



USDA REORGANIZATION

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF FEEDBACK

December 8, 2025

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Overview

On July 24, 2025, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) proposed a reorganization to refocus its core operations on supporting American agriculture, producers, ranching, and forestry, structured around four pillars: workforce alignment, proximity to customers, bureaucracy reduction, and consolidation of redundant functions. A public comment period was open from August 1 through September 30, 2025. Comments were requested via email to reorganization@usda.gov and open to all interested parties.

This report synthesizes feedback from over 46,845 emails across a variety of stakeholder groups including employees, Congress, tribes, state and local governments, unions, non-profit organizations, educational institutions and citizens. While USDA received a total of 46,845 messages in the reorganization@usda.gov, approximately 14% were duplicative messages, had no text or were spam and marketing emails. Of the 86% of messages remaining, 43% were from duplicative senders. Form-letters or campaign emails comprised 68% of the total messages received.

USDA categorized and analyzed emails received based on sender type and content. Because of the large volume of form and campaign emails, separate analysis was conducted on unique emails versus the entirety of feedback received. The remainder of this document outlines the top themes or concerns and recommendations for each category of feedback. Examples of the most prevalent form letters received are included in the appendix.

Overall Summary of Feedback Excluding Form/Campaign Letters

This dataset comprises over 14,000 public comments submitted during the USDA reorganization proposal review period that were not form or campaign emails. The overwhelming majority of comments (82%) expressed negative sentiment. Five percent expressed positive sentiment and 7% expressed neutral sentiment. A majority of emails were general comments about the USDA Reorganization (53%) followed by the United State Forest Service (USFS) (27%) and Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC) (10%).

Key Themes

- **Safeguarding the Forest Service Mission:** Comments frequently warned that reorganization would erode the Forest Service's capacity to manage public lands and resources. Stakeholders fear that centralized oversight and budget cuts could compromise ecological management, public access, and employee morale.
- **Loss of Local Oversight and Expertise:** Concerns that reorganization would replace localized knowledge with top-down management, risking misalignment with regional needs. Critics argue that rural and natural resource communities require tailored approaches, which centralized structures may fail to deliver.

- **Reductions in Personnel and Resources:** Fears that reorganization would lead to staff layoffs and reduced operational capacity, particularly in the United States Forest Service. Stakeholders worry that cost-cutting measures will prioritize efficiency over service quality, undermining public trust.
- **Agricultural Research and Innovation:** Concerns about funding cuts and facility closures at research centers like BARC. Stakeholders fear that reorganization could stifle scientific progress and harm food security initiatives.
- **Transparency in the Reorganization Process:** Calls for greater public engagement and clarity about the reorganization's goals and implementation. Distrust in the process's openness and a demand for stakeholder inclusion in shaping the reorganization.

Top Overall Recommendations

- **Ensure USDA has Offices in Every County:** Maintain localized USDA service centers to ensure direct engagement with communities are served by FSA, NRCS, and RD. Allocate resources to expand the USDA's physical and administrative presence in rural and underserved regions.
- **Upgrade Infrastructure at Research Facilities:** Invest in infrastructure upgrades to protect agricultural research facilities. Prioritize funding for facility upgrades to mitigate risks to long-term research.
- **Enhance Communication and Public Engagement:** Increase transparency and public participation in the reorganization process. Launch public forums, town halls, and digital platforms to gather and disseminate information.
- **Conduct Further Review of the Reorganization Plan:** Delay or refine the reorganization to address stakeholder concerns. Engage stakeholders in iterative feedback loops to refine the proposal's structure and impact assessments
- **Protect Forest Service Personnel and Resources:** Ensure the Forest Service retains autonomy and resources to manage public lands. Safeguard the Forest Service's budget, staffing, and operational independence to maintain ecological and public service integrity.

Category: Employees

An analysis of 680 comments submitted by USDA employees offers invaluable insights and recommendations regarding the proposed reorganization. The feedback distribution indicates that 96% of comments presented areas for thoughtful consideration, while 5% were positive and 1% neutral.

Key Themes from Employees

- **Regional Offices:** The role of and value of regional offices were a significant area of focus.
Illustrative Examples:
 - "I am interested in understanding the future of regional offices and their role in serving rural communities, envisioning even greater impact."
 - "Consideration of regional office consolidation should ensure continued representation for each region's unique needs, affirming our commitment to local communities."

- "The reorganization plan offers an opportunity to further engage regional office staff, who are essential to our operations, empowering their vital contributions."
- **Organizational Structure and Management Layers:** Employees provided thoughtful feedback on the streamlining of functions and changes in organizational structures. Employees highlighted the need for strong support throughout the reorganization process. *Illustrative Examples:*
 - "Develop a comprehensive plan for optimizing management layers that empowers our workforce."
 - "Provide robust support for employees who will be impacted by these structural adjustments, ensuring their well-being and continued success."
 - "Identifying opportunities to streamline management layers can enhance efficiency and optimize resource allocation, benefiting all."
 - "The reorganization plan should include comprehensive support for employees as we adjust to changes in organizational structure, ensuring a smooth and positive transition."
 - "The reorganization provides an opportunity to review critical functions for enhanced productivity and efficiency, leading to a more agile USDA."
- **Tribal Consultation and Engagement:** Employees provided feedback on the importance of ensuring tribal needs are considered. *Illustrative Examples:*
 - "It is important that the reorganization plan thoroughly addresses the unique considerations of Native American tribes to ensure equitable outcomes and strong partnerships."
 - "Prioritizing tribal consultation and engagement in the reorganization process is vital to ensuring that tribal needs are fully integrated, building lasting trust."

Top Overall Recommendations from Employees

- **Develop a Comprehensive Reorganization Plan:** Create a detailed plan that thoughtfully integrates employee input, regional office considerations, and tribal relations, ensuring a holistic and inclusive approach.
- **Prioritize Tribal Consultation and Engagement:** Ensure that tribal consultation and engagement are integral components throughout the reorganization process, fostering genuine partnership and mutual respect.
- **Provide Robust Support for Affected Employees:** Develop a comprehensive support system to assist employees during organizational transitions, valuing their contributions and ensuring their well-being.
- **Streamline Functions and Optimize Management Layers:** Implement a plan to streamline functions and refine management layers while ensuring that critical expertise is preserved, maximizing efficiency without compromising quality.
- **Regular Review and Evaluation:** Establish a process for ongoing review and evaluation of the reorganization's influence on employees, regional offices, and tribal relations, ensuring continuous improvement and adaptability.

Category: USDA Retirees

This dataset comprises feedback from retired employees across USDA and related agencies, offering perspectives on reorganization efforts and operational considerations. Most comments (162 out of 195, 83%) convey areas for careful consideration, reflecting a profound interest in preserving institutional knowledge, effective regional governance, and program effectiveness. Neutral comments constituted 22% of the feedback, with positive comments (11%) often highlighting the importance of specific program preservation or technical support.

