

**NOMINATION HEARING FOR THE HONORABLE  
XOCHITL TORRES SMALL TO BE UNDER  
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE FOR RURAL  
DEVELOPMENT AND THE HONORABLE  
ROBERT F. BONNIE TO BE UNDER  
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE FOR  
FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION**

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**HEARING**

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,  
NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY**

**UNITED STATES SENATE**

**ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS**

**FIRST SESSION**

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**Nomination Hearing for The Honorable Xochitl Torres Small to be Under Secretary of Agriculture for Rural Development and The Honorable Robert F. Bonnie to be Under Secretary of Agriculture for Farm Production and Conservation**

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**THURSDAY, JULY 29, 2021**

U.S. SENATE,  
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY,  
*Washington, DC.*

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10 a.m., via Webex and in room G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Debbie Stabenow, Chairwoman of the Committee, presiding.

Present or submitting a statement: Senators Stabenow, Brown, Klobuchar, Bennet, Gillibrand, Smith, Durbin, Booker, Luján, Warnock, Boozman, Hoeven, Ernst, Marshall, Tuberville, Grassley, Thune, Fischer, and Braun.

**STATEMENT OF HON. DEBBIE STABENOW, U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF MICHIGAN, CHAIRWOMAN, U.S. COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY**

Chairwoman STABENOW. Good morning. I call this hearing of the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry to order.

We are here to consider the nominations of Xochitl Torres Small for Under Secretary of Rural Development and Robert F. Bonnie for Under Secretary of Farm Production and Conservation at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. If confirmed, Congresswoman Torres Small and Mr. Bonnie will lead the USDA programs that interact with our producers, our small businesses, and rural families, where they live and work. That is a big responsibility, but one that I know they are both well qualified to tackle.

Rural America is facing two significant challenges right now. The climate crisis and the extreme weather that comes with it is changing the way many farmers, ranchers, and foresters operate. At the same time, our rural communities are still working to recover fully from the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of these communities were already struggling before the pandemic.

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Risk Management Agency under the Farm Production and Conservation mission area play an important role in helping farmers and ranchers and foresters manage their risk,

protect their soil and water, and continue to produce the safest, most abundant food supply in the world. It is critical that this mission area has strong leadership. I appreciate that Robert Bonnie, President Biden's nominee for the Under Secretary post brings decades of experience in building partnerships and closely collaborating with farmers, ranchers, foresters, and others.

I want to underscore that in our conversations Mr. Bonnie has stated his commitment to tackling the climate crisis and boosting farm income, at the same time with voluntary measures specifically led by this Committee's work on growing climate solutions. That approach has earned him the support of many of the Nation's most respected farm and food organizations, including the American Farm Bureau Federation, the National Pork Producers Council, the American Soybean Association, and the American Sugar Alliance.

Also, USDA Rural Development provides rural communities and businesses and local governments that lift them up with the support and capital they need to succeed, and we all understand how important that is.

As the granddaughter of immigrant farm workers and a native of rural New Mexico, Ms. Torres Small has spent her career finding ways to help vulnerable rural communities. As a Congresswoman, she prioritized improvements to high-speed internet and reliable water for her constituents, making it easier for children to learn and farmers to grow their produce.

If confirmed as Under Secretary, Congresswoman Torres Small will be a leader for the USDA's work in small-town economies. I cannot stress enough how important this work is.

I was pleased to lead the effort to put this position back into the 2018 Farm Bill. We did it on a bipartisan basis, after the former White House chose not to fill that position, because 60 million rural Americans deserve representation at the USDA's highest levels.

Thank you to Congresswoman Torres Small and Mr. Bonnie for joining us today. I really look forward to hearing your visions for the mission areas you will lead, if confirmed. I would note that you have both received letters of support from many, many organizations, and I would ask unanimous consent that these letters be entered into the record. Ordered, without objection.

[The letters can be found on pages 44–77 in the appendix.]

Chairwoman STABENOW. Now I want to turn to my friend and Ranking Member on the Committee, Senator Boozman, for his opening comments. Good morning.

**STATEMENT OF HON. SENATOR JOHN BOOZMAN, U.S.  
SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF ARKANSAS**

Senator BOOZMAN. Thank you, Madam Chair, very much, and good morning also. Today we welcome former Congresswoman Torres Small, the administration's nominee for Under Secretary of Rural Development, and Robert Bonnie, nominated to lead the Farm Production and Conservation, or FPAC, mission area.

Congresswoman Torres Small brings a wide range of experience to the table, from practicing law to working as a field rep for our former colleague and friend, Senator Tom Udall, and serving in the House of Representatives for New Mexico's Second District. She traveled the State, working directly with the people who live and

work in rural communities. Her knowledge will prove valuable as the Under Secretary for Rural Development, as it oversees three agencies: the Rural Utility Service, the Rural Housing Service, and the Rural Business Cooperative Service. These agencies serve rural communities, providing opportunities for reliable electricity, safe drinking water, affordable housing, and sustainable economic development.

Congratulations, Congresswoman, on your nomination. We appreciate your willingness to serve, and I look forward to hearing from you today.

Mr. Bonnie currently serves as the Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy and Senior Advisor on Climate Change in the Office of Secretary Vilsack. Like the Secretary, Mr. Bonnie is no stranger to USDA, having previously served as Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment under President Obama.

Mr. Bonnie's prior service and work in the private sector should be helpful if he is confirmed as FPAC Under Secretary, as the mission area includes the Farm Service Agency, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Risk Management Agency, in addition to overseeing the Farm Production and Conservation Business Center. These agencies are critical to the success of our farmers, ranchers, and private landowners, and play a key role when agriculture is hit hard in bad times. Commodity, disaster, and lending programs as well as crop insurance, conservation programs, and technical assistance are all critical to the FPAC mission areas.

Mr. Bonnie, congratulations also on your nomination and I look forward to hearing from you.

As we consider these two nominees we must look at the issues they confront. One positive development emerging from fighting the COVID-19 pandemic is that we all are appreciating the importance of our rural communities and the pivotal roles that they play. The pandemic has shown us the resilience of our communities but also shined a light on the needs in housing, infrastructure, and utility services, including, and so essential, broadband access. While broadband technology has allowed Americans to work, seek medical care, and keep their kids in school safely throughout the pandemic, it has also shown the acute importance of connectivity and how many still struggle to gain access to it, which is why we need to commit to expanding quality broadband access across rural America.

COVID has not been the only concern on our minds. Over the last year and a half, members of this Committee know natural disasters have taken a toll. I know, first-hand, having seen it in Arkansas with the devastating floods that impacted southeast Arkansas and nearby States. The 2021 fire season is also underway. We have all experienced the smoke coming from the West, and well over half of the U.S. is experiencing drought.

This is why the help and technical assistance of the Department's disaster programs is critical. I hope we can count on USDA and FPAC to provide timely support as our farmers, ranchers, and producers strive to get back on solid footing. When getting back on their feet and planning for the future, I know the landowners consider many options to empower them, to leverage their resources, create new income streams, and be good stewards of their lands,

embracing climate-friendly practices that can yield beneficial financial aspects, all of that being in everyone's interest.

They should be done within the bounds of the law. The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), administered by the Farm Service Agency, is a popular program among producers that allows them to leverage their land to bring certainty and predictability to their farm and financial planning. This is why I voiced concerns to USDA by overstepping authorities, your most recent CRP signup may be creating undue and avoidable problems for producers. I have also voiced my concern with administrative policy initiatives that may attempt to use the CCC in ways not prescribed by statute.

We need to create more opportunities for our producers, not tangle them up in more court cases, which is why I look forward to working with Secretary Vilsack and Mr. Bonnie, if confirmed, to ensure the programs that USDA is working so hard to offer are administered to best serve producers within the bounds of the law. Working together, we can provide opportunities for agriculture. The Growing Climate Solutions Act is truly a good example of how bipartisanship can benefit all of us. In regular order, the Committee had a hearing, a markup, and reported out the act, which ultimately garnered the support of 92 Senators. I am encouraged that the House is looking similarly at the bill. Agriculture stands to benefit when we work together for our farmers and ranchers. I trust the nominees with us today will pursue a similar course as they work to advance the administration's priorities.

Congresswoman Torres Small and Mr. Bonnie are proven public servants with a history of listening to the constituents and stakeholders that they serve. If confirmed, I encourage them to pursue the same level of engagement and listening with our farmers, ranchers, foresters, and rural communities. With that I yield back.

Chairwoman STABENOW. Thank you very much, Senator Boozman, and let me also say it has been a pleasure working with you and continuing to work with you on Growing Climate Solutions as we work with our colleagues in the House to get this all the way across the finish line and to the President's desk for signature.

I am going to introduce both of our nominees then ask you a couple of questions, and then we will turn to you for your opening comments.

First, Robert Bonnie. Welcome to the Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee. You are a repeat visitor to the Senate confirmation process. The Senate confirmed you in 2013, by voice vote, to serve as Under Secretary of Natural Resources and Environment for the Obama Administration. Across the board, farm production and forestry groups widely recognize Mr. Bonnie as a hard-working, solutions-oriented public servant who has shown his dedication to serving our farmers, ranchers, and foresters.

Mr. Bonnie is currently Deputy Chief of Staff and Senior Advisor for Climate at USDA. Before that, he worked on the Bipartisan Policy Center's Farm and Forest Carbon Solutions initiative on evidence-based energy and climate policies. At the Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions at Duke University he worked on conservation and environmental issues in rural America. As Vice President for Land Conservation for the Environmental De-

fense Fund he focused on incentives to reward farmers, ranchers, and foresters for their stewardship. Welcome back, Mr. Bonnie.

I am now going to turn to our colleague, Senator Luján, who I know is excited about introducing our nominee, and is certainly someone who has been not only a champion for rural development but for this particular nominee. We turn it over to you, Senator Luján.

Senator LUJÁN. Well thank you very much, Chair Stabenow and Ranking Member Boozman. It is really an honor to be here on behalf of our colleague, United States Senator Martin Heinrich, fellow New Mexicans, and, of course, myself to introduce our friend and former House colleague, Xochitl Torres Small. I also want to recognize her spouse who is here with us. I know family matters to Representative Xochitl Torres Small, and Nathan, it is an honor to see you today as well, and always working diligently on behalf of fellow New Mexicans.

Now Xochitl Torres Small is the President's nominee to be Under Secretary for Rural Development at USDA. As a native New Mexican from the southwest region of the State, Representative Torres Small is a proud granddaughter of migrant farm workers and a former attorney, specializing in water and natural resources.

In 2019, she came to the Congress, representing New Mexico's Second congressional District, where she arrived to bring home opportunities for New Mexicans and protect our rural way of life. Her passion and determination were an inspiration. She quickly earned the respect of our colleagues on both sides of the aisle, due to her drive to make real progress on issues facing rural America and willingness to work with anyone.

Well, in Congress, Representative Torres Small kept a rural hospital from closing its doors, strengthened constituent access to health care, and raised the alarm on broadband disparities, serving on Majority Whip Clyburn's Rural Broadband Task Force and always an advocate for accessible, affordable internet. She also helped secure tens of millions of dollars for broadband in New Mexico through USDA's ReConnect program, which she will be proud to implement and strengthen, if confirmed.

As a member of the House Agricultural Committee, Xochitl had the privilege to highlight New Mexico's thriving agricultural industry, including our world-famous New Mexico chile, and for those of you not familiar I look forward to sharing it with all of you. Once you try it once, it will be on every dish you prepare.

She fought for fair trade for farmers and ranchers, and in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic drafted legislation to address the urgent issues facing America's agricultural economy and food supply. None of us would be where we are without the support of our families, so again, I want to take that moment to recognize your family, Xochitl, who I know is such a big part of your life in helping to shape you, teach you, and you still lift them up and talk about them every chance you get.

Representative Torres Small has a proven track record of fighting for rural America, and the President's nomination will allow the entire country to benefit from her leadership and expertise. I enthusiastically support her nomination for Under Secretary for

Rural Development and I hope all members of this Committee will join me in supporting this highly qualified nominee.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairwoman STABENOW. Thank you very much, Senator Luján. Every time you talk about that chile it makes me hungry, so you are going to have to bring some to the Committee.

I would like to ask Congresswoman Torres Small and Mr. Bonnie two questions, and if you would both rise for a moment.

Do you swear and affirm that the testimony you are about to receive is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Ms. TORRES SMALL. I do.

Mr. BONNIE. I do.

Chairwoman STABENOW. Thank you. Second, do you agree that if confirmed you will appear before any duly constituted committee of Congress if asked to appear?

Ms. TORRES SMALL. I do.

Mr. BONNIE. I do.

Chairwoman STABENOW. Thank you very much. I look forward to hearing more about your vision and your priorities. Your testimony will be made, of course, a part of the record in its entirety, and you may proceed. I will start first with Ms. Torres Small.

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE XOCHITL TORRES SMALL,  
OF NEW MEXICO, NOMINEE TO BE UNDER SECRETARY FOR  
RURAL DEVELOPMENT, DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

Ms. Torres Small. Thank you, Chairwoman Stabenow, Ranking Member Boozman and members of the Committee. Thank you, as well, to Senator Luján for your mentorship. I am honored to be here today and humbled by President Biden's nomination and Secretary Vilsack's support of me to serve as Under Secretary for Rural Development.

For the last two years, I served New Mexico's Second congressional District, which is geographically the fifth—largest district in the Nation. That is a lot of dirt roads. It includes remote areas and diverse population, from acequias and land grant communities in Valencia County to ranchers and colonias along the U.S.-Mexico border and Mescalero Apache in the Sacramento Mountains. I had the opportunity to represent my home because my grandparents immigrated from Mexico to pick cotton in the Mesilla Valley. I grew up hearing stories about the opportunities my grandparents seized through hard work and vision, like when my nana noticed, as a teenager, that the men were making more money in the fields because they were handed the larger bags for picking cotton. Farmworkers were paid based on what they picked, and she realized she was losing time because she had to go back and forth to the truck more often to haul the smaller bags. She built up her strength and mustered her courage to ask for the larger bags.

If I learned the power of an entrepreneurial spirit from my grandparents, I learned dedication to my community from my parents. With a mother who taught for over 30 years and a father who worked as a social worker and later a school bus driver, my parents have spent their lives paying forward the blessings they have received. I am forever grateful for their lived examples of service.

Growing up in New Mexico fundamentally molded who I am: a sunny woman of her word who will always fight for the underdog. After learning how big the world is at Waterford Kamhlaba United World College of Southern Africa and studying international development at Georgetown, I chose to come home, to take on the inequities of poverty and hunger in the communities I knew best. Every day, I am grateful for that choice, in large part because it led me to find the love of my life, Nathan Small, who is with me today and whose dedication to service in New Mexico is a constant inspiration.

I chose to work in water law because I knew the opportunity my grandparents achieved through working the land and the recognition, fostered by my mentor, Senator Tom Udall, that water is life, and climate change is threatening the heart of rural communities.

When I became a United States Representative, the people I served shared the same determined defense of future opportunities in the places they loved. I heard from parents who were worried about whether their kids could make a good living in the towns they grew up in. I worked with daughters and sons of farmers, committed to penciling out their future working the land. I learned from leaders, like Senator Martin Heinrich and Senator Ben Ray Luján, that if you want to grow opportunity, you have got to support innovation already happening on the ground.

That is what I love about Rural Development. I still remember the name of the civil servant from the local Rural Development office who I met in 2009. It was the wake of the housing market crash, and I was working for Senator Udall as a field rep. I was trying to help rural communities get clean water and invest in new businesses, and Sandra gave me her cell phone number so we could act quickly when opportunity struck. The local office also worked closely with home-grown organizations like Tierra del Sol on farmworker and other affordable housing, and in the process, brought better infrastructure to New Mexico colonias. That is why I turned to Rural Development in the midst of COVID. Their work with tribes and local cooperatives opened opportunities for broadband to reach that last mile. The agency's unique rural mission and on-the-ground commitment are vital to finally closing the digital divide.

One of the most surprising things about working as a Representative was getting to know 434 other people who served vastly different districts across our country. I got to know the country through the people who so loved their homes they wanted to represent them. In the midst of a divided time, I regularly found hope in the moments we discovered common ground. If I get to do this job, I cannot wait to learn about and love every nook and cranny of rural America the way I love New Mexico.

Thank you for your time today and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Small can be found on page 38 in the appendix.]

Chairwoman STABENOW. Thank you so much. Mr. Bonnie, welcome.

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ROBERT F. BONNIE, OF VIRGINIA, NOMINEE TO BE UNDER SECRETARY FOR FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION, DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

Mr. BONNIE. Thank you, Chairwoman Stabenow, Ranking Member Boozman, and members of this Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to be with you today and for your consideration of my nomination. I want to thank my wife, Julie Gomena, and my daughter, Lilly Bonnie, for all their love and support. I want to thank my mother, Nina Bonnie, and my brother, Shelby, for their love and encouragement. I want to acknowledge my father, Ned Bonnie, who I know would be proud if he were with us today.

I am honored to have been nominated by President Biden to serve as Under Secretary of Agriculture for Farm Production and Conservation at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. I am honored to have the opportunity, if confirmed, to work again with Secretary Vilsack on the opportunities and challenges facing American agriculture.

I have been around working lands my whole life. I grew up on a farm in Kentucky. While my father was a lawyer, we had a dairy when I was a young child and later a herd of shorthorn cattle. We grew corn, wheat, and hay and my mother oversaw a horse operation. Today, my wife and I own 285 acres in Loudoun County, Virginia, where she trains and boards horses for clients.

I am a forester by training. My interest in forestry was kindled at an early age. I not only spent time in the woods at our farm in Kentucky but my family also owns property in South Carolina that has been managed for wildlife conservation for over 100 years. As part of that, I have been closely involved in forest management decisions and related issues for decades. The decisions we make on our property in South Carolina—which forest stands to thin or harvest, which stands to use prescribed fire, and which areas to restore or set aside—shape the property for decades to come. As a forester, you are trained to take the long view and to balance production and conservation.

That is the perspective that I hope to bring to this job, if I am fortunate enough to be confirmed. Production and conservation are the flip side of the same coin. Agricultural production is vital to meet the food and fiber needs of a growing world, but that production relies on healthy soils, clean water, and a stable climate. Conservation is vital for productivity.

Likewise, productivity is vital to conservation. Maintaining and enhancing the profitability of agriculture—that is, keeping working lands working—is necessary to meet our conservation goals. Conserving our natural resources means keeping farmers, ranchers, and forest owners on the land. To do that, agriculture and forestry need to be productive and profitable. USDA can help maintain that profitability by providing a safety net that cushions agriculture from the challenges of markets and extreme weather and by promoting conservation practices that contribute to the long-term productivity of agriculture and forestry.

I was honored to serve during the Obama Administration as Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment. In that role, I oversaw not only the U.S. Forest Service but also the Nat-



ural Resources Conservation Service which, if confirmed, I will be fortunate to work with again. If confirmed, I will come to this job with knowledge of USDA and a deep appreciation of the staff that work there. My current work as Deputy Chief of Staff has only reaffirmed my belief in the quality of the people that work at USDA.

USDA has much important work to do. If confirmed, I look forward to working with my colleagues in the FPAC mission area to strengthen the safety net, particularly in response to drought, flooding, fire, and other extreme weather events. Likewise, agriculture and forestry have a vital role to play in addressing climate change through voluntary, incentive-based efforts that can create new income opportunities for producers and landowners. Equity is a vital consideration across all we do at USDA and I look forward to ensuring that all producers can access USDA programs.

Again, Chairwoman Stabenow and Ranking Member Boozman, I want to thank the Committee for considering my nomination. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the employees at USDA and in partnership with U.S. agriculture to enhance the productivity and sustainability of America's farms, ranches, and forest lands.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Bonnie can be found on page 40 in the appendix.]

Chairwoman STABENOW. Thank you very much. We will now turn to questions from the Committee members and five-minute rounds per Senator.

Mr. Bonnie, let me first followup on what you were talking about in terms of your previous experience, because you have a long resume of work experience in conservation that is really outstanding, and you are no stranger to this process. As you have indicated, you are nominated today for a position that is broader than your previous job.

If confirmed, you are going to be responsible for farm production issues as well, and I wonder if you might speak a little bit more about your experiences, and, if confirmed, what would your priorities specifically be for farm production programs?

Mr. BONNIE. As I said in my remarks, you know, part of my experience in working with my own family's property but also my experience in working over the years has been to recognize that production and conservation go together. On the production side, USDA plays an incredibly important role in providing a safety net that allows producers to reduce the risks of engaging in agriculture.

As I think about priorities, if I am lucky enough to be confirmed for the FPAC mission area, preserving that safety net, enhancing that safety net in light of the types of challenges we are seeing now with drought, extreme weather events, and otherwise is incredibly important. That is the blocking and tackling of the FPAC mission area, and it is vitally important.

Climate change is also vitally important. I have talked about that. The alignment between good agronomic practices, good forestry practices, and practices that benefit the climate I think is important, and to look for opportunities, voluntary opportunities to take advantage of that.

I would also add equity is critically important, as I mentioned in my opening remarks. The last thing I would say is that I think sometimes we make conservation too difficult. It is vital that we make conservation easier for producers, and I think that is one area I would like to focus on as well.

Chairwoman STABENOW. Thank you very much.

Congresswoman Torres Small, the Under Secretary for Rural Development is one of the only Federal appointments that is solely focused on serving the nearly 60 million people who live in small towns, like where I grew up, and rural communities, all across the country. What do you see as the greatest opportunity in rural America, and how do you plan to raise the profile of small and rural communities' needs, not only at the Department but across the Federal Government?

Ms. TORRES SMALL. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman, and I see so much opportunity in rural communities, in part because I have seen the opportunity that it has given my family, when my grandparents immigrated, and the opportunities in developing and growing and supporting for generations to come.

As I was a Representative in Congress, I talked to more and more parents who were worried about the future of their communities, because of challenges with markets in farming or with changes in manufacturing, and trying to find new ways, new markets to use all of the different tools. I know, Chairwoman Stabenow, we have talked about the ways you can diversify those markets, from everything to biofuels to filling fiber in car seats, but using that entrepreneurial spirit to diversify markets and build upon the local advantages of rural communities.

That is why I love Rural Development. That is why I am so grateful to the Committee for reinstating the Under Secretary for Rural Development, who can be a constant champion, to wake up every single day thinking about how to support that local innovation.

Chairwoman STABENOW. Thanks so much.

Mr. Bonnie, you were talking about the safety net. It is so important. That is what we do is create risk management tools for farmers. That is really a fundamental piece of what the farm bill is all about, as you know. Crop insurance is the backbone of our farm safety net and a top priority for producers. I would just say that this successful public-private partnership ensures farmers have skin in the game while delivering timely compensation when disaster strikes, getting needed help to farmers, and frankly, in a quicker way and in a more effective way than we are able to do with ad hoc disaster programs.

If confirmed, this will be the primary risk management tool for which you will have responsibility. Could you talk more about your vision for crop insurance, particularly as we witness increased risks for producers, with drought and floods and wildfires?

Mr. BONNIE. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. Crop insurance, as you say, is absolutely vital. It is the most important safety tool right now for producers. I know you have interest in making sure that crop insurance is available to all producers, to specialty crops, to whole farm crop insurance. I think we want to continue to ex-

pand opportunities for making crop insurance available to more producers and more types of agriculture.

I also think there are ways that we can improve data to make sure we do a better job of taking into account climate and extreme weather events, and those sorts of things. Just to underline the critical importance, and I look forward to working with all of you in ways that we can make sure it is a tool that is available to more producers.

Chairwoman STABENOW. Thank you. I am going to squeeze in one other quick question to Congresswoman Torres Small and that is on broadband, rural broadband. We all know how important it is, and USDA has an important role. When you look at the strengths of the USDA in terms of rural broadband programs, how would you look at improving the coordination with USDA and other Federal agencies as we are moving forward, hopefully on a major investment, to connect everybody, including the farmers, and the end of the road?

