

July 22, 2019

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary of Agriculture
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue:

I write to express strong concern regarding actions taken by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that I believe directly contradict *Departmental Regulation 1074-001*, USDA's Scientific Integrity Policy. I am displeased that additional examples have emerged from USDA that suggest little interest in protecting scientific integrity or valuing the work of the Department's dedicated scientists and researchers.

Your Department's Scientific Integrity Policy states that USDA will "promote a culture of scientific integrity" and "ensure the quality, accuracy, and transparency of scientific information used to support policy and decision making." The Policy goes on to state that USDA seeks to "make scientific findings or conclusions considered or relied on in policy decisions publicly available online and in open formats." Despite these underlying policies, your Department has been accused of suppressing scientific research, preventing the publication of findings, and failing to fully staff critical research agencies. These claims are becoming more frequent, and action must be taken to ensure USDA remains a leader in advancing agricultural research for the betterment of farmer, ranchers, and rural communities.

To ensure that USDA is upholding its own Scientific Integrity Policy, I request that you outline what steps your Department intends to take to best protect the open and transparent dissemination of scientific information. I also request an explanation as to how you plan to ensure political influence does not suppress current and future scientific research.

These are the same requests that were made in a letter sent by all Democratic Members of the Biotechnology, Horticulture, and Research Subcommittee on June 28, 2019. I look forward to receiving your response by August 19, 2019.

Respectfully,

Stacey E. Plaskett
Chair
House Agriculture Committee
Subcommittee on Biotechnology, Horticulture, and Research