or connect rural communities, but they will absolutely threaten our natural resources and dramatically undermine NEPA, ESA, and NHPA. Specifically, all of the objectionable provisions in this title include: 8401, 8402, 8403, 8404, 8405, 8411, 8419, and 8506, as well as Amendments 29 and 31 as passed by the House Committee.

**Conservation Funding-** We oppose several provisions in H.R. 8467 that divert billions of dollars of remaining funds in the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) for climate-smart USDA conservation programs and remove the pivotal guardrails that IRA outlines. In May 2024, there was unanimous support from House Agriculture Democrats to include via amendment not only the funding from IRA but also keep the guardrails that further enable farmers and land stewards to adopt proven solutions to increase efficiency and reduce emissions. We oppose the many provisions that would weaken conservation programs and remove the climate guardrails from the IRA funds. These include:

- Secs. 2001, 2201, and 2202, which divert funding away from proven practices to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and instead give it to large equipment purchases under newly defined “precision agriculture” practices.
- Secs. 2501 and 2502, which remove the climate-smart guardrails included in the IRA and strike funding for conservation projects which reduce, capture, and avoid agricultural carbon.
- Secs. 2402, 2404, 2405, and 2501, which reallocate \$590 million in critical funding to programs of lesser or zero climate impact.

**Clean Energy-** In addition, we oppose provisions in the bill which seek to undermine our nation’s interests in clean energy and in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Several provisions under Title IX weaken efforts to advance clean energy production in rural areas. Sections 9011 and 9012 also appear slanted towards limiting opportunities for clean energy to reach rural communities. Section 9011 is framed as calling for a study of land conversion out of agricultural production. The specific subtopics of the study, however, recognize the potential for “shared solar energy and agricultural production on” the same land.” We suggest that if funds are devoted to a study, the overarching purpose include assessing the benefits of such colocation. Section 9012 outlines specific limitations on USDA funding for solar panels on farmlands. Additionally,

we oppose Section 12417 under Title XII, which redefines “qualified renewable biomass” to broadly include woody byproducts, residues, and biowaste. As “qualified renewable biomass,” these products are assigned a greenhouse gas emission rate of zero, something science has proven is patently false, but would enable logging and biomass industries to operate production facilities under false claims of carbon neutrality. With the belief that all communities deserve clean energy and protection from polluting industries, we strongly oppose these provisions.

**Pesticides-** We are deeply concerned with Sections 10204 and 10205 of Title X, as well as Amendment 18, which prevent longstanding rights of state and local governments to protect their communities through localized pesticide laws. Many of these local ordinances are carefully designed to protect children from pesticides sprayed near schools, but the provisions in H.R. 8467 would wipe out hundreds of these laws that keep communities safe. If these provisions become law, chemical companies could evade responsibility to people, including farmers, sickened by exposure, even as research shows many of the substances can cause cancer and other diseases. We also oppose the inclusion of these provisions because they weaken the Environmental Protection Agency’s ability to protect public health and the environment. Section 10204 would prohibit the EPA from adopting new guidance and policies on pesticides that are not aligned with previous risk assessments, no matter how old or outdated the assessment might be. This would directly endanger American consumers and workers who rely on agencies’ up-to-date guidance.

**EATS Act** – We oppose the inclusion of H.R. 4417/ S. 2019, the Ending Agricultural Trade Suppression (EATS) Act in Section 12007. The EATS Act nullifies a range of state laws designed to protect food safety, animal welfare, and environmental standards, dismantling years of state-led progress. Like the failed King Amendment before it, this bill undermines state-led standards and raises serious concerns about public health, environmental protection, and consumer rights by restricting states’ ability to address their unique needs and priorities. Instead of undermining critical consumer protections, Congress should stand firm in supporting state-level safeguards for communities and farmers by removing this section from the Farm Bill, as it did in 2014 and 2018.

As it stands, H.R. 8467 slashes funding to climate-smart programs, weakens bedrock environmental protections, and strips laws protecting communities’ public health. We appreciate your attention to these matters, and thank you for championing our nation’s farmers, families, and frontline communities as you reach a final agreement on the Farm Bill that rejects these attacks.