Ms. TORRES SMALL. Rural Development has crucial strengths to bring to the table when it comes to closing that digital divide, from its unique mission in serving rural communities and specifically targeting rural areas, to its on-the-ground presence, like I mentioned, of the employees of Rural Development who already have the relationships with the utilities, and with the local governments, and with other community organizations and telecoms, all of them, to help build those solutions from the ground up.

I am eager to advance and support and coordinate when it comes to broadband.

Chairwoman STABENOW. Thank you so much. Senator Boozman.

Senator BOOZMAN. Thank you, Madam Chair. One of the questions that we like to ask our nominees, I think I can speak for the entire committee, is whether they commit to responding to staff inquiries in a timely fashion. Sadly—and it does not matter if it is this administration, past administrations; you all have been on the other end of this—sometimes we do not get our answers in a timely fashion, and sometimes they are just unresponsive.

I guess the question is, do you both commit to providing our Committee with timely responses to our outreach and inquiries, whether that be official inquiries at the Member level or other outreach at the staff level?

Mr. BONNIE. Yes, sir.

Ms. TORRES SMALL. Yes, Ranking Member Boozman.

Senator BOOZMAN. Very good. Thank you.

Mr. Bonnie, I would like to followup on crop insurance. Prior to taking your role with the Biden administration you authored a report focused on agriculture in the Climate 21 initiative that provided policy recommendations on climate change. One of the recommendations you included in that report was for RMA, quote, “to prioritize the development of policy that will enable RMA and the FCIC to incentivize climate-smart agriculture practices through crop insurance rates and policies, which has the potential to influence management practices across tens of millions of acres,” end quote.

If confirmed as the Under Secretary, you will lead the RMA. I am concerned that the use of crop insurance to achieve policy goals

regarding climate change could distort the intended purpose of this critical program, and that is, you know, the risk to actuarial soundness with the program, when you focus on other things. How will any proposed changes to the crop insurance program align with the mission of the program, and how would they ensure that the underlying integrity of the program is maintained through an actuarial soundness?

Mr. BONNIE. Senator Boozman, thank you for the question, and I appreciate it very much. You know, what I would say about crop insurance, most important, that it is a public-private partnership. It is a partnership between USDA and the crop insurance providers. Anything we do has to maintain that partnership, and anything we do on this area, or more broadly on climate policy, has to have the support of producers and farmers. If it does not, it is not going to work as an incentive for climate change.

Whatever we do on crop insurance, whether it is thinking about ways to use data to create new products that might incentivize certain practices or otherwise, has to both take advantage of that public-private partnership and work for producers on the ground. If it does not, it will not work. I think that is vitally important.

The last thing I will say is just we have provided an incentive through some of our pandemic assistance for cover crop through crop insurance, and I think that is a signal of the type of things we are thinking about, incentive oriented. The uptake of that has been quite significant interest, and I think those types of approaches that work with the insurance industry are absolutely critical.

Senator BOOZMAN. Very good. Congresswoman, I want to followup on broadband. That is so important, you know, for rural America. During your time in the House you were very supportive of access to broadband in rural areas. As you know, later this year, RUS will roll out the third round of funding for the ReConnect Broadband pilot. The regulation implementing ReConnect provides the Secretary the authority to define and update both the minimum speeds for determining whether an area is considered served and the minimum speeds applicants must promise to provide on their networks.

What definitions of broadband do you think make sense for the USDA broadband programs?

Ms. TORRES SMALL. I am so grateful that you are bringing up this question because it has been a subject of a lot of review. Just recently there was a report that identified some challenges in terms of the current speed and potential impacts. I certainly want to make sure, if I get the chance to do this job, that rural communities are not left in the slow lane when it comes to that definition. If I get to do this work I hope to get to work closely with you to identify those challenges and to make sure that rural communities are able to communicate and use broadband at a speed so that they can compete on a fair level.

Senator BOOZMAN. Okay. Very good. Very quickly, Mr. Bonnie, because I am running out of time and I do not want the Chair to get onto me. I am concerned that the Department has announced inflation-adjusted CRP soil rental rates. We talked a little bit about

this, the minimum CRP grasslands rental rates that exceed the limits enacted in the 2018 Farm Bill.

Prior to making these program changes, did you have guidance from USDA's Office of General Counsel that supports pursuing these policy changes administratively without express authority from Congress? Could you describe the guidance, and also would you commit to providing us with the USDA's written legal justifications for pursuing the actions?

Mr. BONNIE. CRP is obviously a critical program, and I think you know the administration is very supportive of looking at ways to increase enrollment. We did have extensive conversations with our Office of General Counsel before this. We are confident in the legal standing, and I know our staff has had extensive conversations with your team about it, and working through. I am happy to continue that conversation, to, you know, let you know why we made the decision we did, and to continue to have that conversation with your team.

Senator BOOZMAN. Good. No, we appreciate that, and I think the danger is that for us we feel like it is pretty apparent that that is not the case. What we do not want to do is have producers sign up and then, with subsequent lawsuits, all of this, you know, being thrown up in the air.

With that I yield back. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairwoman STABENOW. Thank you very much. Important questions.

Next I have on the list—and we have members that are with us virtually and members that are here in the Committee room—but I have Senator Klobuchar, Senator Grassley, and Senator Smith next in line. Senator Klobuchar.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. All right. Well, thank you. Congratulations to both of you. I guess I will start with you, Ms. Torres Small, and I will reiterate the importance of broadband and USDA's work. I have worked directly with USDA for years on this. I am glad that this is included in the infrastructure plan, with more work to do.

Rural housing is something I hope you are focused on and will be focused on. It is what I hear all the time in the rural areas of our State is they may actually have people to fill the jobs or they are trying to recruit people to fill jobs, or start small businesses, and they just do not have the housing. What role do you think you can play and what are your ideas when it comes to housing?

Ms. TORRES SMALL. I am so grateful that you talked about the relationship between economic development and opportunity in housing because it is one of the key issues that was always brought up when I was a rep in New Mexico. If a rural county came to me, one of their top three questions was about housing. If a Native American sovereign government came to me, one of their top three issues was housing.

We saw it even in more stark relief in the midst of COVID, when you had multigenerational housing. A woman was waiting for her test results and we were talking and she was terrified because she was living with her husband and her kids and her grandparents and her grandkids, and the challenge of containing a pandemic in those situations.

Rural Development has key resources to help make those accessible. It is especially important right now, as we are recovering, hopefully, from the pandemic and monitoring changes, to make sure that people are not evicted from affordable housing. That is another thing that, if I get to do this job, that I will be watching. Also investing, and working with private partnerships, working with numerous different programs to get more housing into rural communities.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Thank you. Mr. Bonnie, I am going to just ask some fast but really important questions here. Drought, huge in my State right now. It is classified as being under a D2 severe drought according to the U.S. Drought Monitor. Seventy-four of Minnesota's 87 counties classified that way.

I led a letter with our Minnesota delegation, Democrats and Republicans, to Secretary Vilsack on July 15th, requesting the authorization of emergency haying and grazing of CRP lands.

If confirmed, will you work to provide relief for ranchers and farmers during extreme summer drought conditions?

Mr. BONNIE. Absolutely.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Okay.

I have been hearing concerns from ranchers in northwest Minnesota about a lack of urgency from USDA on providing drought relief. One example is that wetland restoration acres under CRP are currently ineligible for emergency haying and grazing when the Livestock Forage Disaster Program is triggered. They have been previously eligible under FSA policy change, until there was a policy change early this year.

Will you commit working with me to get some quick action to address this as well?

Mr. BONNIE. Yes, of course, Senator.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Okay. Thank you.

Dairy. In June, Secretary Vilsack announced additional pandemic assistance for farmers and livestock producers. That announcement included funding for supplemental dairy margin coverage payments for small and medium dairy farmers and resources to address food insecurity.

Will you work to quickly finalize and implement these programs to provide additional risk management assistance for dairy producers?

Mr. BONNIE. Absolutely.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Okay. Very good.

Northwest Minnesota has over 50,000 acres of grass seed production enrolled in the Federal Crop Insurance Program. I am concerned that despite demonstrating to USDA how the pandemic impacted prices and disrupted supply chains, grass seed producers have not received any meaningful support from the Coronavirus Food Assistance Programs.

Can you commit to reviewing the data grass seed producers have provided to USDA and work with me to deem grass seeds as eligible commodities for relief payments? I know you do not have a decision to make at this point, but will you commit to reviewing it?

Mr. BONNIE. If confirmed, absolutely.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Okay. Very good.

Minnesota is the Nation's largest producer of sugar beets, and USDA's sugar program has been an effective cost-neutral way to help domestic growers, processors, and workers compete. Recently there has been increases in foreign imports above and beyond our World Trade Organization (WTO) commitments. Decisions related to sugar are coordinated between USDA's Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs and Farm Production and Conservation mission area.

I hope that you are going to advocate for a seat at the table for any decisions made regarding the sugar program and work to ensure that the program does not exceed our import obligations under the WTO.

Mr. BONNIE. If confirmed, I will, absolutely.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Okay. Very good. I think that is it. I really appreciate it. I will do some more questions on the record. As you can see, with everything going on between new administration coming in, the drought, new policies, there is just a lot going on, and I am eager to get you in your place so we can get things done here. Thank you.

Chairwoman STABENOW. Well, thank you, Senator Klobuchar, for your efficiency in getting a lot of information on the record, and, Mr. Bonnie, for your responses.

We will now turn to Senator Grassley.

Senator GRASSLEY. Ms. Torres Small, you probably would expect me to ask something about ethanol. Of the 263 million vehicles registered in the United States, 93 percent can use E15. There are more than 22 million flex fuel vehicles in the U.S., which are capable of using blends up to E85. However, we know that not all consumers have the option of filling up with more environmentally friendly fuels.

Currently, the Rural Development runs the Higher Blends Infrastructure Incentive Program, which is a cost share program for gas stations to upgrade tanks and dispensers. Most recently the USDA announced \$18.4 million for this program. That was announced in April of this year. It was announced, by the way, appropriately on Earth Day.

For you in your new position, if confirmed, can you commit to continuing this program to make sure that more gas stations can upgrade E15 to E85?

Ms. TORRES SMALL. Thank you, Senator Grassley. I do.

Senator GRASSLEY. Thank you. Also for you, I know you have already discussed broadband but I have got one other question in that field. We all know that broadband is so important for many aspects of our life. The pandemic has highlighted the need of connectivity, particularly rural America.

In Iowa, we have many rural communities that are still unserved—not just underserved, unserved. I appreciate the broadband programs through the Rural Utility Service and many Iowans have utilized these programs to connect Iowans. However, there are always ways to enhance these programs, such as addressing the long permitting delays and enhancing coordination with other Federal agencies and programs to minimize the potential duplication of work and to overbuild.

Also, Senator Klobuchar and I have introduced the Assisting Broadband Connectivity Act to help make the Rural Utility Service broadband programs work even better to connect these underserved Americans.

For you, would it be possible for you to commit to focusing on improving to deliver these programs to connect those in rural America who do not have broadband service?

Ms. TORRES SMALL. I do commit to focusing on improving those connections and I deeply appreciate your work in that area.

Senator GRASSLEY. Okay. Now to Mr. Bonnie. I often hear from farmers across Iowa about various farm programs, and I direct them to the local USDA office, as you would expect me to do. I know you have not been confirmed as Under Secretary but you have been working in the Office of Secretary Vilsack. I noticed that there has yet to be a State Executive Director appointed for Iowa, or any other State. Will you commit to immediately filling these important roles of State Executive Director and making sure that USDA field offices are adequately staffed?

Mr. BONNIE. Senator, we will move as quickly as we can.

Senator GRASSLEY. Okay. Then my last question to you, and the last question for this panel. In May, the USDA announced a \$10 million initiative to quantify the climate benefits of the CRP program. I have long been supportive of voluntary conservation programs. However, I hope that the Department remains mindful that many young, beginning farmers struggle to access farmland and often cannot compete with land-idling government payment programs for CRP. I think we took care of some of this in the 2018 Farm Bill, but these set-aside programs also send market signals to U.S. competitors to increase production and acreage.

For example, in 2018, Reuters reported that as the world's largest soybean exporter, Brazil had plowed under more than half of the Cerrado, a vital storehouse for carbon dioxide, which has been disappearing at the rate four times faster than even the Amazon rain forest.

For you, when quantifying the climate benefits of the land-idling program like CRP, which as \$10 million, I think, is intended to do, will this initiative consider the carbon emissions that occur as other countries increase production to seize U.S. market share?

Mr. BONNIE. Our plan with the Soil Carbon Network it not just to start with CRP but actually to look at U.S. working lands as well, to be able to document the carbon storage there.

On your broader point about CRP, it is vitally important—so obviously a critically important program for a lot of reasons. It is vitally important that we get the right lands in the program. We do not want to take highly productive lands into the program. We want to target to the most environmentally sensitive programs. I think that is a place where there should be quite a lot of agreement, and I would look forward to working with you and others on that.

Senator GRASSLEY. Okay. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Chairwoman STABENOW. Thank you very much. Next up I will turn to Senator Smith, and then it will be Senator Fischer and Senator Luján. Senator Smith.



Senator SMITH. Thank you so much, Madam Chair and Ranking Member. It is great to be with you, and I am so grateful to Ms. Small and Mr. Bonnie for your willingness to serve our country and for being with us today.

I would like to start with a question around how the USDA can be more responsive to farmers of color as we think about the work we have ahead of us over the next years.

Minnesota has a diverse farming community. Hmong farmers, Native farmers, Latino farmers, and Black farmers all play an integral role in our agriculture economy, as well as in our small business community. However, I have heard over and over again how the USDA just does not do enough to support and connect with farmers of color and communities of color, broadly speaking.

I raised this issue with Senator Vilsack at his hearing, and I have asked what he thinks the USDA can do, both internally and externally, to remove some of the barriers that farmers of color face when trying to access credit, for example, or other financing and lending.

Let me ask, Ms. Small and then Mr. Bonnie, we can acknowledge that the USDA has historically had a blind spot when it comes to communities of color. What do you think that the USDA should be doing to see this, to address it, and to make it a better partner with farmers of colors and business owners of color?

Ms. TORRES SMALL. Thank you, Senator Smith, for that important question. We know the cumulative impact that institutional barriers can have. In high school I had a Spanish teacher who I loved because she was strict and she was tough and she cared. In the third year that I was with her, you could really tell there was something personal going on, and I did not know what was happening but it was really impacting her. It was not until I came back as a representative for Senator Udall when I found out that Ms. Garcia's husband was one of the lead plaintiffs in the Hispanic farmers lawsuit, and he was struggling to keep his farm because of the challenges he had to accessing capital. That challenge has an impact on the communities, and a cumulative impact.

In Rural Development, if I get the chance to do that work, there are crucial opportunities to be able to address some of those cumulative impacts and to invest in communities and support that rebuilding.

Senator SMITH. Thank you. Mr. Bonnie?

Mr. BONNIE. Senator Smith, this is a vitally important issue for the Biden administration, for Secretary Vilsack, and for all of us at USDA. One of the things we have announced is creation of an equity commission to peel back the layers of the onion, to make sure we look at all aspects of USDA's programs, to ensure that we are making them available to all producers.

Another piece that I think is important is ensuring that our hiring continues to reflect the diversity of America. It is important for our own staff. It is also important of how we think about the State committees and county committees, to make sure that all of agriculture can participate.

Then given USDA's history on this, it is vitally important that we partner with HBCUs, Hispanic-serving institutions, Tribal colleges, and others, to be able to improve our outreach into these

communities. That is another place that I think is really, really important, is to develop those partnership and build greater trust in these communities.

Senator SMITH. Thank you very much. I know that this is an issue of real importance to many of my colleagues on this Committee, and we have collectively proposed some legislation that I think would make a really big different. I am appreciative of both of you agreeing that the USDA needs to pay attention to this, and that there is a real opportunity to address these systemic barriers that need to be addressed, so thank you.

I am going to just quickly ask a question about climate. You know, I know in Minnesota that you do not need to tell Minnesota farmers that climate change is real. They are seeing it right now, this week, today in their fields, where we have almost 75 percent of the State is experiencing serious drought conditions. I think there is a real opportunity for USDA to be a leader on this, along with agriculture in Minnesota, and around the country.

Mr. Bonnie, let me just ask you briefly, with just a few seconds. How do you plan to use the tools available to you, as Under Secretary, to meet the climate goals that have been put forth by the Biden administration?

Mr. BONNIE. I think there are enormous opportunities to utilize USDA programs to encourage, to finance the adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices, to create new markets, new opportunities for producers, both in agriculture and forestry, and we will obviously look at ways to do that.

There are other producers where issues related to resilience may be more important, maintaining productivity. We want to make sure we have a full range of tools. We will look at ways that we can invest in research and development, new data.

I would just say that the principle here is that whatever we do on climate has to work for producers. It has to work for working lands, and that is going to be critically important. The conversation we have with agriculture and forestry going forward is critical.

Senator SMITH. Thank you so much. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairwoman STABENOW. Thank you. We will now turn to Senator Fischer.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, Madam Chairman, and thank you to both of our nominees for being here today.

Mr. Bonnie, as we discussed last week, I believe Nebraska's farmers and ranchers are the original conservationists, managing lands to be both productive while also maximizing environmental benefits. I believe that in many cases voluntary, locally driven conservation efforts that manage our lands provide better environmental benefits than simply idling lands for the purpose of preservation.

I continue to hear from Nebraskans about the administration's 30x30 Initiative and concern about a lack of details from the administration about how conservation will be defined. There is also a fear that the effort will include mandates. For example, just earlier this week the Interior Secretary Haaland stated, and using her words, that "the 30x30 Initiative will be in large part voluntary." People believe that that leaves open the door to mandates, to say that "in large part" it will be voluntary.

Can you commit to me that USDA will ensure that private property rights are fully protected and that any conservation efforts associated with the administration's 30x30 initiative would be 100 percent voluntary?

Mr. BONNIE. From USDA's standpoint, it is vital that 30x30, the American the Beautiful campaign, build on a history of voluntary conservation, of locally led conservation. If you look at the report that the administration put out earlier this year, principles like honoring private property rights, locally led conservation, incentive-based conservation, recognizing the role that working lands play are going to be absolutely vital.

USDA will look to opportunities like we have done in the past. I think of things like the Sage Grouse Initiative, where we worked in partnership with States and ranchers, our efforts in the South on Longleaf Pine, working with partnership with landowners, States, industry, and others. That is the type of work that USDA will do under 30x30. It will be voluntary, it will be incentive-based, and it will be locally led.

Senator FISCHER. You see no reason for private property owners, for stakeholders, for State governments who rely on revenue from agriculture to States like mine, provide the mainstay for State budgets? Do you think there should be any concern out there? Can you say it is going to be 100 percent voluntary, or just using existing programs to incentivize?

Mr. BONNIE. Yes. I mean, our insistence on locally led conservation, on voluntary incentives, absolutely.

I have worked on these issues for a long time, and in my professional life my family has endangered species on their property. I am well aware of the challenges that landowners face.

If you look at what is working in conservation, it is locally led, it is incentive based, and it is about partnerships. For USDA, that is what our work on this will be.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you. If confirmed, you will oversee a large amount of farmer data that is collected by the FSA, NRCS, and the RMA. As you know, each year farmers submit crop reports to USDA twice, to both Farm Service Agency and to the Risk management Agency. Ten years ago, USDA began streamlining this process through an initiative known as the Acreage Crop Reporting Streamlining Initiative, or the ACRSI.

Nebraska FSA took a lead by conducting pilots for this initiative in 2018, but the initiative has not yet been deployed widely, due to a lack of software. In Fiscal Year 2021, in that omnibus that we passed, Congress directed USDA to allocate the necessary resources to identify software options so that the technology is going to be adopted. Can you commit to working to advance ACRSI so that farmers can benefit from that streamlined crop reporting?

Mr. BONNIE. Yes. This will be a priority.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you.

Ms. Small, I would now like to shift to broadband, and with so many Americans still underserved we need to make sure that we get the most out of every dollar that is going to be spent through the Federal broadband programs. I am concerned that billions of dollars in funding are being spent to expand broadband services but

the American public still does not have a clear sense of where all of that is being spent.

How do you think USDA can improve that transparency and also have accountability for what I consider very, very valuable funding?

Ms. TORRES SMALL. It is such an important effort to make sure that the funding that Congress is appropriating gets out quickly to reach communities on the ground and to make sure that it is done responsibly as well. I love the way you asked about how USDA can help in that role, because I firmly believe that Rural Development has a fundamental role in that, because Rural Development has the ability to validate things on the ground, based on its community partnerships, to identify what is being done. They already have that experience working with so many of the players. Because Rural Development's broadband programs, they only use those maps as part of the consideration process. They have been able to identify other ways to identify the need.

As the United States works to get better mapping and better identify where those needs are, Rural Development can have a key role in using other ways to identify needs and make sure that it is measuring the impact that those crucial investments are having.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you very much. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairwoman STABENOW. Senator Luján.

Senator LUJÁN. Thank you, Chair Stabenow. Ms. Torres Small, you know first-hand the importance of affordability and connectivity for rural America. During your time in the House you committed a big part of your time in this particular area. The 2018 Farm Bill created a new grant program for rural broadband deployment. It recognized programs that existed already like the Community Connect Broadband Program, the Technology needs of Precision Agriculture, developing a Rural Broadband Integration Working Group, all important programs that many of the members that are on this Committee, the senior members, worked on to deploy.

If confirmed to this position, what would you do as Under Secretary to connect rural families to affordable, reliable, high-speed broadband?

Ms. TORRES SMALL. It is crucial, as you know. In the midst of COVID, I think everyone saw the challenges that folks were facing. I specifically remember a mom who brought out a sunshade and got her kids, four kids, underneath the sunshade in the parking lot of their school administration building so their kids could do their homework. The question is how do we make sure that she does not have to do that in the future.

I think the big opportunity that Rural Development has is the incredible investment in resources, and making sure that that gets delivered responsibly. You identified all of the programs that Rural Development has. Making sure that there is ease in identifying which programs are the best fit and potentially breaking down some of those silos to make them work together well. Bringing Rural Development's unique mission area to the table in all of the programs they are invested in across America will be crucial.

Senator LUJÁN. I appreciate. Mr. Bonnie, New Mexico, like many Western States, are facing extreme drought conditions that are

having detrimental effects on our State's farmers and ranchers. I just want to echo my colleague's statement that having a State FSA Executive Director position in place will be vital to ensuring that resources are available to get out the door quickly, not just the State Executive Director but also the board members. We need to make sure that these are prioritized and they are moving. We are in a drought, people need help, and these farmers and ranchers are waiting.

Once confirmed, do I have your commitment to work with this Committee to make sure USDA is doing everything in their power to help farmers and ranchers be able to weather these increasing extreme weather conditions?

Mr. BONNIE. You have my commitment, sir.

Senator LUJÁN. Mr. Bonnie, one of the reasons that a State FSA Director and having a board matters, in 2018, I began working with the previous Secretary, Mr. Perdue, after I learned of farmers who were unfairly discriminated against regarding payments they were owed through the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program. I appreciated that Secretary Vilsack recognized this injustice when those farmers won two appeals. The State and county office ignored that those farmers won these appeals, and continued with this discriminatory practice, targeting these farmers.

To add insult to insult to injury—we have these things called the acequias back home, Madam Chair. I often describe them as like Roman aqueducts. They are older than the Federal Government. These were carved by our ancestors, typically three feet wide, three feet deep, that move water from the mountains or from rivers into land. They provide all the nourishment we need.

I am fortunate that we have one of those acequias where I live, and my brother and I are responsible for cleaning it annually by hand every year. He reminds me I am not as good with a shovel as him, but I think that my mom is the judge of that and I do okay.