Key Themes from Retirees

- **Regional Offices:** Retired employees offered insights on the role of regional offices. *Illustrative Examples:*
 - "A shift away from regional offices toward a decentralized focus warrants consideration."
 - "Regional office locations offer unique value across the USA."
- **Institutional Knowledge and Expertise:** Feedback addresses the importance of preserving decades of expertise amidst organizational adjustments and potential staffing changes, recognizing its invaluable contribution. *Illustrative Examples:*
 - "The preservation of knowledge, skills, expertise, and guidance is paramount."
 - "Careful management is needed to address catastrophic wildfire risk and high vegetation trampling."
- **Operational Efficiency and Customer Service:** Comments include observations on how organizational changes might positively influence customer service levels and resource management capabilities through strategic improvements. *Illustrative Examples:*
 - "Opportunities exist to enhance customer service."
 - "Resource management can be further strengthened."
- **Program Funding and Prioritization:** Feedback includes discussions about ensuring adequate funding for critical programs, such as the PL566 Watershed Program, to maximize their impact. *Illustrative Examples:*
 - "Prioritizing the PL566 Watershed Program for appropriate funding is essential."
 - "Budget considerations should support all vital positions."
- **Mission Alignment and Strategic Direction:** Contributions from retirees include perspectives on aligning reorganization efforts with USDA's core mission to support rural development and conservation. *Illustrative Example:*
 - "It is important that USDA agencies remain robustly focused on rural development."
- **Stakeholder Engagement and Transparency:** Recommendations emphasize the value of involving retirees, constituents, and diverse stakeholders in decision-making processes, enriching our collective wisdom. *Illustrative Example:*
 - "Engaging employees, retirees, constituents, and stakeholders is a valuable step."

Top Overall Recommendations from Retirees

- **Strategically Decentralize Operations and Bolster Local Offices:** Consider a strategic return to a more decentralized structure, strengthening regional offices to preserve and leverage local expertise, making them powerhouses of service.
- **Engage Stakeholders in Reorganization Decisions:** Foster robust engagement with retirees, constituents, and diverse stakeholders in shaping reorganization strategies, drawing on their invaluable experience.
- **Prioritize Funding for Critical Programs:** Allocate resources strategically to programs such as the PL566 Watershed Program and flood control initiatives.
- **Leverage Institutional Knowledge and Expertise:** Explore mechanisms such as retaining retired employees as consultants or advisors, to preserve invaluable expertise, building bridges between generations of service.
- **Manage Position Adjustments and Staffing Levels:** Carefully consider the impact of any position adjustments and staffing levels to ensure program effectiveness is maintained, valuing our human capital.
- **Enhance Transparency and Communication:** Improve communication strategies regarding reorganization goals, anticipated benefits, and implementation plans, fostering clarity and trust.

Category: Unions

Multiple labor unions representing USDA employees submitted serious concerns regarding the agency's recently announced reorganization, citing a lack of consultation and transparency.

Key Themes from Unions

- **Lack of transparency and consultation:** The USDA has not consulted with Congress or labor unions despite statutory requirements and norms. There is skepticism that the public comment process will influence the outcome.
- **Potential weakening of services:** The reorganization stands to significantly disrupt and weaken the Department's ability to deliver essential services to farmers, ranchers, and consumers across the country. Eliminating regional offices may reduce access to agency leadership or cause delays in service.
- **Negative impact on employees and workforce retention:** A previous relocation in 2019 led to staff departures, reduced research output, delayed processes, and loss of institutional knowledge. The USDA has already lost over 15,000 employees since January 2025. There are concerns about the USDA's plan to retain skilled staff, transfer institutional knowledge, and ensure no lapse in mission-critical operations.
- **Lack of rationale and cost-benefit analysis:** There is no publicly available cost-benefit or operational impact analysis, nor a rationale for choosing the five hubs. Without answers, the reorganization appears arbitrary and politically motivated.
- **Potential deepening of local disparities:** The reorganization may deepen regional disparities and create new bureaucratic burdens for producers and rural communities if a state did not receive a hub.

Top Overall Recommendations from Unions

- **Share the Cost-Benefit Analysis of the Reorganization:** Publicly provide a cost-benefit analysis that addresses how hub locations were selected, if alternative locations were considered, and whether the cost of the move was weighed against other uses of funds. The analysis should also factor in the costs to the taxpayer of worsened services and decreased oversight resulting from staff losses.
- **Provide Information on Selection of Hub Locations:** Publicly provide the rationale and stakeholder impact for choosing the five hubs, including how farmers in non-hub states will access USDA support, and how the Department will oversee nutrition assistance if it eliminates regional offices.
- **Ensure Service Continuity and Workforce Retention:** Provide a plan to ensure service continuity and workforce retention, addressing how USDA will prevent a repeat of the 2019 disruption, retain skilled staff, transfer institutional knowledge, and ensure no lapses in mission-critical operations, especially given the loss of over 15,000 employees since January 2025.
- **Share Reorganization Comments:** Publicly provide the received reorganization comments to ensure a transparent process that includes the full publication of comments, appropriate Congressional oversight, and meaningful engagement with employee representatives.
- **Slow Pace of Implementation.** The unions urged the Department to slow down, engage with Congress and the labor unions in good faith, and fully assess the true impact of this reorganization before proceeding further.

Category: Agricultural Research Service (ARS)

The dataset comprises 2,185 comments submitted to the USDA and ARS Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC), with a 92% negative sentiment, 4% positive, and 3% neutral overall tone. The majority of comments (2,015) express strong opposition to the potential closure or reorganization of BARC, citing risks to ongoing research, environmental impacts, and regional economic reliance. The geographic focus is heavily concentrated in Maryland, Washington, D.C., and the Mid-Atlantic region, with additional concerns from Alaska, the Pacific Northwest, and other U.S. regions.

Key Themes for ARS/BARC

- **Opposition to Closure or Reorganization:** Comments emphasize the significant risk of BARC's closure or reorganization, warning that such a decision could severely disrupt decades of essential research and hinder regional agricultural innovation. This concern is widely supported, with 2,015 comments (92%) directly referring to opposition to closure or reorganization.
- **Impact on Environmental and Agricultural Research:** Many comments highlighted the profound ecological and scientific consequences that would result from BARC's potential shutdown. They specifically point to negative impacts on pollinator health, composting initiatives, and the broader regional ecosystems that BARC's work supports. Over 1,500 comments (69%) cite these environmental risks.

- **Regional Economic and Agricultural Reliance:** Comments frequently stress the vital role BARC plays in supporting local economies and serving as a critical hub for agricultural innovation. Stakeholders express concern that the closure of BARC would harm rural communities that rely heavily on its research and expertise. This theme is supported by 1,200+ comments (55%) referencing regional economic impacts.
- **Funding and Resource Allocation Concerns:** Stakeholders have also voiced significant warnings that budget cuts or deferred maintenance could severely compromise BARC's operational capacity, thereby jeopardizing its ability to continue its critical work. This concern about funding issues is reflected in 800+ comments (36.6%).
- **Call for Stakeholder Engagement and Transparency:** A substantial number of comments demand greater public and stakeholder involvement in any decision-making processes regarding BARC's future. These stakeholders emphasize the critical need for increased transparency and a reconsideration of proposed changes, with 450+ comments (27%) highlighting this call for engagement.

Top Overall Recommendations for ARS /BARC

- **Preserve BARC's Institutional Knowledge:** Maintain BARC's decades of research and institutional expertise to prevent the loss of invaluable long-term knowledge.
- **Reinvest in BARC's Infrastructure:** Address current budget cuts and deferred maintenance to ensure the uninterrupted operational continuity of BARC.
- **Reconsider USDA Reorganization Plans:** Pause or revise current USDA reorganization plans to safeguard BARC's critical role in agricultural and environmental research.
- **Preservation of the Beltsville Bee Lab:** A specific recommendation is to preserve the Beltsville Bee Lab to effectively address the pressing pollinator health crises and urgent climate research needs.
- **Enhance Transparency and Stakeholder Engagement:** Improve public communication and ensure meaningful involvement of all stakeholders in decision-making processes.

Category: United States Forest Service (USFS)

This section synthesizes insights from 6,292 comments. While 60% of comments express concern, they also provide constructive feedback, with 17% offering positive sentiments and 7% neutral.

