

April 1, 2025

The Honorable Andy Harris
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Hoeven
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Sanford Bishop
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harris, Chairman Hoeven, Ranking Member Bishop, and Ranking Member Shaheen:

As your Committees prepare the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill and Report for FY2026, the undersigned organizations, companies, and institutions urge you to provide an investment of \$10 million for the Agriculture Advanced Research and Development Authority (AGARDA).

Advanced research agencies have been effectively deployed in defense, energy, and health to tackle the biggest challenges facing these industries in novel and groundbreaking ways. Established in the 2018 Farm Bill and modeled after successful advanced research agencies like the Department of Defense's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), AGARDA will foster research, development, and technology transfer resulting in significant benefits across the U.S. food and agriculture value chain.

The challenges facing agriculture today require bold, forward-thinking solutions. Emerging pest and disease pressures, like Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, and high farm input costs continue to impact producers across the country. Agricultural research can address these challenges, help producers thrive, and ensure consumers have access to affordable food. Research can also better equip American agriculture with the innovations needed to lead as the global population, and food demand, continues to grow. Therefore, we must invest in novel research mechanisms and new technologies that prioritize mission-driven innovation and collaboration across disciplines. By providing AGARDA with sufficient funding, Congress can demonstrate its commitment to supporting agriculture as a cornerstone of our economy and a fundamental component of global food security.

Congress has appropriated less than \$4 million to AGARDA to date. While we appreciate this funding, programs such as DARPA, ARPA-E, and ARPA-H received substantial initial

investments and had dedicated leadership to ensure success. Individual projects under ARPA-E's ROOTS and TERRA programs ranged from \$3-10 million. A typical DARPA project can be tens of millions of dollars. AGARDA will require similar levels of investment to support high-impact research that can produce transformative results.

While funding AGARDA at its authorized level will give the program the greatest chance at success, we understand the budgetary constraints facing Congress in FY2026. Therefore we urge the Subcommittee to fund AGARDA at a minimum of \$10 million for FY2026. It is critical that AGARDA has the necessary funds to appoint leadership, hire staff, and support a sufficient number of agricultural research projects to show that this model can produce impactful results. In doing so, we can unlock the potential for groundbreaking innovations that will not only benefit producers and consumers but also ensure the resilience of our agricultural systems and keep U.S. agriculture globally competitive.

As Congress looks for ways to respond to the challenges facing the U.S. food and agricultural system, we urge you to provide \$10 million for AGARDA in FY2026.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

2Blades

Agricultural & Applied Economics Association

American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges

American Conservation Coalition Action

American Farm Bureau Federation

American Farmland Trust

American Feed Industry Association

American Institute of Biological Sciences

American Meat Science Association

American Phytopathological Society

American Society for Horticultural Science

American Society for Microbiology

American Society of Agronomy

American Society of Animal Science

American Soybean Association

Biotechnology Innovation Organization

Bipartisan Policy Center Action

C3 Action

Cereals & Grains Association
ClearPath Action
Crop Science Societies of America
Ecological Society of America
Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative
Enhanced Weathering Alliance
Entomological Society of America
Farm Journal Foundation
Federation of American Scientists
Institute of Food Technologists
International Fresh Produce Association
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Barley Improvement Committee
National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research
Natural Resources Defense Council
Pet Food Institute
Soil Science Society of America
Spark Climate Solutions
Synergistic Hawaii Agriculture Council
The Breakthrough Institute
The Good Food Institute
The Nature Conservancy
US Dairy Forage Research Center Stakeholder Advisory Committee