Nonetheless, to add insult to injury, the State office went on to say that if these farmers irrigate with these acequias, which are not filled with water from a well—if Mother Nature does not deliver, if the Good Lord does not deliver a little bit of precipitation, they run dry. They then went on to say that if these farmers use those acequias they are ineligible for this Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program, predominantly Hispanic and Native American families. It is wrong.

To make it worse, after Secretary Vilsack went in and fortunately they paused this program, they are doing a review of the State FSA office in New Mexico, it was clear that those payments that were being held should have been sent. From the office here, with Secretary Vilsack they were sent. They are still being held up at the local office. These families need help.

This is just another example of the immense responsibility of where we will have to work together, Mr. Bonnie. I look forward to voting for your confirmation. Ms. Torres Small, I look forward to supporting your nomination. We all know families out there need help, and there are a lot of nuanced challenges that farmers and ranchers are facing, in different parts of the country. It is important that we take time to understand those challenges, identify those injustices, and provide the support they need.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairwoman STABENOW. Thank you very much. Thank for raising a really important issue.

Senator Marshall, and then we will hear from Senator Bennet.

Senator MARSHALL. All right. Thank you, Madam Chair, and if I could just have a quick moment of privilege I want to accept the challenge from the Senator from the great State of New Mexico for the first annual Senate Ag Committee Chili Cook-off. I just want to warn you I will be bringing the secret Marshall deer chili recipe, and I think it would be a great tradition to do later this fall.

Senator LUJÁN. If the gentleman would yield, if you put New Mexico chile in there you are guaranteed to win.

Senator MARSHALL. Well, no, no. You have got to make the chili, I am going to make some chili, and we will let the staff enjoy.

Chairwoman STABENOW. Okay. The competition is on.

Senator MARSHALL. It is, indeed. Again, thank you, Madam Chair, and I appreciate you holding this hearing, and welcome again to our nominees. We had wonderful discussions on the phone earlier this week.

My first question for Mr. Bonnie, the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) is certainly a very important entity to my folks back home. How would you describe its primary mission, its primary purpose, in your views?

Mr. BONNIE. It is to support commodity production in agriculture and to help stabilize agriculture in the wake of, you know, extreme weather, all that type of stuff.

Senator MARSHALL. You know, speaking of commodities, I am going to read this definition: A commodity is a raw material or primary agriculture product that can be bought and sold, such as copper, coffee, or wheat, or milo. Do you feel that carbon is a commodity?

Mr. BONNIE. Carbon certainly has value, and we see that in things like the Growing Climate Solutions Act and other pieces of legislation. I think your question is about is it a commodity in the context of the Commodity Credit Corporation, and I do not think it is. I do not think it needs to be, if you want to think about how to use the CCC to advance climate-smart agriculture and forestry.

Whatever you do in the CCC has to be about commodity production, agricultural commodities, and thinking about how you take advantage of that, and create opportunities for producers that may grow those commodities using climate-smart agriculture and forestry is the potential link with the CCC. It is those opportunities and new markets that I think are consistent with the CCC.

Senator MARSHALL. Do you envision in any way, based upon that answer, using the CCC funds to create a carbon bank then?

Mr. BONNIE. I think we would look at the CCC as a potential way to create partnership with agriculture, to look at ways that we can advance climate-smart agriculture in ways that will increase and improve commodity production and will create more value for agriculture on working lands.

Senator MARSHALL. Those answers sound a little bit contradictory to me in the sense that you are describing paying for a carbon service, really the service of storing carbon, so I just do not see how you could in any way equate the two by using moneys from the

CCC. I just want to make sure that we are on the same page here, that you agree the purpose of the CCC, the priorities, should be the ARC programs, the PLCs, and I am just really concerned about running that bank dry.

Mr. BONNIE. Of course, and I would just say, this is true across all climate policy. If we create challenges for agriculture or things do not work for agriculture, that is not just a problem for farmers. It is problem for the climate as well. We have to do things that are going to have agriculture support. Anything we would do with the CCC we would put in front of people, let them look at it, and make sure that we do is consistent with agriculture and agriculture's needs.

That is going to be true of everything we do on climate. As I said before, if it does not work for producers it is not going to work for the climate.

Senator MARSHALL. You know, I always had the saying that farmers and ranchers are the greatest conservationists in the world. I remember my grandfather building terraces for soil conservation. Would you agree, in general, that farmers and ranchers are just incredible conservationists?

Mr. BONNIE. Yes. We have an enormous stewardship ethic in this country, and the test for us on whether it is thinking about wildlife conservation or climate, how do we take advantage of that? How do we create incentives for producers to be able to voluntarily participate? That is true of everything we do.

Senator MARSHALL. Thank you. Last question, probably, to Ms. Torres Small. The question that I get asked all the time is how does rural America survive? What is your vision to help rural America survive? What would be the priorities, the pillars of helping rural America survive?

Ms. TORRES SMALL. I remember those questions too, and what would always inspire me and give me hope for rural America is the local innovation, the things that people are doing on the ground, the ideas to expand markets, to turn every byproduct into a new market, to invest in the natural advantages in a region. That is where Rural Development can have such power and strength is in supporting and investing in those innovative solutions so that in every rural community there are great opportunities for jobs, and support for farmers, and support for manufacturing, or tourism. Identifying those industry opportunities and growing them.

Senator MARSHALL. Thank you. I will just add, the greatest indicator for survival of rural America is the price of wheat, and the price of corn, the price of beef, and the input costs as well. I hope we just do not lose sight of that, that those are all value-added propositions. We need high-speed internet. We need good hospitals. We need a local pharmacy. We need community banks. All those pieces—good schools—to help that rural community survive. Eventually, in my home State, the price of wheat, as agriculture goes, so goes rural America.

Thank you, Madam Chair. I yield back.

Chairwoman STABENOW. Thank you very much. I will now turn to Senator Booker.

Senator BOOKER. Thank you so much, Chairman Stabenow and Ranking Member Boozman. I really appreciate you both, and I want to congratulate the witnesses and nominees.

Ms. Torres Small, there are tens of thousands of rural families currently living in homes that do not have functioning wastewater systems, meaning that they are not connected to a sewer system and they do not have functioning septic systems. This often, unfortunately—and I have visited a lot of these communities—leads to families literally having straight pipes coming out of their homes into their backyards. It creates conditions that led to children testing positive for neglected tropical diseases like hookworm, that many doctors do not even think still exists in the United States.

In the Black Belt in Alabama, I visited some folks who, it was just awful to see kids out in the backyard playing with all these conditions.

In the last Farm Bill, Congress expanded an existing Rural Development Grant Program to authorize funding to address this issue, but we need to do a lot more, and we need to have a sense of urgency in doing it. I would like to know that addressing poverty is really something that you have shown that is really important to you. If you are confirmed, will you make providing assistance to these low-income rural families and rural communities a priority?

Ms. TORRES SMALL. Absolutely, Senator Booker. Thank you so much for raising a crucial issue, whether it is colonias or Native American sovereign governments, or the Black Belt. Having access to good, clean water and plumbing are matters of public health as well as individual survival.

Senator BOOKER. Thank you so much. Mr. Bonnie, FSA lending programs have existed in their current form since the 1990's, and I believe that the next farm bill we need to make major revisions to these FSA programs so that they better serve African American farmers, indigenous farmers, and others whom they just have not served well, nearly as well as they should. I believe we should also update these lending programs to make sure they are tailored to foster adoption of climate-smart ag practices.

Do you agree that this is needed, and if you are confirmed, will this be a priority for you?

Mr. BONNIE. Senator, thank you for the question. If confirmed, absolutely, this is a very important priority. With respect to FSA programs, I think one of the things we are moving out on is the Equity Commission, that I think will give us greater insight into all the things we can do administratively to make sure our programs are available to all farmers. It is vitally important. Of course, you know the history of USDA. There is far more we need to do in this space, and we look forward to working with you and the Committee as we go into the next farm bill, to make sure we get that right.

Senator BOOKER. Mr. Bonnie, I appreciate that, and I also believe that we need to invest tens of billions of dollars of new funding into already existing voluntary USDA working land conservation programs that are really targeted to fund a lot of the soil health practices that NRCS has identified as beneficial from a climate change perspective. I talked to our Chairwoman about this.



These funds are so oversubscribed by farmers. Farmers want to be great stewards of the land. They want to make these investments.

I believe that these investments would not only significantly reduce emissions and sequester a lot of carbon but they would also make our farms and our rural communities more resilient, reduce flooding, protect drinking water, promote biodiversity, and again, empower our farmers.

Can you talk about how oversubscribed these observation programs currently are and if you would support this type of large-scale, targeted investment in soil health using existing voluntary conservation programs?

Mr. BONNIE. There is no question that there are significant opportunities to invest in climate-smart agriculture and forestry through our existing programs and to look at ways to improve soil health through reduced emissions and otherwise. We are going to need to make sure that we have got the folks at NRCS to be able to implement these programs, so that would be very important.

If confirmed, one of the things, you know, we will look into is make sure we can deliver these programs adequately. I think that is going to be important. I think the investment here that you and the Chairwoman have spearheaded and talked about in the conservations going on now up here are really, really important, and I look forward to working with you all on the implementation of existing programs and if there are additional dollars as well.

Senator BOOKER. Mr. Bonnie, real quick, the monocropping system that we are so dependent upon, that has had unintended consequences, overuse of glyphosates that are now poisoning our rivers and our streams and our groundwater, have proved very fragile during things like COVID. Is this something we need to start finding ways to invest so that we can create more sustainable systems as well as more empowered rural areas?

Mr. BONNIE. I think we need to focus on the outcomes we want and to focus on outcomes in terms of clean water and greenhouse gas emissions reductions or other things. I worry a little bit about USDA getting overly prescriptive, and so I want us to focus on what are the public benefits, the environmental benefits we want out of these programs, and how do we work with producers to make that happen.

Senator BOOKER. I hope to talk to you more about that, Mr. Bonnie, because right now we are being very prescriptive. We are incentivizing these behaviors. We are incentivizing the overuse of these chemicals. I believe in not picking winners and losers, letting farmers lead the way, but we are, in a sense, through the Department of Agriculture, supporting a system that is unsustainable and is actually hurting independent family farmers. I look forward to discussing this with you.

Thank you, Chairwoman. I realize I am little over my time.

Chairwoman STABENOW. Well, thank you very much. I will now turn to Senator Tuberville and then Senator Gillibrand.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Thank you very much, Ms. Small, Mr. Bonnie. Thank you for being here today. Both of these positions will have a huge impact in my State of Alabama, and will either help or hurt all our farmers there. We are looking forward to the possibility of working with you.

I am not going to beat a dead horse about internet and broadband. I think all of you know the importance of that, and it is a shame our country, to this point, the developed country that we have, our rural areas are still suffering, and we need help. I know you know that.

Ms. Small, my office has worked with folks in Alabama related to USDA is Business and Industry Loan Guarantee Program, better known as B&I loans. This program helps our rural communities to aid with economic development projects. With now having a more streamlined process with Rural Development loan programs, I am hopeful more interest can lead to more efficient project completions, going from grand idea to grand opening faster.

Ms. Small, can you talk about your own experiences working in rural areas expanding businesses?

Ms. TORRES SMALL. The B&I Loan Guarantee Program is crucial, and it really is the flagship of the Business and Cooperative Services within Rural Development. It is something that I got to experience a little bit as a field representative on the ground, working for Senator Udall, when there was a local business idea, whether it was a coffee shop or whether it was a Digester, trying to find ways to get support. The B&I Loan Guarantee Program was a great starting place to look at options.

It also brought in local community banks, which I thought was great, to find ways to build that business plan and local investment.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Thank you. Mr. Bonnie, I have heard from several of my friends across the South that you are a pretty good turkey hunter. I look forward to getting you to Alabama and giving you a few pointers, being a turkey hunter myself.

Mr. BONNIE. Senator, I wish someone would tell the turkeys that. It was a little rough this spring.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Those of us that turkey hunt know the answer to that question. Yes, sir, I believe that.

Mr. Bonnie, the Farm Service Agency will be one of the top areas under your purview. Alabama farmers and others across the Nation directly rely on their local county FSA offices to properly engage with various USDA programs for their operations. In past years, there have been talks to try to consolidate local FSA offices within each State. Also, Alabama has suffered from lack of full staffing and appropriate resources in local FSA offices.

When and if confirmed, what is your plan to help Alabama farmers in this situation?

Mr. BONNIE. Well, those FSA offices are vitally important, Senator, as you point out, and there is work that we need to do in terms of continuing to hire and fill spots both in FSA and RCS.

As you know right now, our offices are only partially open, and so I think the first order of business, assuming we can move forward safely, is to make sure we get on the path to opening them up fully this fall. I will say that I think our FSA offices have done incredibly well over the last year, responding during a pandemic, and keeping the workflow going, but there is more work to do there, as your question points out.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairwoman STABENOW. Thank you very much. We will now turn to Senator Brown and then Senator Ernst and Senator Warnock.

Senator BROWN. Thank you, Madam Chair. I really appreciate this. Ms. Torres Small and Mr. Bonnie, it is good to see you both. I wish I could be there in person. I am jumping back and forth, chairing the Banking and Housing Committee. I enjoyed our conversations this week and appreciate your willingness to serve the American people.

These jobs are two of the most public-facing, if you will, jobs at USDA. I look forward to hosting each of you separately in Ohio, to meet farmers and small business owners and others invested in making my State an even better place to live. Thank you for your offer to do that, and I will take you up on it.

Mr. Bonnie, let us start with you. Your comments on the importance of a farm safety net ensuring our farmers have the risk mitigation tools they need to succeed are welcome. In the 2018 Farm Bill, I authored an amendment that allows State conservationists to pay 90 percent of the cost of high priority equipped practices up from 75 percent. Many States declined to do so. What do we do to encourage States to take advantage of that?

Mr. BONNIE. Senator, I have to say it is not an issue that I am really familiar with, but opportunity to provide increased incentives for high-priority practices I think are welcome and would welcome the opportunity to think with you and your staff on where we could apply that. I know the Western Lake Erie Basin is very important to you, and maybe that is a place that we could think about implementing that.

Senator BROWN. Thanks. Your comments in our personal conversation last week, or earlier this week, whenever it was, about marginal farmland, planting grasses and trees among the best ways to address the climate crisis and so much else, as you expanded on. I worked with Senators Grassley and Ernst in some of the initiatives in the 2018 Farm Bill. How do we use incentive payments to encourage more farmers to enroll in CRP initiatives that retire marginal acreage? How do we leverage the private sector to help share the cost of some of these agreements?

Mr. BONNIE. I think on the CRP front, as I said earlier, it is vitally important to think about targeting to make sure we get the right lands into the program. I think for thinking about some of the continuous practices, buffers or other types of things, where we can put practices, the right practices on the most important acres is a place where I think we can get a lot of bang for the buck.

There may be opportunities to partner with the private sector. There is growing interest in climate-smart agriculture. There may be opportunities in that or in other ways to think about bringing in private investment into agriculture as well.

Senator BROWN. Thank you, Mr. Bonnie.

Ms. Torres Small, I look with excitement at your nomination in part because in our conversation listening to you talk about the sort of intimacy you have with your old congressional district and your State generally, and what that means, especially in affordable housing and access to health care in rural America.

RCAP does an excellent job helping with water infrastructure. Could you talk on that for a moment? What more do we do to help communities succeed and get access to these programs?

Ms. TORRES SMALL. Absolutely. As we talk about water as a fundamental building block for life, it is crucial that Rural Development continue to engage in communities and identify those needs where they are most. RCAP does an incredible job, and I think the work that Rural Development does when it comes to technical assistance is really important in making sure we are reaching the most underserved communities, and folks really on the brink in terms of public health because of a lack of access to drinking water, good clean water, or a lack of access to good wastewater.

My dad, actually, even growing up in the Mesilla Valley, still remembers where the outhouse was when he was growing up in the house he still lives in.

This is how important it is to make sure that no one is left behind, and I look forward to getting to work with you in housing as well as water issues for Rural Development.

Senator BROWN. Thank you, Ms. Torres Small. I look forward to voting in support of both of you. I know Chair Stabenow wants to move these nominations as quickly as possible getting both of you in place to do these jobs.

Madam Chair, thanks very much for the time.

Chairwoman STABENOW. Well, thanks very much, Senator Brown. We will now turn to Senator Ernst.

Senator ERNST. Great. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman, and it is great to have our witnesses in front of us today, and Congresswoman Torres Small, thank you so much for being with us. We had a great conversation the other day as I was traveling through rural Iowa, and I appreciated you sharing the fact that you come from the rural part of your State as well. I appreciate you sharing the story about your nana today with the cotton sacks, because I think it does highlight women in agriculture, not just as laborers but then now in today's modern era, more of those farm owners and operators. Thank you for sharing that.

I would like to start the questions today, Mr. Bonnie, with you, please, and I am sure that you have heard about the hardships that our livestock producers have been experiencing over the last several years. My home State of Iowa is the country's largest producer of pork. Not the bad kind of pork, the actual animal. Swine. Thousands of farmers have been patiently waiting the announcement of USDA's financial assistance that was provided in December through the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, to make payments to contract growers of livestock and poultry to cover revenue losses.

I am concerned that the Department's announcement on June 15th that described the intent to finalize this program within the next 60 days made no mention of assistance being provided to contract growers of swine. Rather, it focused solely on poultry growers. Can you explain, and do you know, will swine contract growers be eligible for emergency assistance directed by Congress in this Consolidated Appropriations Act, administered by the FSA?

Mr. BONNIE. Yes, so Senator, thank you for the question. As we have taken a look at all the pandemic assistance, our focus has

been on filling those gaps that may not have gotten as much resources as before. I think in terms of the contract growers, I think we think the real focus there and the need and some of the challenges we saw in the formula that would allocate those dollars is on the poultry side.

My understanding is that the pork producers will be eligible. I am not sure how much they are going to be able to take advantage of it, because of the way it is moving forward. We have provided assistance for livestock indemnity and some other areas that I think are eligible to pork, but that is my sense now.

Senator ERNST. Well, I appreciate that. We do have a lot of poultry production in Iowa as well, so that is welcome news, but we do want to make sure that our swine growers are included in that.

Congresswoman, next to you, I know that we have talked a lot about broadband today, and you can tell how important it is to the rural areas. I would like to focus on maybe a little different avenue.

USDA has had a long and successful history of really working with various programs to connect Americans to broadband in rural areas. However, I am hearing from a number of providers that ReConnect awards, they may actually sit there for a number of months, and in some cases well over a year while they are waiting for clearance when it comes to environmental or historical preservation requirements. I know that those reviews are very important. We discussed this. It is very frustrating. In many of these cases, the network is being placed in areas where other construction of some kind has already happened.

How can you plan to address these lengthy delays and maybe accelerate some of the deployment through the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) programs?

Ms. TORRES SMALL. Thank you, Senator Ernst. We have talked about just the variety of broadband programs that are available through Rural Development, and RUS specifically, and there a lot of lessons learned that come from that, in addition, with ReConnect. Rural Development has actually been working on broadband since I was in high school, so there are a lot of lessons learned and a lot of work to be done.

When you bring up the environmental review challenges I am so grateful that you are focused on this issue because it is something that, if I get to do this job, I will be steadfast and focused on as well, in terms of getting that money out the door and in the ground in terms of fiber, or finding other ways to reach homes, and finding ways to target resources to address those challenges, to support the staff that has been trying to coordinate with the multiple entities in the midst of COVID, and to find ways to expedite certain situations.

Senator ERNST. Wonderful. I thank you, Madam Chair, very much. I look forward to supporting our nominees. Thank you.

Chairwoman STABENOW. Thank you so much. Senator Warnock.

Senator WARNOCK. Thank you, Madam Chair, and congratulations to you both on your nominations.

In my travels across rural Georgia, during my campaign and my first few months in the Senate, I have heard from farmers who are saddled with debt, or who have historically struggled to access assistance through USDA's Farm Service Agency, particularly from

small-scale farmers, marginalized farmers, and farmers with limited resources.

These systemic issues were evident with USDA's previous COVID-19 relief efforts. We saw the ways in which the systemic and age-old discrimination shows up in more recent times, because of the formulas, and as a result failed to reach many of the small-scale farmers. I was glad to see Secretary Vilsack reopen programs signed up with dedicated funding for improved outreach to underserved farmers.

The USDA must do more to address underlying issues at the Department of Agriculture and better support our small-scale farmers, the ones I have been seeing all throughout Georgia, who are suffering even more as a result of the pandemic.

Mr. BONNIE, if you are confirmed, FSA will fall under your jurisdiction. Do you believe that previous USDA relief efforts such as the Market Facilitation Program or the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program adequately met the needs of small-scale and limited-resource farmers? Yes or no.

Mr. BONNIE. Senator, thank you for the question. You know, as you know we have tried to do far more, as you pointed out, to make sure we get assistance to those farmers that have not gotten it, and we still need to do more.

Senator WARNOCK. Why do you believe these efforts failed to provide meaningful relief for small-scale farmers, and what can we do to improve?

Mr. BONNIE. One of the things that Secretary Vilsack talks about is sort of the cumulative impacts over decades of the challenges we have created because of both how the programs are structured and the fact that folks were excluded from those programs. We need to take a deep look at that and look at all aspects of program delivery.

I think because—and I alluded to this earlier—I think because there is still distrust in many of those communities, and understandably so, that there is far more work we are going to need to do with partners, to build partnership, to build trust with those producers, and ensure that our programs, both in their design but also in their implementation, are available to those producers.

Senator WARNOCK. That is a great point. Design is important. The design of the program, implementation, the human face, the folks that people encounter when they walk through the door of FSA. We have heard time and time again that people literally do not feel welcome when walking in the door of the FSA, throughout the various local areas.

If confirmed, will you commit to reviewing, rigorously reviewing staffing within your mission area to ensure that your work force is representative and responsive to the farming communities that they are tasked to serve?

Mr. BONNIE. You have my commitment, if confirmed.

Senator WARNOCK. Thank you so much. I think that there is work here for the USDA. There is also work here for the Congress to do, which is why I am proud to support legislation like the Relief for America's Small Farmers Act, which would boost all of our Nation's small farmers through debt relief and uplift their operations.

Mr. Bonnie, how would targeted financial and technical assistance, provided by Congress, combined with improved service from FSA, benefit small-scale farmers in Georgia?

Mr. BONNIE. Vitally important, again, the delivery of programs but also, again, given the history of the additional resources that are needed for outreach, to make sure folks understand programs is critically important here, and I think has to be, as we think about the Equity Commission, those sort of issues that, again, not entirely about design but about implementation and outreach have to be a critical part of what we look at.

Senator WARNOCK. Thank you. Congresswoman, one issue I consistently hear about when speaking with folks in rural Georgia is broadband. People are disconnected and the implications for their health care, for education, for the marketplace, distance learning, is difficult to overstate.

If confirmed, I know you have been in touch with my office regarding this broadband issue, can you say more about how you will work with me and others to prioritize broadband deployment and affordability, particularly in our rural areas?

Ms. TORRES SMALL. Well, when you talk about broadband deployment, I think one of the crucial issues is identifying some of the areas in the most need. We have talked a little bit in this hearing about the challenges with the maps that are sometimes relied upon for allocating resources. I know that Georgia has invested a lot of time in identifying other data to support where to deploy resources for broadband.

If I am confirmed, I would love to work with you on that, learning more about how that was done, and Rural Development is just a key, crucial partner for every broadband discussion because of relationships on the ground, because of the staff, the 47 offices throughout the country who have relationships with people in the communities to identify how to best fill those needs.

Senator WARNOCK. Thank you so much. It is a critical issue. We are talking infrastructure this week. I am glad to have joined Senator Tina Smith in requesting no less than \$60 billion in funding for rural broadband, community infrastructure, business development. Thank you all for your service.

Chairwoman STABENOW. Thank you very much, Senator, and thank you for your leadership on the efforts around small-scale farms and minority farmers.

