

October 7, 2024

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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

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

Dear Speaker Johnson, Democratic Leader Jeffries, Majority Leader Schumer and Minority Leader McConnell:

We write to endorse *the Supporting Innovation in Agriculture Act of 2024*, which would establish a federal investment tax credit (ITC) to accelerate the deployment of innovative farming technologies for U.S. specialty crop producers.

Our country's food supply has long been a bipartisan concern. As secretaries and commissioners of state departments of agriculture, we know first-hand the importance of agriculture to the U.S. economy, the health and well-being of our citizens, and the central role it plays in the fabric of communities across our nation.

Unfortunately, the resilience of our domestic fresh food supply is under threat by recent supply chain disruptions, more extreme weather and drought conditions, worsening pest and disease pressures, rising input costs and inflationary pressures, and the repercussions of labor shortages.

The use of innovative farming technologies can be a significant way of sustainably increasing the domestic production of fresh fruits and vegetables while contributing to greater surety of supply, environmental conservation, and traceability throughout the supply chain.

Urgent action is needed. For the second year in a row, the United States is [projected](#) to run the largest agricultural trade deficit in modern history, driven in part by year-round demand for specialty crops and other horticultural goods.

A reversal of this rising trade deficit is possible, with the right investments and policies in place. However, meaningful action will require focusing not only on growing export markets, but also deploying innovative technologies to grow more food here at home.

In 2022, the bipartisan members of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture unanimously adopted [policy](#) encouraging Congress to consider tax credits as a policy that could help address high upfront capital costs for controlled environment agriculture. Expanding this concept to deploy precision agriculture technologies for traditional specialty crop growers – as *the Supporting Innovation in Agriculture Act of 2024* seeks to do – would fill an important policy gap for the diverse domestic specialty crop industry and complement important efforts that Congress is considering in the next farm bill to expand risk management tools, research, and market development for the specialty crop industry.

ITCs have a proven track record as a market-based tool to accelerate the commercial deployment of innovative technologies. Recognizing the strategic interests to national security, Congress recently created a new federal ITC to accelerate domestic semiconductor manufacturing when it passed the bipartisan *CHIPS and Science Act of 2022*.

We believe that food security and national security are also inextricably linked, and believe *the Supporting Innovation in Agriculture Act of 2024* will help accelerate the deployment of innovative farming technologies and better position American producers to compete on the global stage.

Sincerely,

Russell Redding, Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture

Kevin Atticks, Maryland Secretary of Agriculture

Matthew Lohr, Virginia Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry

Jeff Witte, New Mexico Secretary of Agriculture

Doug Miyamoto, Wyoming Director of Agriculture

Sid Miller, Texas Commissioner of Agriculture

Tyler Harper, Georgia Commissioner of Agriculture

Bryan Scoresby, Alaska Director of Agriculture

Ashley E. Randle, Massachusetts Commissioner of Agricultural Resources

Chris Chinn, Missouri Director of Agriculture

Steve Troxler, North Carolina Commissioner of Agriculture

Jonathan Shell, Kentucky Commissioner of Agriculture

Anson Tebbetts, Vermont Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets

Bryan P Hurlburt, Connecticut Commissioner of Agriculture

Kent A. Leonhardt, West Virginia Commissioner of Agriculture

Craig W. Buttars, Utah Commissioner of Agriculture and Food

J.J. Goicoechea, DVM, Nevada Director Department of Agriculture

Lisa Charpillouz Hanson, Oregon Director of Agriculture

Derek Sandison, Washington Director of Agriculture

Hugh E. Weathers, South Carolina Commissioner of Agriculture

Sharon Hurd, Hawaii Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture

Kate Greenberg, Colorado Commissioner of Agriculture

Charles Hatcher D.V.M, Tennessee Commissioner of Agriculture

Shawn N. Jasper, New Hampshire Commissioner of Agriculture, Markets and Food

Thom Petersen, Commissioner of Minnesota Department of Agriculture

Ed Wengryn, New Jersey Secretary of Agriculture

Christy Clark, Montana Director of Agriculture

CC:

The Honorable Jason Smith, Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee

The Honorable Richard Neal, Ranking Member of the House Ways and Means Committee

The Honorable Ron Wyden, Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee

The Honorable Mike Crapo, Ranking Member of the Senate Finance Committee

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow, Chairwoman of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee

The Honorable John Boozman, Ranking Member of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee

The Honorable David Scott, Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee

The Honorable G.T. Thompson, Ranking Member of the House Agriculture Committee