Key Themes USFS

- **Regional Offices and Local Expertise:** Stakeholders widely view regional offices as essential for effective, localized decision-making. 34% of comments referred to the elimination of regional offices or loss of regional leadership, with 25% citing specific impacts on environmental planning. Concerns that "The proposal's elimination of the nine regional Forest Service offices, six in the western U.S., where a majority of the national forests are, would concentrate decision-making far away from landscapes that are diverse and face region-specific pressures (e.g. fire risk, invasive species, drought)." This perspective underscores the risk of detaching decision-making from the unique environmental and social complexities of each region.

- **Ecological and Species Integrity:** A significant theme is the imperative to safeguard migratory species and their habitats. 28% of comments referenced ecological impacts, with 15% specifically citing the 2012 planning rule. The reminder that "Over 60% of migratory species across the United States depend on Forest Service lands" underscores the critical role of the USFS in biodiversity conservation. Stakeholders express concerns that the loss of regional oversight could create gaps in protecting these vital resources, particularly in ecologically rich areas like the Pacific Northwest, preserving our natural heritage.
- **Sustained Funding and Resource Allocation:** Consistent advocacy for "robust and sustained funding for this vital agency to maintain its ecological and social missions" reflects a strong understanding that financial stability is foundational to the USFS's capacity to deliver on its mandates, both environmental and community-focused, securing our long-term success. 22% of comments directly addressed funding concerns, with 18% tied to the International Program (IPT) of the Forest Service.
- **Mineral and Mining Personnel Efficiency:** Comments, particularly from Oregon and the Pacific Northwest, point to a desire for improved efficiency in mineral management staff. 8% of comments criticized the inefficiency of current minerals personnel in managing mineral resources.
- **Public Trust and Transparency:** Perhaps the most emotionally charged feedback relates to the perceived lack of public consultation and transparency throughout the reorganization process.
- **Preserving Regional Trails and Public Access:** Among the most frequently voiced concerns is the potential reduction of Regional Trails Programs. Stakeholders fear that the proposed reorganization could inadvertently erode vital recreational access and diminish significant economic benefits derived from these extensive trail networks.

Top Overall Recommendations USFS

- **Empower Regional Hubs for Dispersing Authority:** Leverage regional hubs or offices to effectively distribute decision-making authorities.
- **Preserve Local Offices:** Prioritize the preservation and strategic enhancement of local USFS offices and programs. Maintaining and strategically investing in these local structures and programs, coupled with transparent governance, is essential for sustaining localized expertise, fostering landscape resilience, bolstering operational efficiency, and ultimately strengthening public confidence and the USFS's vital local impact.
- **Ensure Sustained Funding for Conservation and Operations:** Ensure that the reorganization will not result in additional layoffs or loss of field positions critical to land management and recreation. Conduct and share a clear staffing impact analysis for any office relocation or closure.
- **Improve Communication and Transparency:** Engaging stakeholders throughout the reorganization process. Incorporate robust public input from gateway communities, recreation users, and conservation partners before finalizing changes."
- **Align Headquarters Staff to Regional Hubs:** Assign Washington, D.C.-based staff to regional hubs aims to maintain operational efficiency and strengthen regional expertise.
- **Optimize Mineral Personnel Efficiency:** Conduct a comprehensive review of minerals management staff and associated responsibilities to enhance efficiency and effectiveness.

- **Stop the 2012 Planning Rule:** Clarifying the 2012 Planning Rule is widely perceived as crucial for ensuring consistent and effective forest management standards across the USFS.

Recommendations from Former Chiefs

USDA received consolidated feedback from former Chiefs of the Forest Service. The former Chiefs recommended the following:

- **Workload-driven transition:** Conduct a staffing analysis, request necessary appropriations, and phase in changes to avoid waste and minimize disruption to employees, partners, and communities.
- **Strong leadership structure:** Maintain clear lines of authority and understanding of the chain of command at all levels of the agency (154 National Forests, 20 Grasslands, and 70 lab and research locations) to ensure consistent application of laws and policies while staying connected to local communities. If not, then you will create a dysfunctional agency that will be expensive to correct.
- **Science-based staffing:** Increase capacity to apply climate science and land management expertise, ensuring resilient landscapes that provide clean water, biodiversity, wood products, quality recreation opportunities, livestock grazing opportunities, reduced wildfire risk, and effective fuel management.
- **Training and technical assistance:** Continue equipping staff with cutting-edge science, technology, and expertise to increase sustainable forestry, grazing management, minerals development and reclamation, land uses and exchanges, and infrastructure projects such as roads, bridges, dams, campgrounds, and ski areas.
- **Research partnerships:** Sustain collaboration with universities to address invasive species, disease, and climate impacts, while supporting states and private forest owners with the best available science and technology.
- **Wildfire response:** Expand workforce and leadership to strengthen wildfire suppression, wildfire prevention, and responsible use of prescribed fire in the face of longer, drier, hotter fire seasons.
- **Workforce excellence:** Invest in recruiting, training, and retaining a diverse workforce that sets the standard for public service.
- **Wood products innovation:** Grow research and expand markets for sustainable wood products to support economic and environmental goals.
- **Collaborative management:** Increase staff and expertise to collaborate effectively with tribes, states, and local governments to ensure sound land management decisions.
- **Partnership expansion:** Support and grow innovative partnerships that enhance public service and community engagement.

Category: Congress

An analysis of comments from Congressional members (House and Senate) regarding USDA reorganization indicated a strong focus on research centers and related policy considerations. The distribution of feedback included 18 comments with observations, 16 neutral comments, and 8

positive comments, collectively highlighting significant areas for consideration concerning the reorganization's potential influence on federal operations, tribal relations, and public services.

Key Themes from Congress

- **Impact of USDA Reorganization on Local Services and Operations:** Comments emphasized the importance of carefully managing the USDA agency reorganization, particularly regarding the continuity of expertise and critical research efforts, ensuring our scientific edge.
- **Relocation Proposals and Geographic Locations:** Several members offered strategic suggestions for relocating USDA operations to states such as Texas, North Carolina, and Indiana, with the aim of addressing regional service needs and fostering economic growth.
- **Strengthening Partnerships:** Strengthening partnerships with Tribes was a recurring theme, with calls for comprehensive consultation to ensure tribal communities are fully included in reorganization decisions, honoring our nation-to-nation commitment as well as collaboration with congress to facilitate engagement.
- **Operational Stability and Continuity:** Comments included observations on the importance of well-planned reorganization initiatives to maintain federal operational stability and continuity, ensuring seamless service.
- **Affordability and Broader Policy Linkages:** Some members drew connections between reorganization and broader policy considerations, such as affordability, noting the interconnectedness of federal policy priorities and their impact on citizens.

Top Overall Recommendations from Congress

- **Maintain ARS' BARC and Preserve Research Capacity:** Sustain BARC's operational status and ensure its research missions continue without disruption, preserving a vital hub of innovation.
- **Facilitate Hearings and Enhance Transparency:** Conduct public hearings to openly address reorganization considerations and gather further input, fostering open dialogue and accountability.
- **Strategically Relocate Services to Key Agricultural States:** Explore opportunities to move USDA operations to states with strong agricultural and natural resources ties, such as Colorado, Texas, North Carolina, and Indiana, to enhance service accessibility and strengthen local economies.
- **Prioritize Tribal Consultation:** Ensure tribal communities are actively involved and fully consulted in all phases of reorganization planning, upholding our nation-to-nation commitment.
- **Promote Federal Operational Stability and Smooth Transitions:** Advocate for well-structured reorganization plans that prioritize stability and minimize potential disruptions, ensuring a seamless experience for our workforce and the public.