Senator WARNOCK. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairwoman STABENOW. It is very, very important work.

I believe Senator Hoeven is with us. Senator Hoeven was here in the Committee room. I believe he is now, though, joining us virtually.

Senator HOEVEN. Thank you, Madam Chairman. I appreciate it very much. My first questions are for Congresswoman Torres Small. Thank you for coming to visit with me.

One of the things we talked about was precision agriculture, and so I would just like to again ask you about the Rural Innovation Stronger Economy (RISE) Program, and your willingness to not only support it but also to come out and see what we are doing with the Grand Farm project in North Dakota, which is all about precision agriculture.

Ms. TORRES SMALL. Senator Hoeven, thank you so much. I really enjoyed talking with you and learning just more about how RISE can adapt to so many different opportunities and innovation on the ground across the country. I am excited to see potential ways that can be done with precision agriculture in Fargo. I have never visited Fargo, so I am looking forward to it and really appreciate the invitation, if confirmed.

Senator HOEVEN. Thank you. My other question for you is regarding carbon capture. One of the things we are working on in North Dakota is to crack the code with carbon capture for coal-fired electric facilities. The Rural Utility Service has loan guarantees and grant programs that help do that. I would ask, are you willing to work with us on Carbon Capture Utilization and Storage (CCUS), through the RUS program?

Ms. TORRES SMALL. If confirmed, I am excited to work with you and learn more about these opportunities. I really appreciate the opportunities through the USE IT Act to identify where CCUS can be a crucial part of addressing climate change. The Biden administration recently released a report of some of that information. There are opportunities, and I look forward to working with you on it, if I get the chance to do this job.

Senator HOEVEN. Again, thank you, Congresswoman. I look forward to working with you, and thanks for coming in and visiting with me. I appreciate it.

Mr. Bonnie, several questions for you. First is we are just suffering tremendous drought in our State this year, along with much of the country as well. I am working on disaster assistance for drought as well as for some of the severe excess moisture problems in other parts of the country.

One of the things you and I visited with is getting help through USDA, and both the FSA Administrator, Zach Ducheneaux, and RMA Acting Administrator, Richard Flournoy, have been out to North Dakota. They have seen the challenges. One of the things we are trying to do is to leverage the livestock forage program with more assistance through the Emergency Livestock Assistance Program (ELAP).

Are you willing to work with FSA Director Ducheneaux to see if we can get more help for our cattle ranchers through ELAP during this terrible drought?

Mr. BONNIE. Absolutely, and we had a conversation with some folks in the Department after our conversation, and my sense is there are some opportunities there. I look forward to working with you on them.

Senator HOEVEN. Thank you. What changes be made to improve the effectiveness of those programs on a long-term basis, both the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) and ELAP, for these kinds of situations?

Mr. BONNIE. Senator, as we look at the look at the drought now I think we need a longer conversation with this Committee about a range of programs around drought. If you look in the Klamath Basin right now, those producers need help immediately, to help them fallow fields, or fallow cropland, because they do not have water to plant crops.



We are finding gaps like that this summer in response to the drought, the gaps that you talked about with water hauling or hay hauling up in North Dakota—critically important—and issues related to wildfires in the West and the impact on agriculture there. I do think there are a range of issues that we need to have a conversation with the Committee about to ensure we have got the right tools in the toolbox, and we would very much welcome that.

Senator HOEVEN. Yes, and we look forward to working with you on that. I talked to Senator Tester about working with me on a bipartisan basis, really to address the livestock program so that we have something along the lines of what WHIP+, which we have on the farm side. We need something on the cattle side, or the livestock side, that is more permanent. We look forward to working with you on that.

The other thing, the last question I have, as far as carbon capture, will you make sure that you both consult with Congress in regard to anything that is done in terms of how the carbon capture programs are structured for our ag producers, so that they are farmer friendly. Make sure that they are farmer friendly. It is both the consultation with Congress and making sure that those programs are farmer friendly.

Mr. BONNIE. Yes, we need to make sure we do a good job of obviously consulting with all of you. It is vitally important that we talk to producers in both agriculture and forestry. You may not have been here to hear me before, but if they do not work for producers and landowners they are not going to work for the climate, and making sure we get that right is going to be a very high priority.

Senator HOEVEN. Thank you very much. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Chairwoman STABENOW. Well, thank you very much. I believe that we have heard from all of Senators wishing to ask questions. So—

Senator THUNE. Madam Chair?

Chairwoman STABENOW. Excuse me. I am sorry. Senator Thune just logged on, so welcome, Senator Thune. You just made it.

Senator THUNE. Just made the cut. Thank you, Madam Chair, and thanks for holding the hearing today to consider Mr. Bonnie's nomination to serve as Under Secretary of Farm Production and Conservation and Congresswoman Torres Small's nomination to serve as Under Secretary of Rural Development. Thank you both for making your appearance before the Committee today and for your willingness to serve in these positions.

Mr. Bonnie, as you know, the Farm Production and Conservation mission area of USDA plays a critical role in administering programs that are essential to producers' safety net, which is extremely important during adverse weather conditions like the drought, which producers in my State are currently facing.

This Committee will soon begin working to craft the next farm bill, and we will rely on the Department to provide timely technical assistance as we draft legislation. If confirmed, will you commit to providing timely technical assistance to members of this Committee?

Mr. BONNIE. Yes, I will.

Senator THUNE. Thank you. What do you envision USDA's involvement will be in developing the next farm bill, and under your leadership would the Department take an active, visible role or provide a technical supporting role to development work led by Congress?

Mr. BONNIE. I am sure, Senator, that I will my cues from the Community on this. We will, of course, provide technical assistance and other insight as we can. Whether or not the administration puts forward proposals or otherwise, I do not know yet, and we will leave that to the boss.

Senator THUNE. All right. Congresswoman Torres Small, closing the digital divide and expanding access to broadband services to rural areas has long been a priority of mine. USDA's ReConnect program plays an important role in bringing reliable connectivity to more rural areas, but it is critical we focus on getting service to truly unserved areas.

If confirmed, do you support the current ReConnect program rules that require at least 90 percent of households in a proposed area to be unserved in order to be eligible for a ReConnect award?

Ms. TORRES SMALL. Senator Thune, I deeply appreciate your work on broadband, through your co-chair of the Broadband Caucus, and I recognize how important it is to get to truly underserved communities. It certainly was my experience working in New Mexico to reach sometimes very tough terrain and folks in remote areas.

I look forward to working with you to identify the specific requirements for underserved within ReConnect, and looking at the impact that that has in terms of truly reaching underserved areas.

Senator THUNE. With respect, though, to that, I appreciate that answer but my question had to do with the current law, which we actually put into the ReConnect program rules, or I should say in the rules but in the statute, that require at least 90 percent of households in a proposed area to be unserved in order to be eligible for ReConnect award. I guess the question is, do you support that particular threshold?

Ms. TORRES SMALL. If confirmed, it is my job to follow the law, and I certainly appreciate the instructions that are in the statute to make sure that ReConnect is reaching the people it is intended to.

Senator THUNE. All right. That is probably as good of an answer as I am going to get today.

Well, I will just say that I think it would be a step backward to change that threshold to a lower percentage, such as 50 percent, which has been advocated by some.

Mr. Bonnie, the Conservation Reserve Program plays a critical role in supporting producers, conservation and wildlife habitat, and sequestering carbon in South Dakota and throughout the Nation. I am concerned that we are significantly behind on CRP enrollment. Recent USDA statistics have CRP enrollment at less than 21 million acres, which is more than four million acres below Fiscal Year 2021 cap of 25 million acres, which we established in the 2018 Farm Bill. Also important to note that millions of CRP acres are set to expire in September of this year.

If confirmed, will you commit to prioritizing the implementation of CRP and other conservation programs in accordance with the statute, and what actions would you take to reach the CRP acreage cap set in the 2018 Farm Bill, while making sure that the program fairly compensates producers and protects soil, water, and wildlife?

Mr. BONNIE. Senator, CRP is a vital program, one that you have been a leader on for a long, long time. As you know, the administration is working to enhance the incentives so that we can get more producers enrolled.

I think in addition to that, and I alluded to this earlier, I think looking at ways that we can use the continuous program, that we can look at targeted enrollments as well as general signups to enroll more acres will be absolutely critical. It is a vitally important program and I look forward to working with you and others as we move forward, if I am confirmed.

Senator THUNE. Okay. Thank you. Madam Chair, I have got some other questions but I am out of time, so I can submit some of these for the record.

Chairwoman STABENOW. Absolutely. Thanks very much.

Well, thanks again, Congresswoman Torres Small and Mr. Bonnie, for being here today. We really appreciate you being here and your answers. In my view, the Farm Production and Conservation as well as Rural Development mission areas that you will oversee are USDA's first line of customer service, for our ag producers and our rural communities. As we witnessed here today, both of you have strong credentials and will be advocates for our farmers and ranchers, foresters, small businesses, rural communities, all those that we on this Committee care so deeply about.

I strongly support your nominations and look forward to moving them forward as quickly as possible.

That concludes today's hearing. The record will remain open until tomorrow at 5 p.m. for members to submit additional questions and statements. The hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:57 a.m., the Committee was adjourned.]



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# **A P P E N D I X**

JULY 29, 2021

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**Opening Statement of Xochitl Torres Small Before the Senate Committee on  
Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry  
July 29, 2021**

Thank you, Chairwoman Stabenow, Ranking Member Boozman and members of the Committee. I am honored to be here today and humbled by President Biden's nomination and Secretary Vilsack's support of me to serve as Under Secretary for Rural Development.

For the last two years, I served New Mexico's Second Congressional district, which is geographically the fifth largest district in the nation. That's a lot of dirt roads. It includes remote areas and diverse populations—from acequias and land grant communities in Valencia County to ranchers and colonias along the United States-Mexico border and Mescalero Apache in the Sacramento Mountains. I had the opportunity to represent my home because my grandparents immigrated from Mexico to pick cotton in the Mesilla Valley. I grew up hearing stories about the opportunities my grandparents seized through hard work and vision—like when my nana noticed as a teenager that the men were making more money in the fields because they were handed the larger bags for picking cotton. Farmworkers were paid based on what they picked, and she realized she was losing time because she had to go back and forth to the truck more often to haul the smaller bags. So, she built up her strength and mustered her courage to ask for the larger bags.

If I learned the power of an entrepreneurial spirit from my grandparents, I learned dedication to my community from my parents. With a mother who taught for over 30 years and a father who worked as a social worker and later a school bus driver, my parents have spent their lives paying forward the blessings they've received. I am forever grateful for their lived examples of service.

Growing up in New Mexico fundamentally molded who I am: a sunny woman of her word who will always fight for the underdog. After learning how big the world is at Waterford Kamhlaba United World College of Southern Africa and studying international development at Georgetown, I chose to come home, to take on the inequities of poverty and hunger in the communities I knew best. Every day, I'm grateful for that choice, in large part because it led me to find the love of my life, Nathan Small, who's with me today and whose dedication to service in New Mexico is a constant inspiration.

I chose to work in water law because I knew the opportunity my grandparents achieved through working the land and the recognition, fostered by my mentor Senator Tom Udall, that water is life, and climate change is threatening the heart of rural communities.

When I became a United States Representative, the people I served shared the same determined defense of future opportunities in the places they loved. I heard from parents who were worried about whether their kids could make a good living in the towns they grew up in. I worked with daughters and sons of farmers, committed to penciling out their future working the land. And I learned from leaders, like Senator Martin Heinrich and Senator Ben Ray Lujan, that if you want to grow opportunity, you've got to support innovation already happening on the ground.

That's what I love about Rural Development. I still remember the name of the civil servant from the local Rural Development office who I met in 2009. It was the wake of the housing market

crash, and I was working for Senator Udall as a field representative. I was trying to help rural communities get clean water and invest in new businesses, and Sandra gave me her cell phone number so we could act quickly when opportunity struck. The local office also worked closely with home grown organizations like Tierra del Sol on farmworker and other affordable housing, and in the process, brought better infrastructure to New Mexico colonias. That's why I turned to Rural Development in the midst of COVID. Their work with tribes and local cooperatives opened opportunities for broadband to reach that last mile. The agency's unique rural mission and on-the-ground commitment are vital to finally closing the digital divide.

One of the most surprising things about working as a Representative was getting to know 434 people who served vastly different districts across our country. I got to know the country through people who so loved their homes they wanted to represent them. In the midst of a divided time, I regularly found hope in the moments we discovered common ground. If I get to do this job, I can't wait to learn about and love every nook and cranny of rural America the way I love New Mexico.

Thank you for your time today and I look forward to your questions.

**Opening Statement of Robert Bonnie Before the Senate Committee on Agriculture,  
Nutrition, and Forestry**  
**Remarks as Prepared**

Thank you, Chairwoman Stabenow, Ranking Member Boozman and members of this Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to be with you today and for your consideration of my nomination. I want to thank my wife, Julie Gomena and my daughter Lilly Bonnie for all their love and support. I want to thank my mother, Nina Bonnie, and my brother Shelby for their love and encouragement. And, I want to acknowledge my father, Ned Bonnie, who I know would be proud if he were with us today.

I am honored to have been nominated by President Biden to serve as Under Secretary of Agriculture for Farm Production and Conservation at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. And, I'm honored to have the opportunity, if confirmed, to work again with Secretary Vilsack on the opportunities and challenges facing American agriculture.

I have been around working lands my whole life. I grew up on a farm in Kentucky. And, while my father was a lawyer, we had a dairy when I was a young child and later a herd of shorthorn cattle. We grew corn, wheat and hay and my mother oversaw a horse operation. Today, my wife and I own 285 acres in Loudoun County, Virginia, where she trains and boards horses for clients.

I am a forester by training. My interest in forestry was kindled at an early age. I not only spent time in the woods at our farm in Kentucky but my family also owns property in South Carolina that has been managed for wildlife conservation for over 100 years. As part of that, I have been closely involved in forest management decisions and related issues for decades. The decisions we make on our property in South Carolina – which forest stands to thin or harvest, which stands to use prescribed fire, and which areas to restore or set aside – shape the property for decades to come. As a forester, you are trained to take the long view and to balance production and conservation.

And, that's the perspective that I hope to bring to this job, if I am fortunate enough to be confirmed. Production and conservation are the flip side of the same coin. Agricultural production is vital to meet the food and fiber needs of a growing world, but that production relies on healthy soils, clean water and a stable climate. Conservation is vital for productivity.

Likewise, productivity is vital to conservation. Maintaining and enhancing the profitability of agriculture – that is, keeping working lands working – is necessary to meet our conservation goals. Conserving our natural resources means keeping farmers, ranchers and forest owners on the land. And, to do that, agriculture and forestry need to be productive and profitable. USDA can help maintain that profitability by providing a safety net that cushions agriculture from the challenges of markets and extreme weather and by promoting conservation practices that contribute to long-term productivity.



I was honored to serve during the Obama Administration as Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment. In that role, I oversaw not only the US Forest Service but also the Natural Resources Conservation Service which, if confirmed, I will be fortunate to work with again. If confirmed, I will come to this job with knowledge of USDA and deep appreciation of the staff that work there. My current work as Deputy Chief of Staff has only reaffirmed my belief in the quality of people that work at USDA.

USDA has much important work to do. If confirmed, I look forward to working with my colleagues in the FPAC mission area to strengthen the safety net, particularly in response to drought, flooding, fire and other extreme weather events. Likewise, agriculture and forestry have a vital role to play in addressing climate change through voluntary, incentive-based efforts that can create new income opportunities for producers and landowners. Equity is a vital consideration across all we do at USDA and I look forward to ensuring that all producers can access USDA programs.

Again, Chairwoman Stabenow and Ranking Member Boozman, I want to thank the Committee for considering my nomination. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the employees at USDA and in partnership with US agriculture to enhance the productivity and sustainability of America's farms, ranches and forest lands.



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**DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE  
RECORD**

JULY 29, 2021

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COMMITTEE ON  
APPROPRIATIONS  
SUBCOMMITTEES:  
DEFENSE  
HOMELAND SECURITY, VETERANS  
AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT,  
FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION,  
AND RELATED AGENCIES

**HENRY CUELLAR, PH.D.**  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

WASHINGTON OFFICE  
1121 RAVENHURST HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20541  
PHONE: (202) 225-1640  
FAX: (202) 225-1641  
*or to the Honorable*  
DEMOCRATIC STEERING AND  
POLICY COMMITTEE  
CHIEF DEPUTY WHIP  
U.S.-MEXICO INTERPARLIAMENTARY  
GROUP CHAIRMAN

July 28, 2021

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
Chair  
Senate Committee on Agriculture,  
Nutrition, and Forestry  
731 Hart SOB  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Boozman  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Agriculture,  
Nutrition, and Forestry  
141 Hart SOB  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow and Ranking Member Boozman:

I am writing to express my support for the confirmation of former Representative Xochitl Torres Small as Undersecretary for Rural Development, Department of Agriculture. She was nominated for this position by President Biden on June 18, 2021.

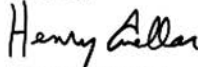
Torres Small grew up in the borderlands of New Mexico and is the granddaughter of migrant farmworkers. This has influenced and informed her work on behalf of vulnerable communities throughout her career and uniquely qualifies her to lead Rural Development.

Representative Torres Small was the first woman and the first person of color to represent New Mexico's second congressional district. She has also served as a field organizer, working in the southern New Mexico colonias, collaborating with local grassroots leaders, business owners, elected officials, and regional and state economic development officials to help communities access American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds. While serving on the House Agriculture Committee, Representative Torres Small was a champion for water security, affordable and accessible broadband, and access to healthcare for rural communities. Torres Small has the needed experience and capability to lead Rural Development's three Agency's - the Rural Housing Service, the Rural Utilities Service, and the Rural Business Service - while ensuring Tribal and other underserved communities are not left behind.

Having collaborated directly with Representative Torres Small, I can attest to her commitment to addressing the needs of rural communities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Representative Torres Small worked in a bipartisan fashion to pass the CARES ACT which provided the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) with thousands of dollars in the form of loans to rural small businesses, supported healthcare providers with the necessary equipment, and secured millions of dollars in relief funding for rural hospitals to keep them from closing their doors.

Xochitl Torres Small is a proven leader with unique experience who will be a true asset to rural America and will greatly aid in the execution of the mission of Rural Development, help communities across the country recover from the pandemic and build long-term, sustainable growth.

Sincerely,



Henry Cuellar, PhD  
U.S. Congressman  
28<sup>th</sup> District of Texas



August 30, 2021

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
 Chair, Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and  
 Forestry Committee  
 United States Senate  
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Boozman  
 Ranking Member, Senate Agriculture,  
 Nutrition and Forestry Committee  
 United States Senate  
 Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Stabenow and Ranking Member Boozman,

On behalf of Community Water Center (CWC), we are pleased to write in strong support to confirm Xochitl Torres Small to the position of Undersecretary for Rural Development at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

CWC is an environmental justice community-based organization that works with small, rural and farmworker communities in California's agricultural Central Valley and Central Coast. We believe that access to safe water is a basic human right, not a privilege. Yet we know the human right to water is one denied to far too many in our state and country -- with disproportionate impacts to communities of color that is rooted in a racist and unjust history. We also believe that water, in a time of pandemic, is the most basic form of PPE and foundational to our ability to recover and build back better. And we believe that water can be an engine of equitable economic opportunity for the very same communities that have been hit hardest by the pandemic. The ongoing megadrought in the West and climate change only increase our sense of urgency.

It is these understandings, beliefs and lived experience working with impacted communities that lead directly to our strong support of Torres Small being confirmed as the next Undersecretary for Rural Development at USDA. USDA's Rural Utility Service and water-focused programs are central to any strategy to address our country's rural water crisis. Those programs are also inadequate both in scope and in implementation. Real leadership is needed if we are to make meaningful progress on rural access to basic but vital drinking water and wastewater services. We are confident that Torres Small can and will provide that necessary leadership. Between her personal background, her years of work on these policy issues and directly with frontline

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*Community-driven water solutions through organizing, education, and advocacy.  
 Soluciones de agua impulsadas por la comunidad a través de la organización, educación y defensa al acceso al agua potable.*

[www.communitywatercenter.org](http://www.communitywatercenter.org)

716 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 300  
 Sacramento, CA 95814  
 (916) 706-3346

900 West Oak Avenue  
 Visalia, CA 93291  
 (559) 733-0219

406 Main Street, Suite 421  
 Watsonville, CA 95076  
 (831) 288-0450



communities and Tribal Nations, and her experience representing a large rural district in Congress, Torres Small will bring an unprecedented level of expertise and understanding about the challenge and solutions. In light of the continued pandemic, the nation's unjust rural water crisis and the fact that CWC now receives weekly calls from families losing access to water due to the drought, we simply cannot confirm Torres Small soon enough.

To close, we support confirming Ms. Torres Small as soon as possible and look forward to partnering with her, and with Congress, to finally bring water justice to every community and family in Rural America.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Nelson  
Federal Advocate and Strategic Projects Manager  
Community Water Center

CC:

- Mikayla Bodey, Professional Staff, US Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
- Anne Knapke, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations, USDA
- Elizabeth Archuleta, Director in the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, USDA

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Watsonville, CA 95076  
(831) 288-0450

September 3, 2021

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
 Chair, Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and  
 Forestry Committee  
 United States Senate  
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Boozman  
 Ranking Member, Senate Agriculture,  
 Nutrition and Forestry Committee  
 United States Senate  
 Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Stabenow and Ranking Member Boozman,

Earthjustice writes to express our strong support for the confirmation of Xochitl Torres Small to the position of Undersecretary for Rural Development in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Earthjustice is the premier nonprofit public interest environmental law organization, utilizing the power of law and strength of partnership to protect public health, ecosystems and wildlife, and combat climate change. Earthjustice partners with a variety of environmental groups, environmental justice organizations, sustainable farming organizations, farmworkers, and tribal partners from rural communities to better protect ecosystems and communities across the country, including by promoting more climate-friendly and less polluting farming practices.

Rural communities have long been bellwethers for the successes and failures of the environmental movement. While farmers have a cabinet-level agency devoted to their interests, there are also millions of other people affected by farm policy who generally have little to no say in it and receive few benefits. While farm owners are a prominent voice in policy, they only represent about two percent of the rural population. Indeed, all too often current farm policy acts against the interests of farmworkers, non-white farmers, and rural people by allowing their air and water to become polluted and providing inadequate protections from toxic chemicals. Current farm policy also often disadvantages the many millions of rural farmworkers and makes it difficult for smaller farmers or farmers of color to gain access to the lucrative federal support programs. Agencies like USDA need not only to serve the diverse, oft-ignored segments of rural America, but to be led by them. Ms. Torres Small has spent years working to address rural inequities in both her personal and professional capacity, including as Congresswoman for the largest non-state congressional district in the country. Ms. Torres Small will bring great expertise regarding environmental justice, and will bring understanding of marginalized communities, particularly communities of color and Tribal Nations, to USDA.

Farm policy and rural environmental policy largely ignores the actual expressed interests of rural communities, who, contrary to assumptions, consistently list clean air and water as their top priorities. Most people in the rural communities are not economically advantaged by current

farm policy -- which encourages consolidation and industrialization -- and the USDA desperately needs a leader who will foreground the interests of all rural residents. USDA's Rural Development program can help improve the quality of life in rural areas by providing financial programs to support essential public facilities and services, including water and sewer systems. Indeed, USDA has at least ten programs dedicated to improving water and wastewater in rural communities. A recent report found more than 2 million Americans currently lack access to running water and basic sanitation in rural areas. Similarly, many agricultural rural communities suffer from unhealthy air quality, largely due to large-scale agriculture, and USDA programming could effectively help reduce and remove that harm. The position of Undersecretary for Rural Development at USDA is uniquely positioned to work with rural disinvested communities to address these issues and others, and Ms. Torres Small is exceptionally suited for this role.

