

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 24, 2022

Our nation's 1890 Land-Grant institutions play an important role in providing the critical teaching, extension, and research necessary to ensure American agriculture produces the safest, most reliable food supply in the world. These institutions, originally established to support the education of Black students, help bridge the gap in underserved communities, diversifying American agriculture and developing the pipeline of talented minds joining our agricultural workforce. As the industry takes on the major challenges that lie ahead, investing in our 1890 Land-Grant institutions will be important to advance the leadership and competitiveness of the American food and agriculture industries.

States have an important role to play in such investments. However, there have been historic funding disparities between 1890 and 1862 Land-Grant institutions in many states. We hope by bringing this disparity to your attention, we highlight an opportunity for future investment as you develop your state budget priorities.

Valuable research provided by 1890 Land-Grant institutions help to innovate new technologies and methods addressing various issues in agriculture, the benefits of which extend to communities well beyond the farm. For example, the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff researches the importance of climate-smart aquaculture practices and how they can economically impact mid-sized and small farmers. Florida A&M University created methods to remove arsenate from contaminated water supplies and use ultraviolet light disinfection to remove pathogens and provide clean drinking water to the general public. Alabama A&M University has been working with the U.S. Forest Service to develop ecologically sound forest management practices.

The funding disparities between 1890 and 1862 Land-Grant institutions are driven by matching requirement waivers and state discretion over matching funds. In fiscal year 2020, nine of the 19 1890 Land-Grant institutions did not receive full matching funds for Evans-Allen research funding and eight did not receive full matching funds for 1890 Land-Grant extension funding. In total, 100% of match eligible NIFA funds at 1862 institutions located in the fifty states received state matches in FY 2020. This number was only 82% at 1890 institutions.

Funding disparities at the state level are of top concern to many stakeholders because many federal capacity grants for the Land-Grant system require one-to-one nonfederal matching funds. Typically, state appropriations are often a primary source of such matches. While USDA can waive a portion of the matching requirement, students and researchers at 1890 Land-Grant institutions are still left with a total amount of funding that is not reflective of the full investment these programs are intended to make.

We acknowledge that investment in higher education has been difficult for many states since the Great Recession. However, there have been states that have consistently matched funds throughout the years. For 1890 Land-Grant institutions to reach their full potential, reliable and equitable state matching funds to 1862 Land-Grant counterparts is critical.

For American agriculture to remain resilient, secure, and globally competitive, we must ensure equitable investment in our land-grant institutions who have been drivers of innovation. Your state's commitment to matching funding for students, faculty, and staff at 1890 Land-Grant institutions will maximize our talent pipeline and positively impact the next generation of agricultural leaders. It is my deepest hope that you will give this worthy consideration when making funding decisions in your state budget.

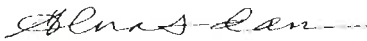
Sincerely,



David Scott
Chairman
Committee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Chairman
Committee on Education and Labor
U.S. House of Representatives



Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Vice Chair
Committee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives



Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug
Administration, and Related Agencies
Appropriations
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives



Stacey E. Plaskett
Chair
Subcommittee on Biotechnology,
Horticulture, and Research
Committee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives



Al Lawson
Member of Congress
U.S. House of Representatives