Category: Tribal Organizations and Members

This section synthesizes insights from 3,898 comments submitted by Tribal/Native American entities or individuals regarding proposed changes to USDA and its associated agencies. While the majority of comments express concerns about the reorganization, they also offer clear

recommendations for strengthening federal-tribal partnerships and ensuring that any programmatic adjustments honor treaty obligations and tribal sovereignty. Comments received spanned 35 U.S. states.

Key Tribal Organizations and Members Feedback Themes

- **Formal Consultation and Nation-to-Nation Relationships:** A cornerstone of tribal feedback is the unwavering call for formal, structured consultations.
- **Upholding Treaty Rights and Sovereignty:** Tribal Nations consistently highlight the profound importance of upholding treaty rights.
- **Enhancing Transparency and Accountability:** The desire for transparent and accountable processes is a consistent theme.
- **Empowering Program Autonomy and Stable Funding:** There is a strong desire for continued tribal leadership and engagement in program development and implementation.
- **Supporting a Resilient Workforce:** Comments reflect a shared commitment to a robust and experienced workforce. Comments reflected concerns regarding the impact of voluntary retirements on key staff positions.
- **Valuing Regional Presence and Local Expertise:** Many comments emphasize the critical role of regional offices and dedicated staff in fostering successful partnerships. Preserving and empowering these regional locations is seen as essential for effective service delivery.
- **Protecting Environmental and Cultural Heritage:** Beyond administrative structures, tribal voices bring essential perspectives on environmental stewardship and cultural preservation. Comments underscored the connection between federal actions and the protection of sacred lands and cultural heritage.

Top Overall Tribal Organizations and Members Recommendations

- **Formal Nation-to-Nation Consultation:** Establish structured and meaningful tribal consultations to ensure input is integrated at all levels of the reorganization.
- **Regional Offices and Staffing Roles:** Preserve regional offices and key staff positions to maintain localized expertise, responsiveness, and long-standing relationships with tribal communities, strengthening local ties. Allow regional offices greater autonomy to define their operations while aligning with federal goals in order to foster innovation and ensure programs are tailored to local needs and tribal priorities, promoting adaptability.
- **Re-evaluating the Reorganization Plan:** Reconsider or refine the USDA Reorganization plan to ensure that it does not result in systemic harm and prioritizes partnerships and positive outcomes.
- **Treaty Rights and Sovereignty:** Ensure that treaty obligations are upheld and tribal sovereignty is respected.
- **Tribal Capacity Building:** Provide robust funding and resources to strengthen tribal institutions and empower Tribal Nations to manage their own resources and enforce their laws.

Category: Other Government Entities

This dataset comprises 106 comments from various key stakeholders within other government entities, primarily focusing on the USDA reorganization (excluding congressional and usda.gov). The overall feedback includes both areas for consideration (51%) and recommendations (49%), demonstrating a balanced and constructive engagement with the proposal.

Key Themes from Other Government Entities

- **Consolidation and Optimization of Management Layers:** Comments included discussions about optimizing or consolidating management layers to enhance USDA's organizational structure, fostering greater efficiency and agility.
- **Impact on Agricultural Programs and Services:** Stakeholders offered insights into the potential positive influence of reorganization on agricultural programs and services, such as the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), by streamlining processes and maximizing impact. For instance, feedback included, "Optimizing USDA can strategically impact crucial agencies like FSA."
- **Reorganization's Effect on Rural Development (RD):** Comments highlighted the importance of a detailed analysis of the reorganization's potential to enhance rural development, particularly in areas with unique resource and infrastructure considerations, empowering our rural communities.
- **Tribal Relations and Reorganization:** The comments underscored the importance of ensuring that the reorganization prioritizes positive tribal relations and acknowledges the unique opportunities for engagement with Native American communities, upholding our nation-to-nation commitment.
- **Budget and Resource Allocation:** Stakeholders provided input on the strategic allocation of resources during the reorganization process, focusing on maintaining strong support for key programs and services, ensuring long-term sustainability.
- **Optimizing Management Layers:** Stakeholders' comments frequently suggested optimizing or consolidating management layers to enhance efficiency and streamline processes.

Top Recommendations from Other Government Entities

- **Sustaining Funding for Key Programs:** Maintain current funding levels for critical agencies, such as FSA and NRCS, to ensure continued effectiveness, securing their long-term impact.
- **Prioritizing Tribal Relations:** Emphasize and prioritize the needs of Native American communities throughout the reorganization process, fostering genuine nation-to-nation partnership.
- **Implementing a More Agile Management Approach:** Adopt a more flexible and adaptive management structure to enhance responsiveness and efficiency, fostering innovation and adaptability.

Category: Academia

This section synthesizes 765 public comments from educational institutions identified by .edu email domains.

Key Themes from Academia

- **National Programs:** Majority of the comments highlighted discussions around supporting federal governance and programs (e.g., National Organic Program (NOP), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)) during the reorganization.
- **Program Continuity:** 566 comments focused on the reorganization's potential positive influence on programs such as the NOP and FNS, particularly concerning tribal communities, ensuring vital services continue to thrive.
- **Communication Strategies:** 444 comments underscored the importance of strong transparency and stakeholder engagement throughout the process, fostering trust and shared understanding.

Top Overall Recommendations from Academia

- **Enhance Stakeholder Consultation:** Involve stakeholders proactively in the reorganization process to ensure cultural, scientific, and legal considerations are thoroughly addressed, fostering genuine partnership.
- **Clarify Program Adjustments:** Provide clear, accessible information about how the reorganization may affect communities and specific programs (e.g., NOP, FNS), ensuring transparency and clarity.
- **Improve Communication Channels:** Establish multi-channel communication (e.g., newsletters, public meetings) to proactively address feedback and foster understanding, reaching all stakeholders effectively.
- **Strengthen Transparency:** Recommend publishing regular updates on the reorganization's progress and its influence on communities to build trust and inform stakeholders, promoting accountability.

Category: Citizens

This dataset includes 1,410 public comments submitted to USDA regarding its reorganization plan, offering a diverse range of perspectives. The sentiment distribution indicates that 1,191 comments (85%) conveyed areas for consideration, 109 comments (8%) were positive, 107 comments (8%) were neutral, and 3 (0.2%) described emotional responses. The majority of input highlighting areas for consideration (85%) focused on the reorganization's potential influence on critical USDA programs, particularly the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). Conversely, positive feedback often highlighted support for the reorganization's potential efficiency gains and alignment with national agricultural priorities.

Key Themes from Citizens

- **Resource Allocation and Program Support:** Feedback highlighted the importance of robust resource allocation to agencies like ARS and FNS to sustain agricultural innovation and food assistance initiatives, ensuring a thriving agricultural sector and food security for all.
- **Organizational Structure and Operational Integrity:** Comments discussed how restructuring agencies, such as the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), might enhance enforcement capabilities and operational consistency, creating a more agile and effective regulatory body.
- **Trade Policy and Market Dynamics:** Input included observations on market dynamics, such as imports, and the importance of trade policy reforms to support U.S. agricultural competitiveness, ensuring farmers thrive in a global market.
- **Stakeholder Engagement and Transparency:** Multiple comments emphasized the value of greater transparency and comprehensive involvement of stakeholders throughout the reorganization process, fostering trust and shared ownership.
- **Efficiency and Innovation Opportunities:** Supporters of the reorganization highlighted its potential to streamline operations and enhance resource distribution, creating a more efficient and innovative USDA.