Earthjustice supports confirming Ms. Torres Small as soon as possible and looks forward to partnering with her on a number of rural justice issues.

Sincerely,

Julian Gonzalez  
Legislative Counsel, Earthjustice



## Gulf Coast Center for Law & Policy

P.O. Box 784  
Slidell, Louisiana 70459  
985.643.6186 office  
www.gcclp.org



August 25, 2021

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
Chair, Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and  
Forestry Committee  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Boozman  
Ranking Member, Senate Agriculture,  
Nutrition and Forestry Committee  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Stabenow and Ranking Member Boozman,

On behalf of Gulf Coast Center for Law & Policy, we write to express our strong support for the confirmation of Xochitl Torres Small to the position of Undersecretary for Rural Development at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The Gulf Coast Center for Law & Policy (GCCLP) is a non-profit, public interest law firm and justice center with a mission to advance structural shifts toward climate justice and ecological equity in communities of color on the frontline of climate change. GCCLP envisions social, economic and political systems throughout the Gulf South that promote equity and justice for all people.

We believe the next Undersecretary for Rural Development at USDA must respond to the water justice crisis in rural communities. A recent report found more than 2 million Americans currently lack access to running water and basic sanitation in rural areas. Another report found that between 2016 and 2019, nearly 130 million, or 40%, of Americans received their tap water from systems in violation of federal safety regulations, with communities of color disproportionately affected. 97% of the nation's public water systems are considered small (under 10,000 connections), and many of those are found in rural areas. And these figures do not include the millions of Americans in rural areas served by very small non-federally regulated water systems or private domestic wells. Drought and climate change will only exacerbate the challenge -- as we are once again seeing all too well with the growing drought emergency in the West.

Xochitl Torres Small is very well positioned to serve as the next Undersecretary for Rural Development at USDA. Ms. Torres Small has spent years working to address rural inequities, including as Congresswoman for the largest non-state congressional district in the country. Ms. Torres Small will bring a level of expertise and understanding about the needs of marginalized

## Gulf Coast Center for Law & Policy

P.O. Box 784  
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communities, particularly communities of color and Tribal Nations, that will prove consequential and is sorely needed.

Gulf Coast Center for Law & Policy supports confirming Ms. Torres Small as soon as possible and looks forward to partnering with her on making sure that all rural residents are provided with safe and clean drinking water.

Sincerely,

Kendall Dix  
Policy Lead for Gulf Coast Center for Law & Policy


**Housing Assistance Council**

 1025 Vermont Ave., N.W., Suite 606, Washington, DC 20005, Tel.: 202-842-8600, Fax: 202-347-3441, E-mail: [hac@ruralhome.org](mailto:hac@ruralhome.org)
[www.ruralhome.org](http://www.ruralhome.org)

July 27, 2021

Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow  
 Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, &  
 Forestry  
 United States Senate  
 731 Hart Senate Office Building  
 Washington, DC 20510

Ranking Member John Boozman  
 Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, &  
 Forestry  
 United States Senate  
 141 Hart Senate Office Building  
 Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow and Ranking Member Boozman,

The Housing Assistance Council (HAC) writes to support and urge the swift confirmation of the Honorable Representative Xochitl Torres Small as Under Secretary for Rural Development at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Rural Development and the communities they serve need an Under Secretary for Rural Development who can help rural communities develop and prosper, especially after this position has remained vacant for more than four years. As a member of Congress from 2019-2021, Under Secretary Designate Small was a champion of rural economic development and has the experience necessary to hit the ground running during this challenging time in our nation's history.

Her nomination comes at a time when the capacity challenges of rural communities are being laid bare by the COVID-19 pandemic. Rural housing programs are being strained, rural renters have been out of work for months and the need for safe, stable housing has never been more important. This is truly a time for strong, experienced and innovative leadership to help keep families across the country – including in our nation's most underserved, rural and persistently poor places – in their homes.

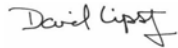
We encourage Under Secretary Designate Small to use her new role to place a renewed focus on the Rural Development programs at USDA. On his first day in office, President Biden signed an [Executive Order](#) affirming the key role of the federal government in advancing racial equity and support for underserved communities. This Executive Order specifically cited rural residents and residents in areas of persistent poverty as underserved communities in need of more equitable federal treatment, and we could not agree more.

Rural housing markets and programs have suffered from bipartisan neglect for decades. Rural America is home to about 20 percent of the U.S. population and covers more than 90 percent of the U.S. landmass. Its small towns and rural regions are diverse demographically and economically, and face a wide array of local challenges and opportunities for developing their communities and housing. While each place is unique, HAC has documented several themes. Persistent poverty is a predominantly rural condition. Habitable rural housing is in severely short supply. The adequate housing that does exist is often unaffordable because rural incomes are low and run well below the national median. Rural housing lacks adequate plumbing and kitchen facilities at a rate almost double the national average. Overcrowding is not uncommon in some regions. Decades of stagnant rural house prices have denied owners the wealth and mobility so often associated with buying a home. And racial inequity is endemic as the result of housing policies and banking practices that excluded rural people of color. Complicating these challenges, a lack of reliable rural data obscures rural realities.

Specifically, we encourage Congress and Under Secretary Designate Small to work together to place a renewed focus on the Rural Development programs at USDA. Rural Development is home to critically important programs that serve low-income rural families and communities, including both the single family and multifamily Rural Housing Service programs. These programs provide affordable homeownership for low-income rural families, and often constitute the only rental option in our nation's smallest communities. There is a growing preservation crisis in the USDA multifamily housing portfolio that demands immediate attention. Programs like the Multifamily Preservation and Revitalization (MPR) program and the Preservation Revolving Loan Fund need significant infusions of funding to combat this crisis. There is a dearth of capacity in rural areas, necessitating a more robust focus on rural capacity building, training and technical assistance through programs like the Rural Community Development Initiative (RCDI), so that small rural nonprofits are able to serve the needs of their communities.

Safe, decent and affordable housing is foundational to health, wealth and other life outcomes. We look forward to working with Under Secretary Designate Small in her new role to place a renewed focus on Rural Development and the needs of rural communities. She brings the knowledge and experience necessary to take the helm at a difficult time in our nation's history, and we wish her well in the confirmation process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Lipset". The signature is written in a cursive style with a stylized "L" at the end.

David Lipsetz  
President & CEO  
Housing Assistance Council



September 10, 2021

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
 Chair, Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and  
 Forestry Committee  
 United States Senate  
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Boozman  
 Ranking Member, Senate Agriculture, Nutrition  
 and Forestry Committee  
 United States Senate  
 Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Stabenow and Ranking Member Boozman,

On behalf of National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLA), we write to express our strong support for the confirmation of Xochitl Torres Small to the position of Undersecretary for Rural Development in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

NHLA is a premier coalition of the nation's 46 prominent Latino organizations. Collectively, NHLA leads the advocacy behind the pressing civil rights and policy issues impacting the 58 million Latinos living in the United States. NHLA strives to increase Latino visibility and leverages its efforts to build a stronger Latino influence in our country's affairs.

Too many rural communities, including many of whom are Latino communities, are still living right now with a water justice crisis. A recent report found more than 2 million Americans currently lack access to running water and basic sanitation in rural areas. Another report found that between 2016 and 2019, nearly 130 million, or 40%, of Americans received their tap water from systems in violation of federal safety regulations, with communities of color disproportionately affected. 97% of the nation's public water systems are considered small (under 10,000 connections), and many of those are found in rural areas. And these figures do not include the millions of Americans in rural areas served by very small non-federally regulated water systems or private domestic wells. Drought and climate change will only exacerbate the challenge -- as we are once again seeing all too well with the growing drought emergency in the West. The next Undersecretary for Rural Development at USDA must respond to the fact that too many rural communities are still living right now with a water justice crisis.

That's why we believe that Xochitl Torres Small is very well positioned to serve as the next Undersecretary for Rural Development at USDA. Ms. Torres Small has spent years working to address rural inequities, including as Congresswoman for the largest non-state congressional district in the country. Ms. Torres Small will bring a level of expertise and understanding about the needs of marginalized communities, particularly communities of color and Tribal Nations, that will prove consequential and is truly needed. Throughout her career Torres Small has shown a level of understanding and accomplishments in not just water security but also rural healthcare and broadband access, all of which our Latino communities care deeply about.

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

- Alianza Americas
- American G.I. Forum
- ASPIRA Association
- AVANCE Inc.
- Casa de Esperanza: National Latino Network
- Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute
- Farmworker Justice
- Green Latinos
- Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities
- Hispanic Federation
- Hispanic National Bar Association
- Hispanics in Philanthropy
- Inter-University Program for Latino Research
- Labor Council for Latin American Advancement
- Latino Justice PRI/DEF
- League of United Latin American Citizens
- MANA, A National Latina Organization
- Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund
- Mi Familia Vota
- NALEO Education Fund
- National Association of Hispanic Federal Executives
- National Association of Latino Arts and Culture
- National Association of Latino Independent Producers
- National Conference of Puerto Rican Women, Inc.
- National Day Laborer Organizing Network
- National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators
- National Hispanic Council on Aging
- National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts
- National Hispanic Media Coalition
- National Hispanic Medical Association
- National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
- National Latinx Psychological Association
- Presente.org
- SER Jobs for Progress
- National Southwest Voter Registration Education Project
- U.S.-Mexico Foundation
- UnidosUS
- United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- United States Hispanic Leadership Institute
- United States-Mexico Chamber of Commerce
- Voto Latino

NHLA supports confirming Ms. Torres Small as soon as possible and looks forward to partnering with her on ensuring our Latino communities in rural areas have equitable access to water, healthcare and broadband.

Sincerely,



Mark Magaña  
Co-Chair, Environmental and Energy Committee, NHLA  
Founding President & CEO, GreenLatinos



Laura Esquivel  
Co-Chair, Environmental and Energy Committee, NHLA  
Vice President, Federal Policy and Advocacy, Hispanic Federation





**Jim Matheson**  
Chief Executive Officer

July 26, 2021

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
Chairwoman, Committee on Agriculture,  
Nutrition, and Forestry  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Boozman  
Ranking Member, Committee on Agriculture,  
Nutrition, and Forestry  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow and Ranking Member Boozman,

On behalf of America's not-for-profit electric cooperatives, I write in strong support of Congresswoman Xochitl Torres Small to serve as the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Under Secretary for Rural Development. As a Congressional staffer, a lawyer focused on natural resources issues, and a Member of Congress representing a large, rural district, Ms. Torres Small has been a champion for a broad range of issues facing rural America. As Under Secretary, we believe she has the experience to help address the unique challenges and opportunities we face.

In 2018, Ms. Torres Small was elected to represent New Mexico's second congressional district, the largest non-at-large district in the country. The district is very diverse and very rural with a population density of only 10 people per square mile. While in Congress, she served on the Agriculture, Homeland Security, and Armed Services Committees and worked on several issues of critical importance to rural utilities.

First, Ms. Torres Small has made it a priority to help bridge the digital divide. The pandemic has highlighted the growing problem of lack of access to high quality internet in rural America. While in Congress, Ms. Torres Small was an active member of the House's Rural Broadband Task Force and was an original supporter of the Affordable Internet for All Act. We believe Ms. Torres Small understands that broadband connectivity is essential to productivity and quality of life in rural America in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, in the same way that deployment of basic rural utilities elevated those communities early in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

Ms. Torres Small is also dedicated to addressing other threats faced by the communities we serve. As a member of the Homeland Security and Armed Services Committees, Ms. Torres Small recognized how resiliency and cybersecurity at rural utilities are critical to our national security. Her understanding of these issues will be essential to the successful administration of the Rural Utilities Service's electric, telecommunications, and water programs.

Lastly, the vast majority of all electric cooperatives are small businesses. Early in the pandemic, she fought to ensure Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan guidance included rural electric cooperatives, farm credit institutions, and non-profit organizations. We appreciate her understanding that small businesses are an essential part of the rural economy.

Ms. Torres Small has worked tirelessly to help improve the lives of the rural communities we all serve. I believe she has demonstrated a sophisticated grasp of the policy issues facing rural America and has the fair-minded perspective to serve in this Administration successfully. We urge you to move expeditiously to confirm her as the next USDA Under Secretary for Rural Development.

Sincerely,

Jim Matheson  
CEO  
NRECA

## NATIONAL RURAL HOUSING COALITION

1155 15<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W., Suite 400, Washington, DC 20005 • (202)393-5229 • fax (202)393-3034 • <http://ruralhousingcoalition.org>

TO: Chairwoman Stabenow, Ranking Member Boozman and Members of the Senate Agriculture Committee

FROM: Bob Rapoza

RE: Nomination of Congresswoman Xochitl Torres Small for the position of Undersecretary for Rural Development

DATE: July 27, 2021

On behalf of the National Rural Housing Coalition (NRHC), a national member organization that supports improved rural housing and community development policies and programs, I write in support of the nomination of Congresswoman Xochitl Torres Small for the position of Undersecretary for Rural Development at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). We believe she will bring new energy and commitment to an important mission of the Department – improving the lives of rural people, especially those with limited means, and their communities – which has been long neglected.

Rural America faces a severe shortage of affordable housing:

- According to US Census data, between 1999 and 2008, the average annual production of new single-family houses in non-metro areas totaled 221,000. In the period 2009 to 2017, average production fell to 68,000 per year.<sup>1</sup>
- Rental housing, where it is available, often costs too much. According to a recent report by the Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies, 41 percent (5 million households) of rural renters are cost-burdened, meaning they pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing costs, and nearly half of rural households (2.1 million) pay more than 50 percent of their income for housing.<sup>2</sup>
- Rural communities lack safe drinking water or adequate waste disposal facilities in the United States. In fact, hundreds of thousands of rural families lack running water in their homes. More than two million Americans do not have access to safe drinking water and sanitation, including 1.4 million who lack access to indoor plumbing.<sup>3</sup>

In its history, USDA's rural development programs have made housing opportunities available to millions of low income families, financing over 2 million home mortgages and some 500,000 units of affordable rental housing.

However, over the last 20 years rural housing assistance has slowed to a trickle. USDA funding for rural home loans for low income families, affordable rental housing and farmworker and related assistance, when accounting for inflation, is down by over 60 percent. As a result, USDA finances less than 7000 mortgages a year for low and very low-income homeowners. Due to

<sup>1</sup> United States Census Bureau. (2018). *Metropolitan Statistical Area Status for New Single-Family Houses Completed*. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/construction/chars/pdf/metro.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies, "America's Rental Housing," 2017. [http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/harvard\\_jchs\\_americas\\_rental\\_housing\\_2017\\_0.pdf](http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/harvard_jchs_americas_rental_housing_2017_0.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> "Closing the Water Gap in the United States." *U.S. Water Alliance*. [http://uswateralliance.org/sites/uswateralliance.org/files/Closing%20the%20Water%20Access%20Gap%20in%20the%20United%20States\\_DIGITAL.pdf](http://uswateralliance.org/sites/uswateralliance.org/files/Closing%20the%20Water%20Access%20Gap%20in%20the%20United%20States_DIGITAL.pdf)



these budget cuts, Agriculture does not provide any direct loans for new construction of affordable rental housing, does little in the way of preserving existing rental housing and annually builds only about 200 units of housing for migrant and seasonal farmworkers.

Unfortunately, the Fiscal Year 2022(FY22) USDA budget did little to address this longstanding decline in support for housing programs, and while details are not yet available, there is little indication that the American Jobs Plan will provide the resources to significantly increase the supply of affordable housing in America's small towns and farming communities.

It is clear USDA will need strong leadership to reinvigorate its Rural Development mission area in general and rural housing in particular. We believe that Congresswoman Torres Small is the right person for the job. She grew up and lives in a rural community in southern New Mexico. During her work as aide to Senator Tom Udall and later as a Member of the House, Rep. Torres Small devoted time and attention to the needs rural New Mexico. Her experience on the House Agriculture Committee and strong interest in building a better rural infrastructure makes her an ideal candidate to direct the Rural Development function at USDA.

Congresswoman Torres-Small is precisely what USDA and rural America need. We strongly support her nomination for Undersecretary for Rural Development.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

July 28, 2021

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

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

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
Chairwoman  
Committee on Agriculture,  
Nutrition, and Forestry  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Boozman  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Agriculture,  
Nutrition, and Forestry  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Chairwoman Stabenow and Ranking Member Boozman:

On behalf of the rural businesses, organizations, and communities we serve, we write to support and urge the swift confirmation of The Honorable Representative Xochitl Torres Small as Under Secretary for Rural Development at the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

As a native rural New Mexican, Congresswoman Torres Small understands firsthand the unique challenges and opportunities rural communities face. Throughout her career, Torres Small has been a dedicated public servant and community advocate. In Congress, Torres Small built a strong track record of supporting rural communities and making investments to address longstanding barriers to rural prosperity.

Congresswoman Torres Small has also made clear that she values the diversity of rural America, which will be critical as Under Secretary in ensuring equitable opportunity for historically disadvantaged groups. These efforts will help build a stronger foundation for our rural economy to support sustainable, long-term growth.

At this critical time, strong leadership at USDA Rural Development is essential. The agency has gone without an Under Secretary for more than four years, and now is the time to have someone as qualified as Congresswoman Torres Small leading USDA Rural Development to ensure the agency can make the greatest positive impact with its infrastructure, housing, rural business, and renewable energy programs.

Our nation is at a critical juncture, and unfortunately, the pandemic has only exacerbated long-standing challenges many rural communities face. We ask for the urgent confirmation of Torres Small to serve as Under Secretary for Rural Development at this important moment.

Sincerely,

National Cooperative Business Association CLUSA  
Rural Community Assistance Partnership  
California Center for Rural Policy  
Center for Rural Strategies  
Coastal Enterprises, Inc.  
Communities Unlimited, Inc.  
Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque

Dairy Producer of New Mexico  
Family Farm Action  
Farm Credit Council  
Housing Assistance Council  
Local Initiatives Support Corporation  
Main Street Project  
National Association of Development Organizations  
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives  
National Farmers Union  
National Milk Producers Federation  
National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA)  
National Rural Health Association  
National Rural Water Association  
NC Rural Center  
Northern Forest Center  
Partners for Rural America  
Pivotal New Mexico  
Rural Coalition  
Rural Community Assistance Corporation  
Rural Community College Alliance  
Rural Community Solutions  
Rural Development Initiatives  
Rural School and Community Trust  
SERCAP  
United Fresh Produce Association  
Western Growers

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 14, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

We proudly support former Representative Xochitl Torres Small to serve as Undersecretary for Rural Development within the Department of Agriculture. As Latino members of the United States Senate, we know that diverse representation beneficially impacts the communities we serve. Representative Torres Small would bring that perspective to Rural Development and use it to help your administration defeat COVID-19, build thriving rural economies, invest in our environment, and achieve racial justice across our country.

Rural Development has the tools to help build what each community needs to thrive, if led by someone with the experience to listen. Whether regions are struggling to sustain a tax base in big western states, or fighting to maintain farmlands in overlooked rural pockets of mostly urban states, each swath of rural America faces unique challenges. In Congress, Representative Torres Small represented the largest non-at-large district in the nation, serving *colonias*, Native American Pueblos and Tribes, and a district with an average of less than ten people per square mile. She tailored her work to each community, helping secure water efficiency funding for parched regions along the Rio Grande, safer infrastructure for one of the most dangerous roadways in the nation, increased payments for telehealth in rural clinics or phone calls where broadband wouldn't reach, and over \$20 million in USDA Rural Connect funding for broadband investments across the district. Rural Development is crucial to build back better because it can reach communities with different needs, and Representative Torres Small has the experience to ensure that these investments reach the true diversity of rural America.

Like us, Representative Torres Small recognizes that strategic infrastructure investments keep rural economic engines running. Representative Torres Small took an active role in the House's Rural Broadband Task force, supporting Majority Whip Jim Clyburn's H.R. 2, the Moving Forward Act, to bring reliable internet to children struggling to learn and small business owners trying to compete in a world-wide market. Representative Torres Small also introduced legislation to better map underserved areas and address the current data barriers to efficient investment. We are confident she will continue to seek out unique ways to help the myriad of utility providers and regional partners collaborate to close the digital divide.

As the granddaughter of migrant farmworkers, Representative Torres Small is committed to investing in rural communities to tackle systemic poverty and give children healthy starts, no

matter where they grow up. In Congress, she introduced legislation to improve telehealth for pregnant women and training for healthcare professionals in rural areas. Good health is impossible without clean water, and Representative Torres Small's experience with water utilities and work to achieve water infrastructure investments in the 2021 Omnibus spending package demonstrate her knowledge in this arena. As Undersecretary for Rural Development, Representative Torres Small will strategically invest in infrastructure to support the health of whole communities, helping to defeat COVID-19 and grow rural economies.

Rural Development has a crucial role in the Administration's plan to build back better, by making sure that diverse rural communities are not, once again, left behind. Representative Torres Small has the insight, experience, and collaborative skills to ensure Rural Development truly reaches rural communities across our country, and we strongly endorse her appointment to Undersecretary for Rural Development.

Sincerely,



BEN RAY LUJÁN  
United States Senator



ROBERT MENENDEZ  
United States Senator



CATHERINE CORTEZ MASTO  
United States Senator



ALEX PADILLA  
United States Senator



*Office of the President*

July 26, 2021

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow, Chairwoman  
The Honorable John Boozman, Ranking Member  
U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry  
328A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow and Ranking Member Boozman:

On behalf of the American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA), I am pleased to write in support of the confirmation of Robert Bonnie as Under Secretary for Food Production and Conservation (FPAC) at the Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA) serves to advance U.S. paper and wood products manufacturers through fact-based public policy and marketplace advocacy. The forest products industry is circular by nature. AF&PA member companies make essential products from renewable and recycle resources, generate renewable bioenergy and are committed to continuous improvement through the industry's sustainability initiative — [Better Practices, Better Planet 2030: Sustainable Products for a Sustainable Future](#). The forest products industry accounts for approximately four percent of the total U.S. manufacturing GDP, manufactures nearly \$300 billion in products annually and employs approximately 950,000 people. The industry meets a payroll of approximately \$60 billion annually and is among the top 10 manufacturing sector employers in 45 states.

Mr. Bonnie has an exceptional understanding of the Department and the importance of working lands and the industries that rely upon them to support the rural economy. He brings eight years of experience working across USDA, including within Natural Resources & Environment (NRE). His NRE role included work with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), which provides conservation funding for private lands. This depth of knowledge across USDA and specifically with NRCS will serve Mr. Bonnie well in his new role as he works to develop consensus-driven solutions in climate and conservation while boosting the rural economy.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Heidi Brock".

Heidi Brock  
President and Chief Executive Officer



*Protecting Water for Western Irrigated Agriculture*

P.O. Box 216 Klamath Falls, OR 97601  
(541)-892-6244 [www.familyfarmalliance.org](http://www.familyfarmalliance.org)

April 23, 2021

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow, Chair  
The Honorable John Boozman, Ranking Member  
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry  
U.S. Senate  
328A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC, 20510

SEND VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Dear Chair Stabenow and Ranking Member Boozman:

On behalf of the Family Farm Alliance (Alliance), we appreciate the opportunity to strongly endorse Robert Bonnie to serve as Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The Alliance is a grassroots organization of family farmers, ranchers, irrigation districts and allied industries in 16 Western states. The Alliance is focused on one mission: To ensure the availability of reliable, affordable irrigation water supplies to Western farmers and ranchers. We are also committed to the fundamental proposition that Western irrigated agriculture must be preserved and protected for a host of economic, sociological, environmental and national security reasons – many of which are often overlooked in the context of other national policy decisions.

Our organization works constructively with many federal departments and agencies, including USDA, which seeks to provide leadership on food, agriculture, natural resources, rural development, nutrition, and related issues based on public policy, the best available science, and effective management. Our membership works particularly close with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, one of the agencies that will fall under Mr. Bonnie's purview.

