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### **Farmers and Ranchers Deliver Letter to the House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis**

*A letter signed by 2,130 farmers and ranchers was delivered to Congress to highlight the impacts of the climate crisis on agriculture and the opportunities for farmers to lead on climate solutions*

Washington, DC, August 27, 2020 – Today, the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC) and farmers and ranchers from across the country delivered a [letter](#) to the House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis (Select Committee), urging Congress to support and invest in farming and rural communities to address the climate crisis.

The letter underscores the fundamental threat that the climate crisis poses to the livelihoods of farmers and ranchers and the viability of agriculture. NSAC organized a [webinar](#) with members of the Select Committee and five farmers who signed the letter and shared their stories on how climate change has impacted their operations and lives. They highlighted how Congress can increase support for farmers to implement climate stewardship practices and build resilience to climate stresses.

“Right now in Northern California, we are dealing with a third year out of four where I find myself or my friends fleeing wildfire in our community. As farmers and ranchers, we are uniquely vulnerable because often our home and our livelihood are at stake, and the burden of evacuating and protecting our farms is so great,” said Avery Hellman, land manager at Five Springs Farm in Sonoma County and Woollystar Ranch in Alpine County. “So many of my friends are already struggling to make a living as a farmer in an economy that doesn’t adequately value their contributions, and these fires and other climate-related impacts often become too much to bear on top of that.”

In receiving this letter, Representative Castor (D-FL), Chair of the House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis, remarked:

“America’s farmers and ranchers are being impacted by extreme heat and flooding caused by climate change, and they are uniquely positioned to help us develop solutions to solve the climate crisis. The USDA and policymakers can be better partners with farmers to help enact lasting climate solutions to boost our economy, protect our families, and leave a sustainable country for future generations. Farmers across the nation are already stepping up to the challenge. Now Congress must work with them to expand the use of clean energy and create a stronger, healthier, more resilient America.”

Representative Brownley (D-CA), member of the House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis, also attended the call. She has introduced many climate-focused bills on renewable energy, reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector, and establishing composting as a conservation practice for which farmers can receive incentives, all of which have been included in the Select Committee’s report.

“American farmers, growers, and livestock producers know from first-hand, on-the-ground experience that our climate is changing, and they understand that the federal government must take these threats to our water and food supply seriously,” said Congresswoman Julia Brownley.

“That is why the agricultural industry has been so engaged with the Select Committee in developing our report. Protecting the agriculture sector of our economy, and protecting American’s access to an affordable and reliable food supply, is key to addressing the threats posed by the climate crisis. I am thankful for the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition’s leadership and assistance in building a diverse and effective coalition for national action on climate change.”

The California Climate and Agriculture Network (CalCAN), an NSAC member, contributed to the development of the letter in partnership with other NSAC members and farmer leaders. Independent farmers and ranchers in 49 states signed the letter – representing farm families producing fruits and vegetables, dairy, livestock, row crops, and more. Upon delivering the letter, Jeanne Merrill, Policy Director at CalCAN, commented:

“The coronavirus pandemic has taught us that we must work now with the country’s farmers and ranchers to develop resilient food and farming systems. The letter we are delivering today is a clarion call to the country – act now on the climate crisis before it is too late – and embrace the solutions farmers have to offer. Farmers are ready to deliver what’s necessary to produce renewable energy, store carbon in soils and enhance biodiversity – so that we may have a healthy environment for all.”

Any climate legislation package will be incomplete without the inclusion of farmers and ranchers as vital partners in our efforts to combat climate change.

“Farmers and ranchers work at the frontlines of the climate crisis, where they face extreme weather and shifting pressures from pests and disease driven by a changing climate,” said Eric Deeble, Policy Director at NSAC. “They are committed to be part of the solution to the climate crisis, and this letter outlines how Congress can ensure that they have the tools and resources to be active leaders in climate change adaptation and mitigation. Many of farmer-focused policy solutions were included in the Select Committee’s report, which establishes an ambitious and achievable roadmap for legislators to develop climate legislation.”

As Congress considers comprehensive climate legislation in the future, NSAC urges legislators to include agricultural policy that places farmers and ranchers at the center and supports them directly in their efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Both the [Select Committee’s report](#) and the [Agriculture Resilience Act](#) (ARA), introduced by Representative Chellie Pingree (D-ME), showcase farmer-focused climate policy solutions that should be included in any future comprehensive climate bill.

Click [here](#) to view the farmer climate letter and click [here](#) for the recording of the webinar.

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#### About the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC)

The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition is a grassroots alliance that advocates for federal policy reform supporting the long-term social, economic, and environmental sustainability of agriculture, natural resources, and rural communities. Learn more: <https://sustainableagriculture.net/>