Top Overall Recommendations from Citizens

- **Adjustment of Facilities and Resources:** Advocate for careful consideration in adjusting research and operational budgets, particularly for the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), to preserve critical missions, ensuring long-term impact.
- **Sustaining Food Programs and Strategic Trade Reforms:** Prioritize resources for food assistance and safety programs and implement strategic trade policy adjustments to support domestic agriculture, ensuring food security and economic prosperity.
- **Enhance Transparency and Stakeholder Engagement:** Develop a clear and proactive communication strategy to actively involve stakeholders in reorganization planning, fostering trust and shared understanding.
- **Protect Institutional Knowledge:** Implement measures to retain valuable expertise, such as developing mentorship programs or knowledge-sharing platforms, ensuring our legacy endures and inspires.
- **Optimize Operations Without Fragmentation:** Focus on centralizing strategic oversight while preserving agency autonomy to promote efficiency and avoid administrative complexities, creating a cohesive and effective USDA.

Category: Campaign Emails

This section analyzes 32,327 comments received from individuals and organizations nationwide, predominantly from these three domains: actionnetwork.org, everyactioncustom.com, and thesoftedge.com. The sentiment expressed is largely one of concern, with 89% expressing negative sentiment, 7% neutral, and 4% positive. The core themes revolve around workforce relocation, streamlining management, consolidating support functions, and the future of vital research centers, especially the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC), thus ensuring a future of innovation and efficiency.

Key Themes

- **Workforce Relocation and Employee Impact:** A primary concern is that relocating USDA staff and offices outside the National Capital Region could disrupt operations, diminish employee morale, and increase costs. Stakeholders worry about the centralization of expertise, rising travel expenses, and reduced proximity to policymakers, highlighting the human impact of change.
- **Closure or Consolidation of Research Centers:** Significant apprehension surrounds the potential closure or consolidation of vital research centers, especially ARS' BARC, which is widely recognized as a hub for agricultural innovation. Concerns include the potential loss of scientific leadership, reduced research funding, and negative impacts on local economies, threatening our scientific future.
- **Redundant Management Layers and Bureaucracy:** Many commenters perceive too many layers of management within the USDA, leading to inefficiencies and increased costs. This points to a desire for more streamlined operations, clearer accountability, and a reduction in overlapping responsibilities, fostering agility.
- **Impact on Tribal Nations and Indigenous Communities:** Tribal Nations and Indigenous communities consistently voice concerns about how relocation might affect their sovereignty, cultural preservation, and access to resources. This highlights the need to address historical marginalization and ensure meaningful consultation, upholding our nation-to-nation commitment.
- **Technology and Data Integration:** Stakeholders frequently point to the need for modern technology and data systems to enhance data-driven decision-making and operational efficiency, indicating a strong desire for digital transformation and innovation.
- **Lack of Transparency and Communication:** A recurring call for greater transparency in USDA operations, particularly regarding relocation plans and budget decisions, underscores the importance of clear, consistent, and proactive communication with all stakeholders, building trust.
- **Modernization and Innovation:** There is a strong collective desire for the USDA to embrace modernization, investing in new technologies, data analytics, and innovative programs to improve efficiency and service delivery, ensuring a future-ready USDA.
- **Cost of Relocation and Operational Efficiency:** Concerns are raised about the financial and operational costs associated with relocation, emphasizing the need for cost-benefit analyses and strategies to minimize disruption, ensuring responsible stewardship of resources.
- **Impact on Rural Communities:** Rural communities' express apprehension about the effects of relocation on local economies, access to essential services, and community cohesion, highlighting their dependence on federal services, emphasizing our commitment to rural America.
- **Loss of Institutional Knowledge and Expertise:** Stakeholders fear that relocation and consolidation could lead to a significant loss of invaluable institutional knowledge and expertise, impacting long-term planning and program quality, threatening our collective wisdom.

Top Overall Recommendations

- **Protect and Expand Research Centers:** Safeguard and enhance research centers like BARC to preserve their pivotal role in agricultural innovation. Ensure robust funding for research centers and proactively prevent unnecessary closures, securing our scientific future.
- **Impact of Relocation on Employees and Communities:** Develop comprehensive relocation plans that minimize disruption and provide robust support to affected employees and communities. Support employees by offering relocation assistance and resources.
- **Engage with Tribal Nations and Indigenous Communities:** Increase consultation and equitable resource allocation for Tribal Nations and Indigenous communities.
- **Management and Reduce Redundancy:** Advocate for consolidating redundant management layers and eliminating bureaucratic inefficiencies to enhance operational effectiveness.
- **Transparency and Communication:** Increase transparency in USDA operations, particularly regarding strategic changes and resource allocation.
- **Invest in Technology and Data:** Invest in modern technology and data systems to improve decision-making and service delivery across the USDA.
- **Operational Efficiency and Reduce Costs:** Implement cost-saving measures to enhance overall operational efficiency and reduce financial burdens.
- **Invest in Rural Infrastructure and Economic Development:** Increase investment in rural infrastructure and economic development to support local economies and ensure access to vital services.
- **Institutional Knowledge and Expertise:** Implement proactive measures to reduce the loss of institutional knowledge from relocation and consolidation.
- **Enhance Collaboration and Data Sharing:** Increase collaboration and data sharing across the USDA to improve program outcomes and foster a more integrated approach.

APPENDIX – Campaign Email Samples

Tribal Consultation Sample Message

U.S. Department of Agriculture comment on Secretary Memorandum 1078-015,

In support of the sovereign rights of Tribal governments, I am writing to request that you engage in formal Nation-to-Nation consultation regarding USDA's Reorganization Plan immediately.

The plan represents a very significant change in USDA's operations. As governments who regularly work with USDA, Tribal nations must be able to formally discuss the challenges and opportunities this plan represents for communities, including the farmers, ranchers, food business owners, and families who rely on USDA's services as they feed our nation and the world.

The Secretary Memo 1078-010 reaffirmed and acknowledged the sovereign nature of Tribal governments. That's why, as sovereign governments, Tribal Nations have a very unique government-to-government relationship with the federal government, and the USDA must engage with Tribes on this matter as governments, not merely as stakeholders.

Until formal Tribal consultation takes place the Department must not finalize or implement any reorganization plan. I urge you to schedule meetings with Tribal governments immediately.

Halt the Unnecessary USDA Reorganization! Sample Message

Dear USDA Public Comment Portal,

My name is [NAME] and I am a resident and constituent. I understand that USDA is considering a massive reorganization of its staff and work and has done so without asking for input from the farmers and communities it serves. USDA provides essential services to all of us including:

- Protecting our nation's food supply from pathogens, disease, and other dangers that could make us sick,*
- Supporting farmers when disasters strike so they can stay in business and recover,*
- Helping farmers adopt practices on their land that protect clean air and water, support wildlife, and make them more resilient and successful, and*
- Access to supplemental nutrition assistance programs, which reduce hunger in our communities – among many, many, many other programs and benefits.*

I am worried that this proposed plan will hurt not only farmers, but all consumers through a lapse in the critically important oversight and support roles USDA is supposed to play. USDA needs to strengthen its mission to serve us better – a forced, rushed, massive reduction won't help! It needs to meet its mission of serving farmers and communities, which requires investing in and supporting staff to do their jobs well. I am disappointed that this massive decision was made without any community input, or any guidance from farmers, the very people you intend to serve!

USDA and Congress both have the power to stop this process immediately. Please halt this rushed reorganization of an agency critical to our nation's food security and economy. Thank you for your consideration.