We believe Robert Bonnie is uniquely qualified to serve as our next Under Secretary. He previously served in the Obama-Biden Administration as Under Secretary for Natural Resource and the Environment and also served then-Agriculture Secretary Vilsack as the Secretary's Senior Advisor for the Environment and Climate. We have worked with him in his current role as Deputy Chief of Staff and Senior Advisor for Climate at USDA, and our experience has been

positive. He has been responsive to issues we've raised, and he appears to be committed to working with U.S. farmers and landowners to help feed and clothe Americans and the world and make climate smart practices work for them in a market-oriented way. This approach builds on his time at the Environmental Defense Fund – an organization we work closely with via our mutual participation in the Western Agriculture and Conservation Coalition - where he focused on developing incentives to reward farmers, ranchers and forest owners for stewardship activities on private lands.

The Family Farm Alliance respectfully requests your support of Robert Bonnie's nomination as the next Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation with USDA. We know he will serve our Nation well in this important position.

Sincerely,



Patrick O'Toole  
President



Dan Keppen  
Executive Director



**\* AMERICAN WOODCOCK SOCIETY \* ARCHERY TRADE ASSOCIATION \*  
ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES \* BOONE AND CROCKETT  
CLUB \* CALIFORNIA WATERFOWL \* CAMP FIRE CLUB OF AMERICA \* CATCH-  
A-DREAM FOUNDATION \* CONGRESSIONAL SPORTSMEN'S FOUNDATION \*  
CONSERVATION FORCE \* DALLAS SAFARI CLUB \* DELTA WATERFOWL \*  
DUCKS UNLIMITED \* HOUSTON SAFARI CLUB \* IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF  
AMERICA \* MASTERS OF FOXHOUNDS ASSOCIATION \* MULE DEER  
FOUNDATION \* NATIONAL BOBWHITE CONSERVATION INITIATIVE \*  
NATIONAL DEER ASSOCIATION \* NATIONAL SHOOTING SPORTS FOUNDATION  
\* NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION \* NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE  
ASSOCIATION \* NATIONAL WILD TURKEY FEDERATION \* NORTH AMERICAN  
FALCONERS ASSOCIATION \* NORTH AMERICAN GROUSE PARTNERSHIP \*  
PHEASANTS FOREVER \* QUAIL FOREVER \* RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY \* THE  
CONSERVATION FUND \* THEODORE ROOSEVELT CONSERVATION  
PARTNERSHIP \* WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE \* WILDLIFE  
MISSISSIPPI \* WILD SHEEP FOUNDATION \***

April 26, 2021

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
Chairwoman  
Senate Committee on Agriculture  
328A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Boozman  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Agriculture  
192 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow and Ranking Member Boozman,

The undersigned organizations, which represent millions of hunters, anglers, and wildlife enthusiasts are writing to express our strong support for Robert Bonnie to serve as Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation.

Robert's experience as Under Secretary of Agriculture for Natural Resources and Environment has provided him firsthand knowledge of The Department of Agriculture's programs, structure, and operations. That experience will be invaluable to ensure Robert's continued success in his new role.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service within the FPAC's portfolio, is among the most important agencies for hunters and anglers. Robert is a lifelong sportsman with an unparalleled track record of success working on behalf of our nation's farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners; he is an ideal fit for this role.

Robert has an unwavering commitment to working on a bipartisan basis to achieve shared habitat and conservation goals for sportsmen and sportswomen. For these reasons, we urge the Committee to advance Robert Bonnie's confirmation, so that the Senate may quickly act to confirm him to this critical position at the Department of Agriculture.

Sincerely,

American Woodcock Society  
Archery Trade Association  
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies  
Boone and Crockett Club  
California Waterfowl  
Camp Fire Club of America  
Catch-A-Dream Foundation  
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation  
Conservation Force  
Dallas Safari Club  
Delta Waterfowl  
Ducks Unlimited  
Houston Safari Club  
Izaak Walton League of America  
Masters of Foxhounds Association  
Mule Deer Foundation  
National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative  
National Deer Association  
National Shooting Sports Foundation  
National Wildlife Federation  
National Wildlife Refuge Association  
National Wild Turkey Federation  
North American Falconers Association  
North American Grouse Partnership  
Pheasants Forever  
Quail Forever  
Ruffed Grouse Society  
The Conservation Fund  
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership  
Wildlife Management Institute  
Wildlife Mississippi  
Wild Sheep Foundation

July 26, 2021

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
Chairwoman  
U.S. Senate Committee  
on Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Boozman  
Ranking Member  
U.S. Senate Committee  
on Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow and Ranking Member Boozman:

As 59 forest and forest products organizations, we represent the nation's full forest-sector value chain supporting 2.9 million American jobs. We urge you to confirm Robert Bonnie as Under Secretary for Food Production and Conservation (FPAC) at the Department of Agriculture. This role oversees critical agricultural production and conservation programs that serve the full array of forest owners, farmers, ranchers, and other landowners. Mr. Bonnie is the right person at the right time for this important role. He is a nominee with an exceptional understanding of the department, the importance of working lands to meet societal needs, and of the climate and conservation challenges our country is facing.

Through his distinguished career promoting rural conservation and climate solutions, Mr. Bonnie has continuously engaged forest owners, farmers, and ranchers to identify and advance outcomes that are mutually beneficial to the climate and the landowner. During his time at Duke University and the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), he built consensus across the political spectrum to advance solutions to natural resource and climate challenges that economically benefit working lands and rural communities.

At the Department of Agriculture, Mr. Bonnie brings eight years of experience working across the department and specifically within Natural Resources & Environment (NRE). His NRE role included supervision of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, which involved managing the largest government source of conservation funding on private lands. This depth of experience with the department will serve Mr. Bonnie well in his new role as he continues to find creative and consensus-driven solutions in climate and conservation.

After leaving USDA, Mr. Bonnie has advanced ways to increase the role of private working forests and forest products as a solution to address a variety of pressing needs, including climate change mitigation, wildlife conservation, and rural investment. He has provided leadership on climate within the forestry community, serving as the neutral convenor for the [CEO Principles on Working Forests as a Natural Climate Solution](#), signed by 43 CEOs of leading private forestry companies along with the CEOs of the National Alliance of Forest Owners, The Nature Conservancy, the Environmental Defense Fund, American Forests, and the American Forest Foundation. He also served as a steering committee member of the [Forest-Climate Working Group](#), a sector-wide coalition focused on forests and forest products as natural climate solutions. His leadership in each of these efforts has been a catalytic force for finding common ground between diverse interests to achieve outcomes at scale.

Mr. Bonnie has also been a champion of wildlife conservation, and has been very active in working with the forestry sector and a breadth of stakeholders to advance collaborative outcomes on private land, following the model of efforts like the [Wildlife Conservation Initiative](#)

and Conservation without Conflict. Mr. Bonnie's leadership in such efforts have increased confidence in working land stewardship and is leading to real impact.

We are confident that, if confirmed as Under Secretary for Food Production and Conservation, Mr. Bonnie will draw on his network and experience to build broad stakeholder support for solutions that achieve climate and conservation objectives by supporting privately owned working lands and increasing rural economic prosperity.

Thank you for your consideration of Mr. Bonnie's nomination, and we welcome a speedy and bipartisan confirmation so he can begin his service with broad congressional support.

Sincerely,

Alabama Forestry Association	Massachusetts Forest Alliance
Arkansas Forestry Association	Maine Forest Products Council
American Forest Foundation	Merrill & Ring Inc.
American Forests	Michigan-California Timber Company
American Wood Council	Mississippi Forestry Association
BBC Land, LLC	Molpus Woodlands Group
BTG Pactual Timberland Investment Group	National Alliance of Forest Owners
Campbell Global	National Association of State Foresters
California Forestry Association	NCX
Caswell Thompson	New Forests
CatchMark	New Hampshire Timberland Owners
Composite Panel Association	Association
Coastal Forest Resources Company	North Carolina Forestry Association
The Conservation Fund	Pingree Associates, Inc.
Empire State Forest Products Association	Port Blakely
Enviva	PotlatchDeltic
Federal Forest Resource Coalition	Rayonier
Florida Forestry Association	Resource Management Service LLC
The Forestland Group	Salt River Project
Forest Resources Association	Sierra Pacific Industries
Forest Landowners Association	Southeastern Lumber Manufacturers
Forestry Association of South Carolina	Association
Georgia Forestry Association	Starker Forests Inc.
Giustina Resources	Texas Forestry Association
Green Diamond Resource Company	Theodore Roosevelt Conservation
Hancock Natural Resource Group	Partnership
The Hardwood Federation	Timberland Investment Resources, LLC
Idaho Forest Group	Washington Forest Protection Association
Jamestown, L.P.	The Westervelt Company
Lone Rock Resources	West Virginia Forestry Association
Louisiana Forestry Association	Weyerhaeuser

CC: Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

July 21, 2021

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
Chairwoman  
U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture,  
Nutrition, and Forestry  
328A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Boozman  
Ranking Member  
U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture,  
Nutrition, and Forestry  
328A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow and Ranking Member Boozman:

We write to express our support for the nomination of Robert Bonnie to serve as the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation. The Under Secretary position is critical in overseeing the administration of a wide variety of USDA farm and conservation programs that directly serve farmers, ranchers, foresters, and landowners. Bonnie's prior experiences show he is dedicated to serving U.S. agricultural producers, and improving the lands Americans depend on for food, fiber, water, recreation, and environmental enhancement. These experiences and his deep background knowledge make Bonnie uniquely qualified to serve as the USDA's next Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation.

Robert Bonnie's understanding of agriculture and working lands can be traced back to his childhood when he was raised on his parents' horse farm near Louisville and spent time visiting Groton Plantation, which is where his passion for forestry and nature was developed. Bonnie went on to receive a master's degree in forestry from Duke University and later became a licensed forester. These experiences benefited Bonnie when he was nominated and later served as Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment at USDA. During his time in this position, Bonnie led the administration of the Natural Resources Conservation Service as well as the Forest Service. Bonnie was widely recognized as a hardworking, solutions-oriented public servant by public and private stakeholders, reflected by forest industry organizations, farm, conservation and environmental groups joining together to support his nomination.

Robert Bonnie is also uniquely qualified to lead the Farm Production and Conservation mission area due to his expertise in working lands approaches to conservation and voluntary incentive-based climate and conservation practices for farmers, ranchers, foresters, and landowners. Bonnie is a proven leader on working lands agriculture issues and his approach has been tested. Bonnie is someone who listens intently, gathers facts to understand various stakeholder positions, and weighs all options as he makes decisions. He is thoughtful and pragmatic, and someone who will hit the ground running on day one.

We strongly urge the Committee to advance Robert Bonnie's nomination in a timely manner, so he can continue the work of serving agricultural producers, foresters, and landowners. We

believe Bonnie's depth and breadth of experience and knowledge in working lands conservation and production will make him an excellent Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation.

Regards,

Agricultural Retailers Association  
American Association of Crop Insurers  
American Biogas Council  
American Farm Bureau Federation  
American Farmland Trust  
American Feed Industry Association  
AmericanHort  
American Seed Trade Association  
American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers  
American Soybean Association  
American Sugar Alliance  
Association of Equipment Manufacturers  
Biotechnology Innovation Organization  
Corn Refiners Association  
Cotton Warehouse Association of America  
Crop Insurance and Reinsurance Bureau  
Crop Insurance Professionals Association  
CropLife America  
Ducks Unlimited  
Environmental Defense Fund  
Farm Credit Council  
The Fertilizer Institute  
FMI – The Food Industry Association  
International Dairy Foods Association  
National Alliance of Forest Owners  
National Association of Conservation Districts  
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture  
National Association of State Foresters  
National Association of Wheat Growers  
National Conservation District Employees Association  
National Cotton Council  
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives  
National Farmers Union  
National Grain and Feed Association  
National Milk Producers Federation  
National Oilseed Producers Association  
National Pork Producers Council  
National Potato Council  
National Sorghum Producers  
National Turkey Federation

National Wild Turkey Federation  
National Wildlife Federation  
Northwest Horticultural Council  
Panhandle Peanut Growers Association  
Pollinator Partnership  
Produce Marketing Association  
Rural & Agriculture Council of America  
Society of American Florists  
Southwest Council of Agribusiness  
United Egg Producers  
United Fresh Produce Association  
U.S. Apple Association  
United States Cattlemen's Association  
USA Rice Federation  
Western Growers Association  
Western Landowners Alliance  
Western Peanut Growers Association



July 20, 2021

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Senate Committee on Agriculture
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Boozman
Senate Committee on Agriculture
192 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senators Stabenow and Boozman:

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association, Public Lands Council, and American Sheep Industry Association are pleased to support the nomination of Robert Bonnie to serve as the USDA Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation. NCBA is the nation's largest and oldest national trade association representing the U.S. beef cattle industry with over 250,000 producers represented, both directly and through its 44 state affiliates. PLC is the only national organization representing the 22,000 western ranchers who hold federal grazing permits and care for over 250 million acres of federal public lands. Since 1865, ASI has been the national trade organization representing the interests of more than 100,000 sheep producers located throughout the country who produce America's lamb and wool.

Mr. Bonnie's experience at USDA will serve both the agency and America's agricultural producers as he leads implementation of conservation, insurance, and risk management programs. In his previous roles as Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment and Senior Advisor for the Environment and Climate, Mr. Bonnie laid a foundation from which farm programs will grow and evolve during the Biden Administration. As USDA sets its sights on increasing access to farm programs, Mr. Bonnie's in-depth knowledge and commitment to the agency's mission will be exceedingly valuable.

America's farmers and ranchers rely on clean air and water for the health of their livestock, families, and communities. Often, assistance and resources provided through USDA conservation programs are necessary to ensure that farms remain both environmentally and economically sustainable. The success of these programs hinges on clear guidelines for compliance and accessibility to all producers. Clear rules are key to ensuring that farmers across the country can continue producing the world's safest food supply. Additionally, access to technical assistance and funding ensures that farmers are maximizing profit while minimizing environmental impact.

NCBA, PLC, and ASI stand ready to engage with Mr. Bonnie on conservation issues important to the U.S. beef cattle and sheep industries.

Jerry Bohn
President
National Cattlemen's Beef Association

Niels Hansen
President
Public Lands Council

Susan Shultz
President
American Sheep Industry Association





July 27, 2021

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow, Chairwoman  
The Honorable John Boozman, Ranking Member  
U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry  
328A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow and Ranking Member Boozman:

The National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) writes in support of the nomination of Robert Bonnie to serve as Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC). In this important position, Mr. Bonnie will oversee a key mission area and serve a critical role for the nearly 40,000 corn grower members that NCGA represents.

As production agriculture continues to face multiple challenges from climate to markets, the Under Secretary for FPAC will be an important figure for responding to farmer needs. Robert Bonnie, having previously served as the Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment, has experience working with a variety of stakeholders and overseeing important USDA agencies. NCGA appreciates the outreach and open communication from Mr. Bonnie as he led the USDA transition team for the Biden-Harris Administration. These experiences, his commitment to bipartisanship, along with his ongoing work with farmers, ranchers, and conservationists, will ensure Mr. Bonnie's success in his new role.

The agencies and local offices within FPAC's mission area interact with our members frequently through the administration of commodity and disaster programs within the Farm Service Agency, crop insurance via the Risk Management Agency, and voluntary conservation programs and technical assistance through the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The Commodity Credit Corporation supports producers through implementation of these mandatory Farm Bill programs, as authorized by the Agriculture Committees. Mr. Bonnie's extensive previous experience, knowledge and leadership will make him an excellent Under Secretary for FPAC.

NCGA looks forward to your expedient consideration of Robert Bonnie for the Under Secretary for FPAC and our continued partnership with the Committee on critical conservation, risk management programs, and issues facing the nation's corn growers.

Sincerely,

[WWW.NCGA.COM](http://WWW.NCGA.COM)

NATIONAL OFFICE  
632 Cepi Drive  
Chesterfield, MO 63005  
(636) 733-9004

WASHINGTON, DC OFFICE  
20 F Street NW, Suite 900  
Washington, DC 20001  
(202) 628-7001



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Linder". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first and last names being the most prominent.

John Linder, President  
National Corn Growers Association

[WWW.NCGA.COM](http://WWW.NCGA.COM)

NATIONAL OFFICE  
632 Cepi Drive  
Chesterfield, MO 63005  
(636) 733-9004

WASHINGTON, DC OFFICE  
20 F Street NW, Suite 900  
Washington, DC 20001  
(202) 628-7001



July 28, 2021

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
Chairwoman  
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and  
Forestry  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Boozman  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and  
Forestry  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow and Ranking Member Boozman:

I am writing to you on behalf of the members of The Fertilizer Institute (TFI) to strongly endorse the nomination of Robert Bonnie to serve as Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Bonnie's prior service as Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment and as Senior Advisor to Secretary Vilsack at USDA, combined with his private sector experience, makes him uniquely qualified for this important position that provides critical support for America's farmers and ranchers.

TFI represents the nation's fertilizer industry, which includes companies that are engaged in all aspects of the fertilizer supply chain. Together, our industry supports nearly 500,000 high-quality American jobs and has an economic impact of more than \$130 billion annually, supporting communities in all 50 states. Our industry is essential to ensuring that American farmers receive the nutrients they need to enrich the soil and, in turn, grow the crops that feed our nation and the world. Half of all food grown around the world today is made possible only through fertilizer. As food demand grows, farmers around the world will continue to rely on fertilizer to increase production efficiency by producing more food while using less land and helping reduce deforestation.

We appreciate Robert's collaborative approach of bringing all stakeholders to the table and we look forward to working with him to promote science-based, sustainable fertilizer best management practices through a voluntary program called the 4R Nutrient Stewardship Program (4Rs – Right Source, Right Rate, Right Time, Right Place) which helps farmers maximize crop yields while minimizing the environmental impact of nutrient use. The key to the success of sustainability programs like the 4Rs is partnerships. Nobody understands this better than Robert. Working together with farmers, agricultural retailers, federal, state and local governments and environmental organizations, we can and will achieve positive outcomes.

In addition to his focus on collaboration, Robert's strong familiarity and understanding of the importance of voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs for farmers and ranchers will be a tremendous benefit for this important role.

For the aforementioned reasons, we strongly support Robert Bonnie to be Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation at the U.S. Department of Agriculture and we urge your support of his confirmation.

4201 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 700  
Arlington, VA 22203  
Tel - 202-962-0490  
Fax - 202-962-0577  
[www.tfi.org](http://www.tfi.org)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Corey Rosenbusch', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Corey Rosenbusch  
President and CEO

CC: Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry

4201 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 700  
Arlington, VA 22203  
Tel - 202-962-0490  
Fax - 202-962-0577  
[www.tfi.org](http://www.tfi.org)



Joe S. Whitworth, President & CEO

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 Brad Preble  
 Gia Schneider  
 Dr. Sara Spangelo  
 Tony Trunzo  
 Margaret Tuchmann

Chad Brown, Advisor  
 Arthine Cossey van Duyne, Advisor  
 Graciela Gomez Cowger, Advisor  
 David Howitt, Advisor  
 Marian Singer, Advisor  
 Liz Spence, Advisor

**emeritus**

Tim Boyle  
 Randy Labbe

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The Freshwater Trust is a 501(c)(3)  
 nonprofit organization, and its tax ID  
 is 93-0843521.

27 April 2021

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow, Chair  
 The Honorable John Boozman, Ranking Member  
 Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry  
 United States Senate  
 328AA Russell Senate Office Building  
 Washington, DC 20510

SENT VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Dear Chair Stabenow and Ranking Member Boozman:

On behalf of The Freshwater Trust (TFT), please accept this as a vigorous endorsement of Robert Bonnie to serve as Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation for U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

TFT works at the intersection of innovation, finance, and technology to devise and implement conservation actions on the ground using market-based approaches. We work collaboratively with private landowners, funders, corporations and regulated entities as well as federal and state agencies to deliver quantified environmental outcomes on time and on budget in ways that benefit local sustainable economies.

Given his track record of taking big ideas and putting them to work in the real world, we strongly believe that Robert Bonnie is singularly qualified to serve as Under Secretary at this critical juncture in our nation's history. In view of the economic and environmental headwinds facing the American farmer, his ability to coordinate across USDA and the broader federal family to align effort and resources to support the next generation of agriculture and conservation is a must-have. He has previously served in the Obama-Biden Administration as Under Secretary for Natural Resources and the Environment and as Senior Advisor for the Environment and Climate for then-Secretary Vilsack. Having worked with him for positive results in these capacities previously, we stand ready to do so again. His deep and dual commitment to agriculture and the environment enables him to pursue integrated solutions that benefit ranchers and farmers as well as the watersheds wherein they operate.

The Freshwater Trust respectfully requests your support of Robert Bonnie's nomination for Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation, as he will execute the duties and responsibilities of this post with great care and unyielding commitment.

In earnest,

Joe S. Whitworth  
 President & CEO

**U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION & FORESTRY**  
**Questions for Executive Nominees**  
**117<sup>th</sup> Congress**

**1. Basic Biographical Information**

Please provide the following information.

<i>Position to Which You Have Been Nominated</i>	
<b>Name of Position</b>	<b>Date of Nomination</b>
Under Secretary of Agriculture for Rural Development	6/18/2021

<i>Current Legal Name</i>			
<b>First Name</b>	<b>Middle Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Suffix</b>
Xochitl	Liana	Torres Small	

<i>Addresses</i>					
<b>Residential Address</b> (do not include street address)			<b>Office Address</b> (include street address)		
			Street: N/A		
<b>City:</b> Las Cruces	<b>State:</b> NM	<b>Zip:</b> 88005	<b>City:</b>	<b>State:</b>	<b>Zip:</b>

<i>Other Names Used</i>								
<b>First Name</b>	<b>Middle Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Suffix</b>	<small>Check if Maiden Name</small>	<b>Name Used From</b> (Year) (Check box if estimate)	<b>Name Used To</b> (Month/Year) (Check box if estimate)		
Liana	Atzán Irwin	Torres		X	11/1984	Est X	11/2000	Est X
Xochitl Liana	Atzlán Irwin	Torres		X	08/1990	Est X	07/2012	Est X
Xochitl Liana	Atzlán Irwin	Torres Small			07/2012	X	01/2016	X

<i>Birth Year and Place</i>	
<b>Year of Birth</b> (Do not include month and day.)	<b>Place of Birth</b>
1984	Portland, Oregon

<i>Marital Status</i>					
Check All That Describe Your Current Situation:					
<b>Never Married</b>	<b>Married</b>	<b>Separated</b>	<b>Annulled</b>	<b>Divorced</b>	<b>Widowed</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<i>Spouse's Name</i> (current spouse only)			
<b>Spouse's First Name</b>	<b>Spouse's Middle Name</b>	<b>Spouse's Last Name</b>	<b>Spouse's Suffix</b>
Nathan	Phillip	Small	

<i>Spouse's Other Names Used</i> (current spouse only)						
<b>First Name</b>	<b>Middle Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Suffix</b>	<small>Check if Maiden Name</small>	<b>Name Used From</b> (Year) (Check box if estimate)	<b>Name Used To</b> (Month/Year) (Check box if estimate)
N/A					Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Est <input type="checkbox"/>
					Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Est <input type="checkbox"/>

<i>Children's Names (if over 18)</i>			
<b>First Name</b>	<b>Middle Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Suffix</b>
N/A			

**2. Education**

List all post-secondary schools attended.

