

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 17, 2016

The Honorable Tom Wolf
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
508 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Wolf:

We are writing to express concerns over Pennsylvania's budget impasse; we remain alarmed that federally appropriated funds have been held during the impasse, to the detriment of Pennsylvania's farmers and the agriculture industry. These funds have been appropriated by Congress for the purpose of supporting the Commonwealth's largest industry, agriculture, which is responsible for one in seven jobs and more than \$67 billion in economic output annually.

In Pennsylvania, 97% of the farms are family owned, and these small businesses have long been the backbone of our rural communities. With over 63,000 farms, the nation relies on Pennsylvania as one of the leading national producers of milk from cows, nursery crops, Christmas trees, corn for silage, and livestock. The value of agricultural products sold by Pennsylvania's agricultural producers is over \$7.4 billion annually.

A key reason for the success of Pennsylvania agriculture is the strong federal, state and local partnership in the land-grant system, which has been in place for more than 150 years. With the support of Congress, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) administers federal funding that is matched by the state and local governments to support agricultural extension services through the Pennsylvania State University (Penn State). Extension services help our farmers be more productive, profitable, and to operate as competitive businesses. In addition, Penn State Extension works to strengthen families, children and youth through 4-H, and local communities by sharing unbiased, research-based information. These functions are critical to the success of the Commonwealth's farm communities and the continued success of Pennsylvania as a national agriculture leader.

As a result of the state budget impasse, it is our understanding nearly \$80 million in federal funding is at stake. Furthermore, it has also been brought to our attention that all 67 Penn State Extension offices and the agricultural scientific research experiment stations will be closed, resulting in more than 1,100 job losses. A continued impasse will make Pennsylvania the first state to sever a 100 year-long partnership with the federal government. Should you reach this point, it will undoubtedly have negative and costly economic impacts across the Commonwealth.

For these reasons, we urge you provide adequate consideration to restoring agriculture funding, particularly the funds that have been provided by the U.S. Congress. We believe this to be a prudent measure and an assurance that Pennsylvania's largest industry is not seriously compromised. Thank you for your consideration of our views. We look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,



Glenn 'GT' Thompson
Member of Congress



Bill Shuster
Member of Congress



Mike Kelly
Member of Congress



Mike Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



Lou Barletta
Member of Congress



Tom Marino
Member of Congress

cc: Senator Jake Corman, Senate Majority Leader
Senator Jay Costa, Senate Minority Leader
Senator Patrick M. Browne, Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations
Senator Vincent J. Hughes, Minority Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations
Representative Mike Turzai, House Speaker
Representative Dave Reed, House Majority Leader
Representative Frank Dermody, House Minority Leader
Representative William F. Adolph, Jr. Chair, House Committee on Appropriations
Representative Joe Markosek, Minority Chair, House Committee on Appropriations