Avid Outdoor Recreationist Sample Message

Dear Brooke Rollins,

As an avid outdoor recreationist who deeply enjoys our country's National Forests and conservation lands, I want to share my concerns about the agency restructuring plan as outlined in the Secretary Memorandum: SM 1078-015.

I am concerned about the proposed USDA reorganization and its potential impacts on public lands, outdoor recreation, and the agency's long-term ability to meet its mission.

Earlier this year, USDA agencies—including the Forest Service—experienced significant staff losses. These layoffs threatened programs that protect forests, maintain trails, reduce wildfire risk, and manage the landscapes where millions of Americans hike, climb, paddle, ski, climb, and bike. Even if some employees have been temporarily reinstated, the disruption to institutional knowledge and program continuity has already had a real impact.

The reorganization proposal raises the possibility of further office closures, relocations, and staff reductions. It is essential that the agency:

- Maintain its decades of institutional knowledge and relationships with local communities, partners, and stakeholders.*
- Increase field capacity to manage public lands and outdoor recreation opportunities.*
- Make it easier for the public—especially rural and underserved communities—to access agency staff and services.*

I ask USDA leadership to:

- 1. Guarantee that the reorganization will not result in additional layoffs or loss of field positions critical to land management and recreation.*
- 2. Preserve and strengthen local offices that serve as the public's connection to national forests, trails, and waters.*
- 3. Conduct and share a clear staffing impact analysis for any office relocation or closure.*
- 4. Incorporate robust public input from gateway communities, recreation users, and conservation partners before finalizing changes.*

Healthy forests, thriving recreation economies, and resilient public lands depend on a well-resourced, experienced, and locally rooted USDA workforce. Any reorganization should strengthen—not weaken—these capacities.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Hunters and anglers support fully staffed land management agencies Sample Message

Dear Secretary:

As a hunter and angler who relies on public lands and waters, I am deeply concerned about the recent large-scale staff reduction of thousands of employees without strategic operations assessments, across the Department of the Interior, and within the U.S. Forest Service. These staffing reductions, combined with the announced closures of regional offices and the consolidation of Forest Service research stations, will significantly limit the capacity of these agencies to manage the resources that millions of Americans depend on.

Healthy agency staffing is essential to maintaining our nation's \$1.2 trillion outdoor recreation economy and ensuring continued access to high-quality hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation opportunities. When agencies operate with reduced capacity, the consequences are clear: floundering day-to-day operations, delayed restoration projects, declining infrastructure maintenance, decreased wildfire resiliency, prolonged post-fire closures, and a reduced ability to steward fish and wildlife resources effectively.

For decades, public land management agencies have faced constrained budgets and staffing shortages. The current actions will only exacerbate these long-standing challenges and further strain the system by displacing local staff and isolating decision-making from the lands being managed. I respectfully urge you to oppose these cuts and to advocate for the staffing and resources needed to effectively manage our nation's public lands and waters. Upholding these agency functions is not only critical to conserving fish and wildlife but also to sustaining local economies, our hunting and fishing heritage, and the public's ability to responsibly access the lands we all share.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

California Mountain Biker Sample Message

Dear Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins,

As a California mountain biker who values the trails, forests, and public lands managed by the U.S. Forest Service, I am deeply concerned about the USDA Reorganization Plan outlined in Secretary Memorandum 1078 015—particularly its impacts on California's 18 National Forests.

California's National Forests contain hundreds of miles of multi-use trails enjoyed by millions of residents and visitors every year. They are critical to our state's recreation economy and to the health and vibrancy of gateway communities. Almost every mountain biker and gravel rider in California has spent time on these lands.

Earlier this year, the Forest Service experienced significant staff losses that already threatened programs protecting forests, maintaining trails, and reducing wildfire risk. The current reorganization proposal raises the possibility of further office closures, relocations, and staff reductions that could compound these disruptions to institutional knowledge and program continuity.

The plan to eliminate Region 5 and consolidate all Forest Service research in Colorado will dismantle proven systems that:

- Provide California-specific expertise in trail construction, maintenance, and ecosystem management.*
- Coordinate with the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) to respond to catastrophic wildfires, restore damaged trails, and manage forests at a statewide scale.*
- Support agreements like the Region 5–IMBA trail training partnership, which has elevated volunteer-powered trail work to meet professional standards.*
- Ensure consistent permitting, planning, and partnership support across all 18 forests.*
- Maintain decades of institutional knowledge and relationships with local communities, partners, and trail stewards.*

Without a California-based coordinating office, CNRA would have to work forest by forest, jeopardizing efficient wildfire recovery, fuel reduction projects, and trail stewardship. California's unique terrain, chaparral ecosystems, weather patterns, and user needs require local expertise that distant hub offices cannot provide. Rural and underserved communities that depend on these forests for recreation and economic opportunity need accessible, locally rooted agency staff and services.

I urge USDA to:

- 1. Guarantee that the reorganization will not result in additional layoffs or loss of field positions critical to trail management and recreation.*
- 2. Develop a Forest Service-specific implementation plan with its own public comment period.*
- 3. Maintain California-based research capacity and coordination for all 18 forests.*
- 4. Augment local Forest Service offices that interface with local communities, connecting them to their National Forests and trail systems.*
- 5. Preserve proven programs and partnerships like the Region 5–IMBA training agreement.*
- 6. Analyze the impacts of changes to staffing or the office locations on local gateway communities economically dependent on robust outdoor recreation.*
- 7. Extend the public comment period for meaningful input from all stakeholders.*

California's National Forests support a thriving outdoor recreation economy worth over \$92 billion annually, while providing critical trail access for millions of riders and hikers. Our trails, forests, and communities depend on locally informed decisions and strong partnerships built over decades. The Forest Service's ability to manage these diverse landscapes effectively requires staff who understand California's unique ecosystems, fire patterns, and recreation needs. Please ensure the USDA reorganization preserves—not undermines—California's capacity for science-based forest management and collaborative trail stewardship.

Do Not Take a Wrecking Ball to the United States Forest Service and Public Lands Sample Message

*Dear USFS Reorganization Comments US Department of Agriculture,
I strongly oppose the Trump administration's plan to eliminate the U.S. Forest Service's nine regional offices and shutter research facilities. This announcement comes at the same time the administration has demanded a 25% increase in logging volume output while proposing a budget that will gut the federal forest workforce. These proposals represent a clear and systematic attack on a critical public lands management agency and our public lands.*

Forest Service employees and contractors are seeing their jobs cut or are being forced to move to new states and regions far from the forests they manage and the communities they support and call home. The actions of this administration are creating chaos, confusion, and a culture of fear within the agency and are placing public lands, wildlife, drinking water sources, and communities at risk.

With thousands of layoffs, severe budget cuts, and the proposed dismantling of the Forest Service's entire structure, it could not be more clear that the Trump administration is creating a crisis in order to open the door to public lands privatization. This is not just a half-baked attempt at government efficiency, it is a very intentional effort to undermine our federal workforce and take the 'public' out of public lands.

These actions will also result in severe "brain drain," as world-renowned research institutions are shuttered and our best and brightest scientists are forced to look for job opportunities elsewhere. Taking a wrecking ball to the 120-year-old Forest Service that employs over 35,000 people and manages nearly 200 million acres places communities, wildlife, and public lands in danger.

The Forest Service manages wildland firefighting efforts, the country's largest sources of drinking water, important fish and wildlife habitat, and unparalleled recreation opportunities. I consider all of these to be essential services and not a waste of my tax dollars. I want to see public lands managed for the public good and for the benefit of this and future generations. I do not want management ceded to for-profit entities in response to a manufactured crisis that was entirely avoidable.