<b>Name of School</b>	<b>Type of School</b> (vocational/technical/trade school, college/university/military college, correspondence/distance/extension/online school)	<b>Date Began School</b> (month/year) (check box if estimate)	<b>Date Ended School</b> (month/year) (check box if estimate) (check "present" box if still in school)	<b>Degree</b>	<b>Date Awarded</b>
University of New Mexico School of Law	Law School	08/2012	05/2015 Est <input type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/>	Juris Doctor	05/2015
University of Texas El Paso	University	05/2006	07/2006 Est <input type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/>		
Georgetown University	University	08/2004 Est <input type="checkbox"/>	05/2007 Est <input type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/>	Bachelors in Science of Foreign Service	05/2007



### 3. Employment

(A) In reverse chronological order, list all of your employment activities, including unemployment and self-employment. If the employment activity was military duty, list separate employment activity periods to show each change of military duty station. Do not list employment before your 18th birthday unless to provide a minimum of two years of employment history.

<u>Type of Employment</u> (Active Military Duty Station, National Guard/Reserve, USPS Commissioned Corps, Other Federal employment, State Government (Non-Federal Employment), Self-employment, Unemployment, Federal Contractor, Non-Government Employment (excluding self-employment), Other)	<u>Name of Your Employer/Assigned Duty Station</u>	<u>Most Recent Position Title/Rank</u>	<u>Location</u> (City and State only)	<u>Date Employment Began</u> (month/year) (check box if estimate)	<u>Date Employment Ended</u> (month/year) (check box if estimate) (check "present" box if still employed)
State Government	University of New Mexico	Adjunct Professor	Las Cruces, NM	05/2021	Present
Self-Employment	Self	Contractor	Las Cruces, NM	04/2021	06/22/21
Unemployed	N/A	N/A	Las Cruces, NM	01/2021	Est 04/2021
Other Federal employment	United States Congress	United States Representative	Washington, DC	Est 01/2019	Est 01/2021
Unemployed	N/A	N/A	Las Cruces, NM	Est 06/2018	Est 01/2019
Non-Government Employment	Kemp Smith LLC	Associate Attorney	Las Cruces, NM	Est 09/2016	Est 06/2018
Unemployed	N/A	N/A	Las Cruces, NM	08/2016	09/2016
Other Federal employment	United States District Court, District of New Mexico	Law Clerk	Las Cruces, NM	Est 08/2015	Est 08/2016
Unemployed	N/A	N/A	Las Cruces, NM	Est 05/2015	Est 08/2015
State Government	University of New Mexico	Senior Tutor	Albuquerque, NM	Est 01/2014	Est 05/2015
Non-Government Employment	Law Office of Pamela D. Kennedy	Legal Clerk	Albuquerque, NM	Est 01/2015	Est 04/2015
Non-Government Employment	Law Office of Lee Peters	Legal Clerk	Las Cruces, NM	Est 05/2014	Est 08/2014

<b>Type of Employment</b> (Active Military Duty Station, National Guard/Reserve, USPHS Commissioned Corps, Other Federal employment, State Government (Non-Federal Employment), Self-employment, Unemployment, Federal Contractor, Non-Government Employment (excluding self-employment), Other)	<b>Name of Your Employer/Assigned Duty Station</b>	<b>Most Recent Position Title/Rank</b>	<b>Location</b> (City and State only)	<b>Date Employment Began</b> (month/year) (check box if estimate)	<b>Date Employment Ended</b> (month/year) (check box if estimate) (check "present" box if still employed)
Unemployed	N/A	N/A	Albuquerque, NM	08/2013 <input type="checkbox"/> Est	01/2014 <input type="checkbox"/> Est
Self Employment	Self	Consultant on Navajo Water Settlement	Santa Fe, NM	05/2013 <input type="checkbox"/> Est	08/2013 <input type="checkbox"/> Est
State Government	Utton Transboundary Resources Center	Research Assistant	Albuquerque, NM	01/2013 <input type="checkbox"/> Est	05/2013 <input type="checkbox"/> Est
Unemployed	N/A	N/A	Albuquerque, NM	07/2012 <input type="checkbox"/> Est	01/2013 <input type="checkbox"/> Est
Other Federal employment	Office of United States Senator Tom Udall	Field Representative	Las Cruces, NM	01/2009 <input type="checkbox"/> Est	07/2012 <input type="checkbox"/> Est
Unemployed	N/A	N/A	Las Cruces, NM	11/2008 <input type="checkbox"/> Est	1/2009 <input type="checkbox"/> Est
Non-Government Employment	Democratic Party of New Mexico	Field Organizer	Las Cruces, NM	05/2008 <input type="checkbox"/> Est	11/2008 <input type="checkbox"/> Est
Non-Government Employment	Planned Parenthood Federation of America	Government Relations Associate	Washington, DC	08/2006 <input type="checkbox"/> Est	05/2008 <input type="checkbox"/> Est
Non-Government Employment	Georgetown University Office of Residence Life	Resident Assistant	Washington DC	08/2006 <input type="checkbox"/> Est	05/2007 <input type="checkbox"/> Est
Unemployed	N/A	N/A	Las Cruces, DC	05/2006 <input type="checkbox"/> Est	08/2006 <input type="checkbox"/> Est
Non-Government Employment	Georgetown University Center for Social Justice	Research Assistant	Washington, DC	09/2005 <input type="checkbox"/> Est	05/2006 <input type="checkbox"/> Est
Non-Government Employment	Georgetown University School of Continuing Studies	Resident Assistant	Washington, DC	05/2005 <input type="checkbox"/> Est	08/2005 <input type="checkbox"/> Est
Non-Government Employment	DC Schools Program	Tutor	Washington, DC	08/2004 <input type="checkbox"/> Est	05/2006 <input type="checkbox"/> Est
Non-Government Employment	TMC Designs Engineering Firm	Administrative Assistant	Las Cruces, NM	02/2004 <input type="checkbox"/> Est	08/2004 <input type="checkbox"/> Est

Unemployed	N/A	N/A	Mbabane Eswatini, /Las Cruces, NM	11/2003	Est <input type="checkbox"/>	02/2004	Est <input type="checkbox"/>
------------	-----	-----	---	---------	---------------------------------	---------	---------------------------------

**(B) List any advisory, consultative, honorary or other part-time service or positions with federal, state, or local governments, not listed elsewhere.**

<u>Name of Government Entity</u>	<u>Name of Position</u>	<u>Date Service Began</u> (month/year) (check box if estimate)	<u>Date Service Ended</u> (month/year) (check box if estimate) (check "present" box if still serving)
New Mexico Public School Capital Outlay Oversight Task Force	Member	01/2017 Est <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	01/2018 Est Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

#### 4. Honors and Awards

**List all scholarships, fellowships, honorary degrees, civilian service citations, military medals, academic or professional honors, honorary society memberships and any other special recognition for outstanding service or achievement.**

During Congress: 2019 Mexican American Law Student Association (University of New Mexico) Fighting for Justice Award; Emerge New Mexico Democratic Woman of the Year; Georgetown University College Democrats 2019 Alumna of the Year; Border Patrol Agent Family Network 2019 Community Impact Award; American Life Sciences Innovation Council 2020 Champion of Health Care Innovation; Las Cruces International Film Festival Hometown 2019 Hero Award; New Mexico Democratic Party 2019 Rising Star Award.

From University of New Mexico School of Law: Alumni Full Merit Scholar; Co-Editor-in-Chief, *Natural Resources Journal*; Helen Carter Writing Prize; ALI-CLE Award; Faculty Award; LexisNexis Award; NM Court of Appeals Advocacy Tournament Winner; CALI Awards: Con. Law; Con. Rights I; Elements of Legal Writing II; Oil & Gas; Property I; Graduated *summa cum laude*

From New Mexico State University: Domenici Conference Student Panelist

From Georgetown University: Dean's List, three semesters; Second Honors, two semesters; Graduated *cum laude*

From United World College USA Selections Committee: Davis Scholar, full tuition, room and board scholarship.

### 5. Memberships

List all memberships that you have held in professional, social, business, fraternal, scholarly, civic, or charitable organizations in the last 10 years.

Unless relevant to your nomination, you do NOT need to include memberships in charitable organizations available to the public as a result of a tax deductible donation of \$1,000 or less, Parent-Teacher Associations or other organizations connected to schools attended by your children, athletic clubs or teams, automobile support organizations (such as AAA), discounts clubs (such as Groupon or Sam's Club), or affinity memberships/consumer clubs (such as frequent flyer memberships).

<u>Name of Organization</u>	<u>Dates of Your Membership</u> (You may approximate.)	<u>Position(s) Held</u>
Peace Lutheran Church	09/2016 – Present	Member, Former Choir Member, Former Expanding Vision Board Member
New Mexico Bar Association	09/2015 – Present (Inactive since 2020)	Dues paying member
Hispanic Bar Association	09/2015 – Present	Dues paying member
La Semilla Food Center	11/2016 – 01/2018	Board of Director
Mountain View Market Co-op	11/2008 – 01/2020	Former Board of Director
Leadership Las Cruces	08/2017 – 02/2018	Member
United World College United States Selection Committee	04/2010 – 07/2016	Member, Chairwoman
Natural Resources Journal	09/2013 – 05/2015	Staff editor, Co-Editor-in-Chief
Native American Law Student Association	09/2012 – 05/2015	Dues paying member
Environmental Law Society	09/2012 – 05/2015	Dues paying member

### 6. Political Activity

(2019) **Have you ever been a candidate for or been elected or appointed to a political office?**

**Yes**  **No** (If yes, please complete the chart below)

<u>Name of Office</u>	<u>Elected/Appointed/ Candidate Only</u>	<u>Year(s) Election Held or Appointment Made</u>	<u>Term of Service (if applicable)</u>
United States Representative for New Mexico's Second Congressional District	Elected	2018	2019 – 2021

**(B) List any offices held in or services rendered, including volunteer services, to a political party or election committee during the last 10 years that you have not listed elsewhere.**

<u>Name of Party/Election Committee</u>	<u>Office/Services Rendered</u>	<u>Responsibilities</u>	<u>Dates of Service</u>
Democratic Party of New Mexico	State Central Committee (Automatic pursuant to Rule 1.2.6 as a United States Representative)	Voting member	01/2019 – 01/2021
Nathan Small for State House	Introduced spouse at several events, led canvasses and phone banks, organized GOTV efforts.	Volunteer organizer for husband's campaign	09/2016 – 11/2016

**(C) Itemize all individual political contributions of \$200 or more that you have made in the past five years to any individual, campaign organization, political party, political action committee, or similar entity. Please list each individual contribution and not the total amount contributed to the person or entity during the year.**

<u>Name of Recipient</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Year of Contribution</u>
Melanie Stansbury (United States House of Representatives)	\$500	2021
Marcus Montoya (New Mexico District Attorney)	\$500	2020
Laura Childress (New Mexico House of Representatives)	\$250	2020
Linda Bessin (Burbank City Council)	\$500	2020
Paul Baca (New Mexico House of Representatives)	\$500	2019
Nathan Small (New Mexico House of Representatives)	\$2,000	2017
Democratic Party of New Mexico	\$240	2016

### 7. Publications and Speeches

(A) List the titles, publishers and dates of books, articles, reports or other published materials that you have written, including articles published on the Internet. Please provide the Committee with all listed publications via email or other digital format and list all required publications even if no copy of the publication is available to provide.

<u>Title</u>	<u>Publisher</u>	<u>Date(s) of Publication</u>
Republican lies helped defeat us in 2020. We're going to shield House Democrats in 2022.	USA Today	04/05/2021
On Trying, Winning, and Failing	Las Cruces Sun News	01/04/2021
My First Year in Congress	Las Cruces Sun News	01/12/2020
House Should Vote on Trade Deal	Albuquerque Journal	12/18/2019
Let the Facts and Truth Come to Light	Las Cruces Sun News	10/10/2019
Water Use and Recycling in Hydraulic Fracturing: Creating a Regulatory Pilot for Smarter Water Use in the West	Natural Resources Journal	2015, Vol. 55, Iss. 2
Introduction	Natural Resources Journal	2015, Vol. 55, Iss. 1
Book Review: Contested Waters, An Environmental History of the Colorado River	Natural Resources Journal	2014, Vol. 54, Iss. 1



**(B) List any formal speeches you have delivered during the last 10 years relevant to the position to which you have been nominated, and all speeches you have delivered related to any topic for the last five years. Include any testimony to Congress or any other legislative or administrative body. Please provide the Committee with copies of all listed speeches via email or other digital format and list all known required speeches even if no copy is available to provide.**

Given my previous role as an elected official from 2018 to 2020, I participated in numerous public events. I have included below any speeches where I am likely to be listed in materials as a speaker and all speeches relevant to Rural Development, events that I participated in and had a role with substantive policy discussion (panels), and all hearings I chaired and floor speeches I delivered.

<b>Title/Topic</b>	<b>Place/Audience</b>	<b>Date(s) of Speech</b>
Eastern New Mexico Governmental Forum; panel participant	Zoom Event	6/21/2021
Problem Solvers Caucus News Conference; speaker – COVID-19 relief	Capitol – Washington, DC <a href="#">Clip: beginning at 24:12</a>	12/21/2020
New Mexico 2 <sup>nd</sup> Congressional Debate	C-SPAN/KOB <a href="#">CSPAN Clip</a>	10/7/2020, 10/9/2020
Third Way Rural Town Hall; panel participant re: COVID-19 impact	Zoom Event	9/24/2020
New Mexico 2 <sup>nd</sup> Congressional Debate	KOAT <a href="#">Clip</a>	9/27/2020
International Water and Sanitation Caucus Kick-off Event; speaker, (Co-Chair of caucus)	Zoom Event	9/15/2020
Oversight, Management, and Accountability Subcommittee Hearing: <i>Reviewing Federal and State Pandemic Supply Preparedness and Response</i> ; Chair	Cannon Office Building – Washington, DC <a href="#">Clip</a>	7/14/2020
Broadband Funding Opportunities for New Mexico Webinar; panelist	WebEx Event	7/8/2020
Oversight, Management, and Accountability Subcommittee Hearing: <i>Business as Usual? Assessing How DHS Can Resume Operations Safely</i> ; Chair	Zoom Event <a href="#">Clip</a>	6/16/2020
Oversight, Management, and Accountability Subcommittee Hearing: <i>Building a Diverse and Inclusive Workforce to Meet the Homeland Security Mission</i> ; Chair	Cannon Office Building – Washington, DC <a href="#">Clip</a>	2/27/2020

National Indian Gaming Association – Winter Legislative Summit; speaker	Washington, DC	2/25/2020
Floor Speech re: USPS Fairness Act	US Capitol, Floor of the House of Representatives – Washington, DC	2/5/2020
New Mexico Association of Counties Legislative Conference; speaker	Santa Fe Community Convention Center – Santa Fe, NM	1/23/2020
Kelly Drye Congressional Forum; keynote speaker on bipartisanship	Washington Court Hotel	1/14/2020
Oversight, Management, and Accountability Subcommittee Hearing: <i>17 Years Later: Why is Moral at DHS Still Low?</i> ; Chair	Cannon Office Building – Washington, DC <a href="#">Clip</a>	1/14/2019
White Sands National Park Celebration; speaker on rural economy	Alamogordo, NM	12/21/2019
Floor Speech re: O'Halleran amendment to HR 3	US Capitol, Floor of the House of Representatives – Washington, DC	12/12/2019
Remarks for the Committee on Agriculture Member Day	Longworth Office Building – Washington, DC	12/11/2019
Floor Speech re: Esther Martinez	US Capitol, Floor of the House of Representatives – Washington, DC	12/9/2019
Oversight, Management, and Accountability Subcommittee Hearing: <i>Promoting Safe and Efficient Travel and Trade at America's Land Ports of Entry</i> ; Chair	Cannon Office Building – Washington, DC <a href="#">Clip</a>	12/02/2019
Floor Speech re: National Rural Health Care Day	US Capitol, Floor of the House of Representatives – Washington, DC	11/21/2019
64 <sup>th</sup> Annual New Mexico Water Conference; speaker	Video message	10/29/2019
New Mexico Infrastructure Finance Conference; speaker	Video message	10/23/2019
Floor Speech re: Health Care	US Capitol, Floor of the House of Representatives – Washington, DC	10/19/2019
Oversight, Management, and Accountability Subcommittee Hearing: <i>The Public's Right to Know: FOIA at the Department of Homeland Security</i> ; Chair	Cannon Office Building – Washington, DC <a href="#">Clip</a>	10/17/2019



Floor Speech re: Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women	US Capitol, Floor of the House of Representatives – Washington, DC	10/16/2019
Oversight, Management, and Accountability Subcommittee Hearing: <i>Oversight of ICE Detention Facilities: Is DHS Doing Enough?</i> ; Chair	Cannon Office Building – Washington, DC <a href="#">Clip</a>	9/26/2019
National Tribal Telecommunications Association Summit; welcome speaker	New Mexico	9/16/2019
Remarks for the Committee on Energy and Commerce Member Day	Rayburn Office Building – Washington, DC	7/25/2019
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Remarks for NDAA Markup IPP Pilot Program	Rayburn Office Building – Washington, DC	6/7/2019
Remarks for NDAA Markup PFOS and PFOA	Rayburn Office Building – Washington, DC	6/7/2019
Remarks for NDAA Markup Broadband Access Near Remote or Isolated Bases	Rayburn Office Building – Washington, DC	6/7/2019
Remarks for the Committee on Ways and Means Member Day	Longworth Office Building – Washington, DC	5/28/2019
New Mexico Military Institute High School Commencement; keynote speaker	Roswell, NM	5/23/2019
Organ Mountains Desert Peaks National Monument 5 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary; keynote speaker	Las Cruces Convention Center – Las Cruces, NM	5/21/2019
Oversight, Management, and Accountability Subcommittee Hearing: <i>Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers: Preparing America's Law Enforcement to Protect the Homeland</i> ; Chair	Cannon Office Building – Washington, DC <a href="#">Clip</a>	5/16/2019

Oversight, Management, and Accountability Subcommittee Hearing: <i>FEMA Contracting Reviewing Lessons Learned</i> ; Chair	Cannon Office Building – Washington, DC <a href="#">Clip</a>	5/9/2019
Floor Speech re: Rural Health Care	US Capitol, Floor of House of Representatives – Washington, DC	5/08/2019
Two Nations One Water Remarks	Las Cruces Farm and Ranch Museum	4/17/2019
Oversight, Management, and Accountability Subcommittee Hearing: <i>Ensuring Effective Operations: A Review of the Fiscal Year 2020 DHS Management Directorate Budget Request</i> ; Chair	Cannon Office Building – Washington, DC <a href="#">Clip</a>	4/3/2019
Oversight, Management, and Accountability Subcommittee Hearing: <i>CBP Workforce Challenges: Exploring Solutions to Address Recruitment and Retention</i> ; Chair	Cannon Office Building – Washington, DC <a href="#">Clip</a>	3/7/2019
Floor Speech re: Shutdown	US Capitol, Floor of House of Representatives – Washington, DC	1/30/2019
Domenici Conference; keynote speaker on regional development	Las Cruces Convention Center – Las Cruces, NM	9/13/2018
Carlsbad Mayor’s Energy Summit; keynote speaker	Walter Gerrells Performing Arts Center Annex – Carlsbad, NM	9/06/2018

8. Lobbying

**In the past 10 years, have you registered as a lobbyist? No. If so, please indicate the state, federal, or local bodies with which you have registered (e.g., House, Senate, California Secretary of State).**

**ADDENDUM FOR SPEECHES AND PUBLICATIONS**  
**Under Secretary for Rural Development Nominee Xochitl Torres Small**

**(A) List the titles, publishers and dates of books, articles, reports or other published materials that you have written, including articles published on the Internet. Please provide the Committee with all listed publications via email or other digital format and list all required publications even if no copy of the publication is available to provide.**

<u>Title</u>	<u>Publisher</u>	<u>Date(s) of Publication</u>
Republican lies helped defeat us in 2020. We're going to shield House Democrats in 2022.	USA Today <a href="https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2021/04/05/democrats-who-lost-house-races-no-more-republican-lies-column/4815284001/">https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2021/04/05/democrats-who-lost-house-races-no-more-republican-lies-column/4815284001/</a>	04/05/2021
On Trying, Winning, and Failing	Las Cruces Sun News <a href="https://www.lcsun-news.com/story/opinion/2021/01/04/trying-winning-and-failing/4094701001/">https://www.lcsun-news.com/story/opinion/2021/01/04/trying-winning-and-failing/4094701001/</a>	01/04/2021
My First Year in Congress	Las Cruces Sun News <a href="https://www.lcsun-news.com/story/opinion/2020/01/12/xochitl-torres-small-my-first-year-congress/4434911002/">https://www.lcsun-news.com/story/opinion/2020/01/12/xochitl-torres-small-my-first-year-congress/4434911002/</a>	01/12/2020
House Should Vote on Trade Deal	Albuquerque Journal <a href="https://www.abqjournal.com/1399037/nm-needs-congress-to-work-with-trump-on-trade.html">https://www.abqjournal.com/1399037/nm-needs-congress-to-work-with-trump-on-trade.html</a>	12/18/2019
Let the Facts and Truth Come to Light	Las Cruces Sun News <a href="https://www.lcsun-news.com/story/opinion/2019/10/10/let-facts-and-truth-come-light/3925716002/">https://www.lcsun-news.com/story/opinion/2019/10/10/let-facts-and-truth-come-light/3925716002/</a>	10/10/2019
Water Use and Recycling in Hydraulic Fracturing: Creating a	Natural Resources Journal	2015, Vol. 55, Iss. 2

Regulatory Pilot for Smarter Water Use in the West	<a href="https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nrj/vol55/iss1/2/">https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nrj/vol55/iss1/2/</a>	
Introduction	Natural Resources Journal <a href="https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nrj/vol55/iss2/8/">https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nrj/vol55/iss2/8/</a>	2015, Vol. 55, Iss. 1
Book Review: Contested Waters, An Environmental History of the Colorado River	Natural Resources Journal <a href="https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/151578864.pdf">https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/151578864.pdf</a>	2014, Vol. 54, Iss. 1

**(B) List any formal speeches you have delivered during the last 10 years relevant to the position to which you have been nominated, and all speeches you have delivered related to any topic for the last five years. Include any testimony to Congress or any other legislative or administrative body. Please provide the Committee with copies of all listed speeches via email or other digital format and list all known required speeches even if no copy is available to provide.**

Given my previous role as an elected official from 2018 to 2020, I participated in numerous public events. I have included below any speeches where I am likely to be listed in materials as a speaker and all speeches relevant to Rural Development, events that I participated in and had a role with substantive policy discussion (panels), and all hearings I chaired and floor speeches I delivered.