Sincerely,  
Earthjustice  
350 Bay Area Action

350 Eugene  
350 Humboldt  
350 Salem Oregon  
350 Seattle  
350VT  
Alaska Community Action on Toxics  
Alianza Nacional de Campesinas  
Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments  
American Friends Service Committee  
American Sustainable Business Network  
Beyond Pesticides  
PNW Forest Climate Alliance, Biomass Working Group  
Bullitt Countians for Justice  
Californians for Western Wilderness  
CalWild  
Camp Grants and Huts Move Mountains  
Carbon180  
Carbondale Food Autonomy  
Cascadia Wildlands  
CCAN Action Fund  
Center For Biological Diversity  
Center for Food Safety  
Center for Progressive Reform  
Central Oregon LandWatch  
CFSA  
Chattooga Conservancy  
Chesapeake Climate Action Network Action Fund  
Citizens for a Clean Harbor  
Clean Water Action  
Climate Communications Coalition  
Climate Reality Project  
Climate Reality Project Chicago Metro Chapter  
Climate Reality Project Maine Chapter  
Climate Reality Project New York Tug Hill Region Chapter  
Climate Writers  
Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life  
Community Food Strategies  
Concerned Citizens of Franklin County, MA  
Consultant Nutritionists, LLC  
Deep Fork Audubon Society

Defenders of Wildlife  
Dogwood Alliance  
Earth Law Center  
EcoActUs Climate Boot Camp  
El Granada Advocates  
Endangered Species Coalition  
Environmental Law & Policy Center  
Environmental Protection Information Center  
Environmental Working Group  
Ethical And Respectful Treatment of Humans  
Evergreen Action  
Extreme Weather Survivors  
Family Farm Defenders  
Farm Sanctuary  
Farming Falmouth  
Farmworker Association of Florida  
Firefighters United for Safety, Ethics, and Ecology  
Friends of Grays Harbor  
Forest Keeper  
Forests Forever  
Franciscan Action Network  
Friends of Bell Smith Springs  
Friends of Big Ivy  
Friends of Douglas-fir National Monument  
Friends of the Bitterroot  
Friends of the Earth  
Friends of the Earth, U.S.  
Friends of White's Woods  
Gallatin Wildlife Association  
Gila Resources Information Project  
Grand Canyon Trust  
Grandmothers' Village Project, Inc.  
Green America  
Green New Deal Network  
GreenLatinos  
Heart of the Gila  
HERONS  
I Heart Pisgah  
InCommon Group  
Interfaith EarthKeepers

Interfaith Power & Light  
James Beard Foundation  
Jewish Earth Alliance - PA  
Kentucky Heartwood  
Kettle Range Conservation Group  
King Arthur Baking Company  
Kiss the Ground  
Klamath Forest Alliance  
Klamath Siskiyou Wildlands Center  
Latino Farmers & Ranchers International, Inc.  
League of Conservation Voters  
Legal Rights for the Salish Sea  
Los Angeles Climate Reality Project  
Los Jardines Institute  
Los Padres ForestWatch  
Maryland Pesticide Education Network  
Massachusetts Forest Watch  
Mazingira Plus  
Meadow Clare Farm  
Mennonite Central Committee U.S.  
Mi Tierra Farm LLC  
Michigan Clinicians for Climate Action  
Moms for a Nontoxic New York  
Mount Shasta Bioregional Ecology Center  
Mountain Lion Foundation  
National Family Farm Coalition  
National Ocean Protection Coalition  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
Natural Resources Law  
Naturepedic  
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice  
New Mexico Wild  
Non-Toxic Neighborhoods  
Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness  
Old-Growth Forest Network  
Olympic Climate Action  
Oregon Wild  
Pesticide Action and Agroecology Network  
Pivot Point  
Predator Defense

Presbyterian Church USA Office of Public Witness  
Protect Our Woods  
Re:wild Your Campus  
Regenerative Agriculture Coalition  
Rocky Mountain Wild  
Rural Coalition  
Save Massachusetts Forests  
Science and Environmental Health Network  
Sea Hugger  
Sierra Club  
Sierra Club Uplands Network  
Silvix Resources  
Slow Food USA  
Soda Mountain Wilderness Council  
Southern Environmental Law Center  
Springfield Food Policy Council  
Standing Trees  
Starbright Farm  
Stop VT Biomass  
t.e.j.a.s.  
Tennessee Heartwood  
The Coming Clean Network  
The Conservation Angler  
The Ocean Project  
The Phoenix Group  
The Wilderness Society  
Thurston Climate Action Team/Tree Action Group  
Toxic Free North Carolina  
Union of Concerned Scientists  
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Big Flats NY  
Upper Valley Affinity Group, Vermont  
WE ACT for Environmental Justice  
Western Watersheds Project  
Wild Orca  
WildEarth Guardians  
Wildlife for All  
Women's Earth and Climate Action Network  
Yaak Valley Forest Council  
Youth of Lewis County