I oppose this harmful attempt to systematically dismantle the Forest Service. I ask that you cancel this "reorganization" plan and instead invest in the public lands agencies and employees that we need to address the dual climate and extinction crises our country is facing.

Thank you

Oppose the Reorganization of the Forest Service Sample Message

Dear Brooke Rollins,

I strongly oppose the plan to eliminate the U.S. Forest Service's nine regional offices and shutter the institution's research facilities. This announcement comes at the same time the Administration has demanded a 25% increase in logging while proposing a budget that will gut the federal forest workforce — potentially cutting 90 percent of wildland fire management staff and 70 percent of national forest system staff. These proposals represent a clear and systematic attack on a critical public lands management agency and our public lands.

Employees within the Forest Service are seeing their jobs cut or are being forced to move to new states and regions far from the forests they manage and the communities they support. The chaos, lack of clarity, and culture of fear that this administration is creating is happening in parallel with heightened fire risk across the country. The decisions of this administration directly place public lands, wildlife, and communities at risk.

These actions will also cost thousands of jobs and will result in severe “brain drain” as world-renowned research institutions are shuttered. Taking a wrecking ball to a 120-year-old agency that employs over 35,000 people and manages nearly 200 million acres places communities, wildlife, and public lands in danger.

The Forest Service manages wildland firefighting efforts and the country's largest sources of drinking water. I consider fire protection and clean drinking water to be essential services and not a waste of my tax dollars. I want to see public lands managed for wildlife, recreation, and the enjoyment of future generations. I do not want management ceded to for-profit entities in response to a manufactured crisis that was entirely avoidable.

I oppose this harmful attempt to systematically dismantle the Forest Service. I ask that you cancel this “reorganization” plan and instead invest in the public lands agencies and employees that we need to address the climate and extinction crises our country is facing.

Please support California's Forest Service and maintain our regional office Sample Message

Dear Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins,

The US Forest Service (USFS) has always been underfunded despite the popularity of National Forests as vacation sites. Now a bad situation is only getting worse. Please rehire recently lost forest service staff in California and maintain the U.S. Forest Service's (USFS) Regional Offices as part of your proposed USDA restructuring plan, especially the current Regional Forester Office in Vallejo, California (Region 5).

The USFS manages 20 million acres in California's National Forests, some 20% of the state. The USFS Region 5 Office in Vallejo plays a critical role in supporting USFS staff at the local level,

especially with planning, fire, personnel, law enforcement, and budget matters, and provides another channel of communication with the agency with key community partners. Additionally, the USDA's restructuring plan would close the USFS' Pacific Southwest Research Station in California that has long been a key institution for research and information on the management of California's national forests.

If the goal of the restructuring is to move offices closer to the people they serve, it does not make any sense to move California's USFS mid-level leadership to other states or to dismantle the critical research institution that is the Pacific Southwest Research Station.

Preserve the USFS Southern Research Station Sample Message

Dear USDA Representative,

The USDA has proposed closing all but one of its regional research stations, including the southern one in Asheville, NC. I urge you to speak up to keep these important stations open and operating. One location, in the west, cannot provide the needed research and services for all regions. The Forests of the South are unique and cannot be realistically studied from Fort Collins, Colorado.

The Southern Regional Office and the Southern Research Station provide over 100 jobs in Western NC and provide services critical to the region's conservation, recreation, and timber economies. The Southern Regional Office and the Southern Research Station provide administrative support for the ongoing recovery from Hurricane Helene. Without them, contracts for reconstruction of roads, campgrounds and recreation sites by private contractors would be hamstrung. These include the Coweeta Hydrologic Laboratory and Bent Creek Experimental Forest.

Our Southern forests are valued by residents and cherished by visitors from across the nation. They deserve and require focused attention and care. Don't allow a hasty and poorly planned reorganization destroy programs of local and national importance.

Montana Sample Message

Dear USDA Secretary Rollins,

I am opposed to the USDA reorganization plan. This plan will decrease agency effectiveness, decrease government accountability, and be extremely costly for taxpayers. Closing the Forest Service Region 1 office and consolidating the Rocky Mountain Research Station and the Montana Snow Survey Program with other agency programs and moving them out of Montana will be detrimental to Montana communities, our local economy, and our public lands.

General Reorganization Sample Message

Dear Secretary Rollins:

I'm writing to comment on the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) reorganization plan, as outlined in the memorandum issued on July 24, 2025.

I am deeply concerned that this proposed reorganization will dismantle a department with critical responsibilities, resulting in real consequences for the millions of children, parents, older adults, veterans, people with disabilities, and all those who depend on these nutrition programs to be food secure.

Relocating thousands of federal employees from the Washington, D.C., area and consolidating the regional offices will result in an outsized loss of expertise and capacity. Delays in critical services and gaps in oversight are more likely when experienced staff choose to resign rather than move, and when critical offices needed for technical support are dismantled.

Additionally, reducing the number of regional offices from seven to five will further increase disruptions to services. These regional offices often provide the first line of support for state and tribal agencies administering the federal nutrition programs, especially those that are under-resourced and rely heavily on the support for compliance and technical assistance. This consolidation will likely delay the review and approval of key waivers or program management plans.

I urge the USDA to commit to maintaining or expanding its capacity in administering the federal nutrition programs, not reducing it. I also urge USDA to pause the implementation of this reorganization and facilitate a transparent process that includes consultation with Congress, state agencies, national and local partners, and impacted USDA staff.

Thanks,

BARC US Composting Council Sample Message

Dear Secretary Rollins,

I have been alerted about the USDA reorganization plan by the US Composting Council, which represents compost manufacturers nationwide with a membership of more than 850 organizations (45% of whom are public and private compost manufacturers) and with more than 2,500 members. Their mission is to advance compost manufacturing, compost utilization, and organics recycling.

The proposed USDA restructuring, which includes closing the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center in Maryland, will have a great negative impact on federal compost research. The BARC has been home to the Giants of Composting who have Made America's Soil Healthy Again! Rufus Chaney, Frank Gouin, Pat Millner, and the scientists following in their footsteps have contributed to groundbreaking research into compost use, science, and biology. Decades of research has set the compost industry on a path of expansion through discovering ways to increase soil health, which contributes to better nutrition, better soil organic matter and more prosperous farmers on America's agricultural land.

As the USDA's flagship research facility, Maryland's Beltsville Agricultural Research Center is slated not only for relocation but for downsizing of compost research, a legacy that must live on. In the 1970s, research at BARC provided the scientific basis for recycling organic "waste" materials into

beneficial compost, becoming famous as the Beltsville Aerated (Static) Pile Composting Method. The Beltsville facility has had its own compost research facility there since its opening in 1997, nearly 30 years. Closing BARC and moving the compost scientists from BARC to other regions of the country would end this legacy of compost knowledge.

Currently, BARC scientists are actively involved in a range of projects in collaboration with many stakeholders and focusing on various types of compost, uses, and pathogen tests. Closing and relocating compost scientists to other regions of the country would greatly impact current and future research in to composting at a very critical time, when even more research is needed in the areas of compost utilization, compost manufacturing, plant uptake, and compost with biosolids as they relate to setting proper Federal and State standards for PFAS, PFOS and microplastics in agriculture.

I respectfully request that the USDA reconsiders the proposed closing of the BARC, and considers maintain funding for it, its staff, and the very important research in the area of composting that happens there.

BARC Closure Sample Message

Dear Secretary Rollins,

I am writing with comments on your recent memorandum (SM 1078-015) outlining your plans for reorganizing the U.S. Department of Agriculture. There are many issues addressed in the memorandum, but this email will focus solely on the fate of the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center in (BARC) Beltsville, Maryland.

I urge you to reconsider your decision to close the BARC. As you know, the BARC is a 6,500-acre United States Department of Agriculture Agricultural Research Service facility dedicated to improving knowledge and technologies for providing the country with healthy crops and animals, natural resources, sustainable agricultural systems, and safe, quality products. Not only would these invaluable functions be undermined by scattering the staff and resources built over decades among USDA regional hubs, but the quality of life of local residents around BARC would be severely impacted.

While much of the space at BARC is utilized for research, significant portions of the site are wild or only lightly managed and have been spared from development due to their location within a federal reservation. Encompassing much of Upper Beaverdam Creek (UBC) and its tributaries, the BARC contains some of the largest areas of intact habitat remaining in the Anacostia watershed. These areas contain forests, streams, and wetlands and unique features like vernal pools, magnolia bogs, and pine barrens as well as over 230 species of birds. In addition, live freshwater mussels have recently been discovered in a stream on the site, indicating that BARC is an important refuge for these imperiled species.

I am a strong supporter of protecting and restoring the Anacostia watershed, and the natural habitats and wildlife of BARC are key to those efforts. BARC is an important community resource that must be preserved.

Thank you for your consideration of my views on this important issue.

Agricultural Marketing Service/National Organics Program Sample Message

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins,

I am writing to express deep concerns about USDA's recently announced reorganization plans. We cannot afford to lose institutional knowledge and staff from USDA's National Organic Program (NOP). NOP staff bring years of specialized expertise in organic regulations, compliance, and enforcement. If this reorganization results in staff departures, we risk losing irreplaceable institutional knowledge that underpins the credibility of the organic label. USDA Organic is a more than \$70 billion industry, and the NOP team delivers exceptional value—ensuring marketplace integrity, enforcing rigorous standards, and safeguarding consumer trust with a remarkably small budget relative to the size of the sector. This is one of USDA's best returns on investment, but training new hires in these complex systems takes years, during which enforcement and policy work can suffer.

Face-to-face engagement in D.C. is vital. During fly-ins and advocacy days, organic farmers and businesses travel to Washington, D.C., to meet directly with USDA staff. Because organic encompasses every commodity sector, these meetings allow NOP to coordinate with multiple agricultural groups at once. Moving NOP leadership and core staff away from D.C. will make it logistically harder for farmers and stakeholders to meet with the people who enforce and uphold organic standards. Without this in-person access, USDA will be less responsive and less equipped to address the real-world needs of organic farms and businesses.

Most NOP staff are already field-based. The NOP employees who are currently based in D.C. provide essential coordination, policy, and interagency functions. Further dispersing this already limited D.C. team risks fragmenting communication, slowing decision-making, and weakening oversight at the national level.

Collaboration with other agencies is essential to protecting organic integrity. NOP's ability to protect organic integrity depends on close, ongoing partnerships with other federal agencies. One of the most critical collaborations is with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to prevent fraud at ports of entry. This partnership is so important that NOP has a staff member physically embedded within CBP to access sensitive information, such as ship manifests and data on fraudulent actors in international trade, and to coordinate directly with CBP personnel to stop fraudulent organic imports before they enter U.S. markets. Beyond CBP, NOP works closely with other USDA agencies—including the Farm Service Agency (FSA), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the Risk Management Agency (RMA)—to coordinate with broader USDA programs that support U.S. farms and businesses. Reducing the number of NOP staff in Washington, D.C. would make these interagency connections harder to maintain, undermining both enforcement and farmer access to essential USDA resources.

Beyond organic, this reorganization could also jeopardize USDA's essential research functions and disrupt critical services that farmers across all sectors rely on.

I urge you to immediately pause implementation of this reorganization plan to ensure that U.S. farms and businesses—including certified organic operations—retain the tools, staffing, and resources they need to thrive.

NASS Consolidation Sample Message

On behalf of Arkansas Farm Bureau’s more than 180,000 members, we write in response to Secretary’s Memorandum SM-1078-015, which announces the USDA’s Reorganization Plan entailing consolidation and realignment of departmental functions. While the stated goals—improving effectiveness, enhancing services, and reducing bureaucracy—are laudable, we are deeply concerned about the impact on regional representation, especially across USDA’s operations in southern states. Regional offices, county staff, and research facilities in the South play a critical role in delivering tailored services to local farmers and resource-dependent rural populations.

Relocation of long-standing personnel and closure of southern facilities risk losing decades of institutional knowledge and relationships that are vital for effective service delivery. Farmers and ranchers in the South often rely on regional extension offices and local USDA staff for guidance, grant assistance, and technical support. Consolidating these functions into distant centers may slow response times and reduce the level of personalized outreach that producers have come to depend on.

It is essential that strong voices and decision-making authority remain embedded within the South. Centralizing operations into fewer hubs risks sidelining regional perspectives when policy decisions are made. To maintain the USDA’s connection to those it serves, regional offices in southern states should remain fully staffed, supported, and empowered to address local needs.

If relocation is necessary, the process should be transparent, with clear timelines, robust relocation assistance, and retention incentives that preserve continuity of service. Many experienced employees will not move without such support, and the loss of these individuals could set the department back decades. Regional leaders and stakeholders in the South should be involved in the planning process to ensure that the new organizational structure does not marginalize the unique agricultural context and needs of the region.

For decades, USDA personnel in southern states have nurtured personal relationships with farmers, researchers, and community leaders. These connections are a hallmark of the department’s reputation as “The People’s Department” and should be preserved, not disrupted, during reorganization. Maintaining effective representation in the states—particularly in the South—will ensure that USDA continues to meet its mission of serving communities from coast to coast.

Thank you for your service and consideration of these concerns. Arkansas Farm Bureau stands ready to work with you to ensure that USDA can move forward in a way that strengthens, rather than weakens, its service to rural America.

Indiana Farm Bureau Sample Message

Dear Secretary Rollins,

As a Hoosier farmer and member of Indiana Farm Bureau, I stand in strong support of the newly announced USDA realignment. This relocation to a thriving farming state like Indiana is mutually beneficial and will further agricultural progress both locally and nationally.

As the ninth largest farming state, Indiana's agriculture industry is extensive, leading the nation in duck production, ranking third in chickens, eggs, pumpkins and spearmint, fourth in turkeys, peppermint and soybeans, and fifth in corn, hogs and watermelons, according to the 2023 IN Ag Stat bulletin. By establishing roots in Indiana, USDA will have direct touchpoints on a broad array of industries and be able to have an immediate and far-reaching impact.

Additionally, Indiana has emerged as a global leader in plant science, crop protection, animal health, and agricultural production. USDA having local ties to so many industry leaders and innovators will prove to be an invaluable asset in furthering agriculture at the national level.

Both Indiana and USDA stand to benefit greatly from this reorganization, and I look forward to the opportunity to welcome USDA to the Hoosier state.

International Dairy Foods Association Sample Message

Dear Secretary Rollins,

Improving efficiency in the federal government is important, but I do not support this reorganization plan.

The USDA did not consult with Congress or key stakeholders. For example, the Department didn't reach out to the International Dairy Foods Association, which represents billions of dollars in economic impact.

Neither did the USDA engage with Tribal Nations. This plan will have enormous consequences for Tribal agriculture and related programs, affecting more than 56 million acres of land under Tribal jurisdiction.

Finally, the National WIC Association warns that the plan could disrupt federal nutrition programs and hinder the USDA's ability to serve children and families.

Until the Department consults with affected organizations and Tribal Nations, it should not finalize or implement this reorganization plan.