<u>Title/Topic</u>	<u>Place/Audience</u>	<u>Date(s) of Speech</u>
Eastern New Mexico Governmental Forum; panel participant	Zoom Event	6/21/2021
Problem Solvers Caucus News Conference; speaker – COVID-19 relief	Capitol – Washington, DC <a href="#">Clip: beginning at 24:12</a>	12/21/2020
New Mexico 2 <sup>nd</sup> Congressional Debate	C-SPAN/KOB <a href="#">CSPAN Clip</a>	10/7/2020, 10/9/2020

Third Way Rural Town Hall; panel participant re: COVID-19 impact	Zoom Event	9/24/2020
New Mexico 2 <sup>nd</sup> Congressional Debate	KOAT <a href="#">Clip</a>	9/27/2020
International Water and Sanitation Caucus Kick-off Event; speaker, (Co-Chair of caucus)	Zoom Event	9/15/2020
Oversight, Management, and Accountability Subcommittee Hearing: <i>Reviewing Federal and State Pandemic Supply Preparedness and Response</i> ; Chair	Cannon Office Building – Washington, DC <a href="#">Clip</a>	7/14/2020
Broadband Funding Opportunities for New Mexico Webinar; panelist	WebEx Event	7/8/2020
Oversight, Management, and Accountability Subcommittee Hearing: <i>Business as Usual? Assessing How DHS Can Resume Operations Safely</i> ; Chair	Zoom Event <a href="#">Clip</a>	6/16/2020
Oversight, Management, and Accountability Subcommittee Hearing: <i>Building a Diverse and Inclusive Workforce to Meet the Homeland Security Mission</i> ; Chair	Cannon Office Building – Washington, DC <a href="#">Clip</a>	2/27/2020
National Indian Gaming Association – Winter Legislative Summit; speaker	Washington, DC	2/25/2020
Floor Speech re: USPS Fairness Act	US Capitol, Floor of the House of Representatives – Washington, DC	2/5/2020
New Mexico Association of Counties Legislative Conference; speaker	Santa Fe Community Convention Center – Santa Fe, NM	1/23/2020
Kelly Drye Congressional Forum; keynote speaker on bipartisanship	Washington Court Hotel	1/14/2020
Oversight, Management, and Accountability Subcommittee	Cannon Office Building – Washington, DC	1/14/2019

Hearing: <i>17 Years Later: Why is Moral at DHS Still Low?</i> ; Chair	<a href="#">Clip</a>	
White Sands National Park Celebration; speaker on rural economy	Alamogordo, NM	12/21/2019
Floor Speech re: O'Halleran amendment to HR 3	US Capitol, Floor of the House of Representatives – Washington, DC	12/12/2019
Remarks for the Committee on Agriculture Member Day	Longworth Office Building – Washington, DC	12/11/2019
Floor Speech re: Esther Martinez	US Capitol, Floor of the House of Representatives – Washington, DC	12/9/2019
Oversight, Management, and Accountability Subcommittee Hearing: <i>Promoting Safe and Efficient Travel and Trade at America's Land Ports of Entry</i> ; Chair	Cannon Office Building – Washington, DC <a href="#">Clip</a>	12/02/2019
Floor Speech re: National Rural Health Care Day	US Capitol, Floor of the House of Representatives – Washington, DC	11/21/2019
64 <sup>th</sup> Annual New Mexico Water Conference; speaker	Video message	10/29/2019
New Mexico Infrastructure Finance Conference; speaker	Video message	10/23/2019
Floor Speech re: Health Care	US Capitol, Floor of the House of Representatives – Washington, DC	10/19/2019
Oversight, Management, and Accountability Subcommittee Hearing: <i>The Public's Right to Know: FOIA at the Department of Homeland Security</i> ; Chair	Cannon Office Building – Washington, DC <a href="#">Clip</a>	10/17/2019
Floor Speech re: Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women	US Capitol, Floor of the House of Representatives – Washington, DC	10/16/2019
Oversight, Management, and Accountability Subcommittee Hearing: <i>Oversight of ICE Detention Facilities: Is DHS Doing Enough?</i> ; Chair	Cannon Office Building – Washington, DC <a href="#">Clip</a>	9/26/2019

National Tribal Telecommunications Association Summit; welcome speaker	New Mexico	9/16/2019
Remarks for the Committee on Energy and Commerce Member Day	Rayburn Office Building – Washington, DC	7/25/2019
Floor Speech re: Alvin Jones	US Capitol, Floor of the House of Representatives – Washington, DC	6/20/2019
Oversight, Management, and Accountability Subcommittee Hearing: <i>Federal Protective Service: Ensuring the Mission is Not Lost in Transition</i> ; Chair	Cannon Office Building – Washington, DC <a href="#">Clip</a>	6/11/2019
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Oversight, Management, and Accountability Subcommittee Hearing: <i>Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers: Preparing</i>	Cannon Office Building – Washington, DC <a href="#">Clip</a>	5/16/2019



<i>America's Law Enforcement to Protect the Homeland</i> ; Chair		
Oversight, Management, and Accountability Subcommittee Hearing: <i>FEMA Contracting Reviewing Lessons Learned</i> ; Chair	Cannon Office Building – Washington, DC <a href="#">Clip</a>	5/9/2019
Floor Speech re: Rural Health Care	US Capitol, Floor of House of Representatives – Washington, DC	5/08/2019
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Domenici Conference; keynote speaker on regional development	Las Cruces Convention Center – Las Cruces, NM	9/13/2018
Carlsbad Mayor's Energy Summit; keynote speaker	Walter Gerrells Performing Arts Center Annex – Carlsbad, NM	9/06/2018

UNITED STATES OFFICE OF  
GOVERNMENT ETHICS



July 1, 2021

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
Chairwoman  
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition,  
and Forestry  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Madam Chairwoman:

In accordance with the Ethics in Government Act of 1978, I enclose a copy of the financial disclosure report filed by Xochitl Torres Small, who has been nominated by President Biden for the position of Under Secretary for Rural Development, Department of Agriculture.

We have reviewed the report and have obtained advice from the agency concerning any possible conflict in light of its functions and the nominee's proposed duties. Also enclosed is an ethics agreement outlining the actions that the nominee will undertake to avoid conflicts of interest. Unless a date for compliance is indicated in the ethics agreement, the nominee must fully comply within three months of confirmation with any action specified in the ethics agreement.

Based thereon, we believe that this nominee is in compliance with applicable laws and regulations governing conflicts of interest.

Sincerely,

DAVID APOL

Digitally signed by DAVID  
APOL  
Date: 2021.07.01 14:53:21  
+04'00'

David J. Apol  
General Counsel

Enclosures



June 10, 2021

Mr. Stuart Bender  
Designated Agency Ethics Official  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
J.L. Whitten Building  
Room347-W  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Mr. Bender:

The purpose of this letter is to describe the steps that I will take to avoid any actual or apparent conflict of interest in the event that I am confirmed for the position of Under Secretary of Agriculture for Rural Development. It is my responsibility to understand and comply with commitments outlined in this agreement.

#### SECTION 1 – GENERAL COMMITMENTS

As required by the criminal conflicts of interest law at 18 U.S.C. § 208(a), I will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter in which I know that I have a financial interest directly and predictably affected by the matter, or in which I know that a person whose interests are imputed to me has a financial interest directly and predictably affected by the particular matter, unless I first obtain a written waiver, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 208(b)(1), or qualify for a regulatory exemption, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 208(b)(2). I understand that the interests of the following persons are imputed to me:

- Any spouse or minor child of mine;
- Any general partner of a partnership in which I am a limited or general partner;
- Any organization in which I serve as an officer, director, trustee, general partner, or employee; and
- Any person or organization with which I am negotiating or have an arrangement concerning prospective employment.

In the event that an actual or potential conflict of interest arises during my appointment, I will consult with an agency ethics official and take the measures necessary to resolve the conflict, such as recusal from the particular matter or divestiture of an asset.

If I have a managed account or otherwise use the services of an investment professional during my appointment, I will ensure that the account manager or investment professional obtains my prior approval on a case-by-case basis for the purchase of any assets other than cash, cash equivalents, investment funds that qualify for the regulatory exemption for diversified mutual funds and unit investment trusts at 5 C.F.R. § 2640.201(a), obligations of the United States, or municipal bonds.

I will receive a live ethics briefing from a member of the ethics office after my confirmation but not later than 15 days after my appointment pursuant to the ethics program regulation at 5 C.F.R. § 2638.305. Within 90 days of my confirmation, I will submit my Certification of Ethics Agreement Compliance which documents my compliance with this ethics agreement.

Page 2 of 3

I understand that as an appointee I will be required to sign the Ethics Pledge (Exec. Order No. 13989) and that I will be bound by it. Among other obligations, I will be required to recuse from particular matters involving specific parties involving my former employer or former clients for a period of two years after I am appointed, with the exception of federal, state, and local government.

I will not modify this ethics agreement without your approval and the approval of the U.S. Office of Government Ethics pursuant to the ethics agreement requirements contained in the financial disclosure regulation at 5 C.F.R. § 2634.803(a)(4).

#### SECTION 2 – INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR POSITION

Upon confirmation, I will terminate my contract with Third Way, under which I provide services to Shield PAC. Pursuant to the impartiality regulation at 5 C.F.R. § 2635.502, for a period of one year after the termination of this contract, I will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter involving specific parties in which I know that Third Way or Shield PAC is a party or represents a party, unless I am first authorized to participate, pursuant to at 5 C.F.R. § 2635.502(d).

#### SECTION 3 – TEACHING POSITION

If confirmed, I will resign from my position as Adjunct Professor at the University of Mexico School of Law. I am currently teaching one summer course, and I will continue teaching this course whether I am confirmed before or after the course ends. The University is currently scheduled to pay me for teaching this course. If I begin my government service prior to receiving this payment, I will accept compensation only for services rendered before I assume the duties of the position of Under Secretary. If I begin my government service after having received the payment, I will promptly repay any portion that covers the period after I have assumed the duties of the position of Under Secretary.

Until I resign from my position as Adjunct Professor Lecturer in Law, I will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter that to my knowledge has a direct and predictable effect on the financial interests of the University of New Mexico, unless I first obtain a written waiver, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 208(b)(1), or qualify for a regulatory exemption, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 208(b)(2). Following my resignation, pursuant to the impartiality regulation at 5 C.F.R. § 2635.502, I will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter involving specific parties in which I know the University of New Mexico is a party or represents a party for a period of one year after my resignation, unless I am first authorized to participate, pursuant to 5 C.F.R. § 2635.502(d).

#### SECTION 4 – SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT

My spouse is a member of the New Mexico State House of Representatives and receives a per diem for each day the House is in session and those days he attends meetings for interim legislative committees to which he is appointed. In addition, my spouse is employed by the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance, for which he receives a fixed annual salary. Pursuant to the impartiality regulation at 5 C.F.R. § 2635.502, for as long as my spouse continues to work for these employers, I will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter involving specific parties in which I know that either the State of New Mexico or the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance is a party or represents a party, unless I am first authorized to participate, pursuant to 5 C.F.R. § 2635.502(d).

SECTION 5 – PUBLIC POSTING

I have been advised that this ethics agreement and the Certification of Ethics Agreement Compliance will be posted publicly, consistent with the public information law at 5 U.S.C. § 552, on the website of the U.S. Office of Government Ethics with ethics agreements of other Presidential nominees who file public financial disclosure reports.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Xochitl Torres Small". The signature is stylized with a large initial "X" and a long horizontal stroke.

Xochitl Torres Small

**Executive Branch Personnel  
Public Financial Disclosure Report (OGE Form 278e)**

**Filer's Information**

Torres Small, Xochitl

Under Secretary for Rural Development, Department of Agriculture

Other Federal Government Positions Held During the Preceding 12 Months:

United States Representative (1/2019 - 1/2021) See endnote

Names of Congressional Committees Considering Nomination:

- Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

Electronic Signature - I certify that the statements I have made in this form are true, complete and correct to the best of my knowledge.

/s/ Torres Small, Xochitl [electronically signed on 05/10/2021 by Torres Small, Xochitl in integrity.gov]

Agency Ethics Official's Opinion - On the basis of information contained in this report, I conclude that the filer is in compliance with applicable laws and regulations (subject to any comments below).

/s/ Bender, Stuart, Certifying Official [electronically signed on 06/25/2021 by Bender, Stuart in integrity.gov]

Other review conducted by

U.S. Office of Government Ethics Certification  
/s/ Apol, David, Certifying Official [electronically signed on 07/01/2021 by Apol, David in Integrity.gov]

**1. Filer's Positions Held Outside United States Government**

#	ORGANIZATION NAME	CITY, STATE	ORGANIZATION TYPE	POSITION HELD	FROM	TO
1	Shield PAC/Third Way	Washington, District of Columbia	Corporation	Independent Contractor	4/2021	Present
2	University of New Mexico School of Law	Albuquerque, New Mexico	University/College	Adjunct Professor	5/2021	Present

**2. Filer's Employment Assets & Income and Retirement Accounts**

#	DESCRIPTION	EIF	VALUE	INCOME TYPE	INCOME AMOUNT
1	Shield PAC/Third Way	N/A		Consulting Fees	\$10,000
2	Kemp Smith LLP (Defined Contribution Plan)	No			
2.1	John Hancock Multimanager 2050 Lifetime	Yes	\$1,001 - \$15,000		None (or less than \$201)
3	New Mexico University School of Law (Anticipated Payment)	N/A	\$1,001 - \$15,000		None (or less than \$201)

**3. Filer's Employment Agreements and Arrangements**

#	EMPLOYER OR PARTY	CITY, STATE	STATUS AND TERMS	DATE
1	Kemp Smith LLP	El Paso, Texas	I will continue to participate in this defined contribution plan, but the plan sponsor no longer makes contributions.	12/2017
2	University of New Mexico School of Law	Albuquerque, New Mexico	This is a temporary, part-time contract, concluding 7/2021. I will receive a total payment of \$1,384.	5/2021



4. Filer's Sources of Compensation Exceeding \$5,000 in a Year

#	SOURCE NAME	CITY, STATE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DUTIES
1	Shield PAC/Third Way	Washington, District of Columbia	Serve on the advisory council, communicate goals and importance of mission to press outlets, speak with donors about impact, and provide strategy recommendations.

5. Spouse's Employment Assets & Income and Retirement Accounts

#	DESCRIPTION	EIF	VALUE	INCOME TYPE	INCOME AMOUNT
1	State of New Mexico	N/A		Per Diem for serving in the New Mexico State House of Representatives	
2	New Mexico Wilderness Alliance	N/A		salary	
3	City of Las Cruces/Public Employees Retirement Association of New Mexico, defined benefit plan	N/A	\$15,001 - \$50,000		None (or less than \$201)

6. Other Assets and Income

#	DESCRIPTION	EIF	VALUE	INCOME TYPE	INCOME AMOUNT
1	Oil and Gas Mineral Rights (Value Not Readily Ascertainable)	N/A		Rent or Royalties	\$201 - \$1,000
2	U.S. credit union (cash)	N/A	\$15,001 - \$50,000		None (or less than \$201)

7. Transactions

(N/A) - Not required for this type of report

8. Liabilities

#	CREDITOR NAME	TYPE	AMOUNT	YEAR INCURRED	RATE	TERM
1	Wells Fargo	Mortgage on Personal Residence	\$50,001 - \$100,000	2015	3.5	15 years
2	Discover	Personal Loan	\$15,001 - \$50,000	2021	11.99%	5 years

9. Gifts and Travel Reimbursements

(N/A) - Not required for this type of report

Endnotes

PART	#	ENDNOTE
Filer's Information	1	Elected to serve in the 116th Congress.
1.	1	The Consultant Agreement extends from April 1, 2021 through August 31, 2022, but may be terminated at any time by either party. The first payment was made pursuant to the agreement on 4/5/2021. Unless cancelled by either party, a second payment will be made on 7/1/2021.
1.	2	I am teaching a two credit summer course from May 20, 2021 to July 20, 2021.

PART	#	ENDNOTE
6.	1	Mineral interests in Beckham, Green, and Lincoln Counties, Oklahoma, United States of America. Operated by Brackeen Operating, LLC, which pays me 3/16 part of its proceeds, with adjustments for costs.
8.	2	The actual amount of this personal loan debt was \$17,614 and I have paid off this loan in full.

## Summary of Contents

### 1. Filer's Positions Held Outside United States Government

Part 1 discloses positions that the filer held at any time during the reporting period (excluding positions with the United States Government). Positions are reportable even if the filer did not receive compensation.

This section does not include the following: (1) positions with religious, social, fraternal, or political organizations; (2) positions solely of an honorary nature; (3) positions held as part of the filer's official duties with the United States Government; (4) mere membership in an organization; and (5) passive investment interests as a limited partner or non-managing member of a limited liability company.

### 2. Filer's Employment Assets & Income and Retirement Accounts

Part 2 discloses the following:

- Sources of earned and other non-investment income of the filer totaling more than \$200 during the reporting period (e.g., salary, fees, partnership share, honoraria, scholarships, and prizes)
- Assets related to the filer's business, employment, or other income-generating activities (1) that ended the reporting period with a value greater than \$1,000 or (2) from which more than \$200 in income was received during the reporting period (e.g., equity in business or partnership, stock options, retirement plans/accounts and their underlying holdings as appropriate, deferred compensation, and intellectual property, such as book deals and patents)

This section does not include assets or income from United States Government employment or assets that were acquired separately from the filer's business, employment, or other income-generating activities (e.g., assets purchased through a brokerage account). Note: The type of income is not required if the amount of income is \$0 - \$200 or if the asset qualifies as an excepted investment fund (EIF).

### 3. Filer's Employment Agreements and Arrangements

Part 3 discloses agreements or arrangements that the filer had during the reporting period with an employer or former employer (except the United States Government), such as the following:

- Future employment
- Leave of absence
- Continuing payments from an employer, including severance and payments not yet received for previous work (excluding ordinary salary from a current employer)
- Continuing participation in an employee welfare, retirement, or other benefit plan, such as pensions or a deferred compensation plan
- Retention or disposition of employer-awarded equity, sharing in profits or carried interests (e.g., vested and unvested stock options, restricted stock, future share of a company's profits, etc.)

4. Filer's Sources of Compensation Exceeding \$5,000 in a Year

Part 4 discloses sources (except the United States Government) that paid more than \$5,000 in a calendar year for the filer's services during any year of the reporting period.

The filer discloses payments both from employers and from any clients to whom the filer personally provided services. The filer discloses a source even if the source made its payment to the filer's employer and not to the filer. The filer does not disclose a client's payment to the filer's employer if the filer did not provide the services for which the client is paying.

5. Spouse's Employment Assets & Income and Retirement Accounts

Part 5 discloses the following:

- Sources of earned income (excluding honoraria) for the filer's spouse totaling more than \$1,000 during the reporting period (e.g., salary, consulting fees, and partnership share)
- Sources of honoraria for the filer's spouse greater than \$200 during the reporting period
- Assets related to the filer's spouse's employment, business activities, other income-generating activities (1) that ended the reporting period with a value greater than \$1,000 or (2) from which more than \$200 in income was received during the reporting period (e.g., equity in business or partnership, stock options, retirement plans/accounts and their underlying holdings as appropriate, deferred compensation, and intellectual property, such as book deals and patents)

This section does not include assets or income from United States Government employment or assets that were acquired separately from the filer's spouse's business employment, or other income-generating activities (e.g., assets purchased through a brokerage account). Note: The type of income is not required if the amount of income is \$0 - \$200 or if the asset qualifies as an excepted investment fund (EIF). Amounts of income are not required for a spouse's earned income (excluding honoraria).

6. Other Assets and Income

Part 6 discloses each asset, not already reported, (1) that ended the reporting period with a value greater than \$1,000 or (2) from which more than \$200 in investment income was received during the reporting period. For purposes of the value and income thresholds, the filer aggregates the filer's interests with those of the filer's spouse and dependent children.

This section does not include the following types of assets: (1) a personal residence (unless it was rented out during the reporting period); (2) income or retirement benefits associated with United States Government employment (e.g., Thrift Savings Plan); and (3) cash accounts (e.g., checking, savings, money market accounts) at a single financial institution with a value of \$5,000 or less (unless more than \$200 in income was received). Additional exceptions apply. Note: The type of income is not required if the amount of income is \$0 - \$200 or if the asset qualifies as an excepted investment fund (EIF).

#### 7. Transactions

Part 7 discloses purchases, sales, or exchanges of real property or securities in excess of \$1,000 made on behalf of the filer, the filer's spouse or dependent child during the reporting period.

This section does not include transactions that concern the following: (1) a personal residence, unless rented out; (2) cash accounts (e.g., checking, savings, CDs, money market accounts) and money market mutual funds; (3) Treasury bills, bonds, and notes; and (4) holdings within a federal Thrift Savings Plan account. Additional exceptions apply.

#### 8. Liabilities

Part 8 discloses liabilities over \$10,000 that the filer, the filer's spouse or dependent child owed at any time during the reporting period.

This section does not include the following types of liabilities: (1) mortgages on a personal residence, unless rented out (limitations apply for PAS filers); (2) loans secured by a personal motor vehicle, household furniture, or appliances, unless the loan exceeds the item's purchase price; and (3) revolving charge accounts, such as credit card balances, if the outstanding liability did not exceed \$10,000 at the end of the reporting period. Additional exceptions apply.

#### 9. Gifts and Travel Reimbursements

This section discloses:

- Gifts totaling more than \$415 that the filer, the filer's spouse, and dependent children received from any one source during the reporting period.
- Travel reimbursements totaling more than \$415 that the filer, the filer's spouse, and dependent children received from any one source during the reporting period.

For purposes of this section, the filer need not aggregate any gift or travel reimbursement with a value of \$166 or less. Regardless of the value, this section does not include the following items: (1) anything received from relatives; (2) anything received from the United States Government or from the District of Columbia, state, or local governments; (3) bequests and other forms of inheritance; (4) gifts and travel reimbursements given to the filer's agency in connection with the filer's official travel; (5) gifts of hospitality (food, lodging, entertainment) at the donor's residence or personal premises; and (6) anything received by the filer's spouse or dependent children totally independent of their relationship to the filer. Additional exceptions apply.

#### Privacy Act Statement

Title I of the Ethics in Government Act of 1978, as amended (the Act), 5 U.S.C. app. § 101 et seq., as amended by the Stop Trading on Congressional Knowledge Act of 2012 (Pub. L. 112-105) (STOCK Act), and 5 C.F.R. Part 2634 of the U. S. Office of Government Ethics regulations require the reporting of this information. Failure to provide the requested information may result in separation, disciplinary action, or civil action. The primary use of the information on this report is for review by Government officials to determine compliance with applicable Federal laws and regulations. This report may also be disclosed upon request to any requesting person in accordance with sections 105 and 402(b)(1) of the Act or as otherwise authorized by law. You may inspect applications for public access of your own form upon request. Additional disclosures of the information on this report may be made: (1) to any requesting person, subject to the limitation contained in section 208(d)(1) of title 18, any determination granting an exemption pursuant to sections 208(b)(1) and 208(b)(3) of title 18; (2) to a Federal, State, or local law enforcement agency if the disclosing agency becomes aware of violations or potential violations of law or regulation; (3) to a source when necessary to obtain information relevant to a conflict of interest investigation or determination; (4) to the National Archives and Records Administration or the General Services Administration in records management inspections; (5) to the Office of Management and Budget during legislative coordination on private relief legislation; (6) when the disclosing agency determines that the records are arguably relevant to a proceeding before a court, grand jury, or administrative or adjudicative body, or in a proceeding before an administrative or adjudicative body when the adjudicator determines the records to be relevant to the proceeding; (7) to reviewing officials in a new office, department or agency when an employee transfers or is detailed from one covered position to another, a public financial disclosure report and any accompanying documents, including statements notifying an employee's supervising ethics office of the commencement of negotiations for future employment or compensation or of an agreement for future employment or compensation; (8) to a Member of Congress or a congressional office in response to an inquiry made on behalf of and at the request of an individual who is the subject of the record; (9) to contractors and other non-Government employees working on a contract, service or assignment for the Federal Government when necessary to accomplish a function related to this system of records; (10) on the OGE Website and to any person, department or agency, any written ethics agreement, including certifications of ethics agreement compliance, filed with OGE by an individual nominated by the President to a position requiring Senate confirmation; (11) on the OGE Website and to any person, department or agency, any certificate of divestiture issued by OGE; (12) on the OGE Website and to any person, department or agency, any waiver of the restrictions contained in Executive Order 13770 or any superseding executive order; (13) to appropriate agencies, entities and persons when there has been a suspected or confirmed breach of the system of records, the agency maintaining the records has determined that there is a risk of harm to individuals, the agency, the Federal Government, or national security, and the disclosure is reasonably necessary to assist in connection with the agency's efforts to respond to the suspected or confirmed breach or to prevent, minimize, or remedy such harm; and (14) to another Federal agency or Federal entity, when the agency maintaining the record determines that information from this system of records is reasonably necessary to assist the recipient agency or entity in responding to a suspected or confirmed breach or in preventing, minimizing, or remedying the risk of harm to individuals, the recipient agency or entity, the Federal Government, or national security. See also the OGE/GOVT-1 executive branch-wide Privacy Act system of records.

#### Public Burden Information

This collection of information is estimated to take an average of ten hours per response, including time for reviewing the instructions, gathering the data needed, and completing the form. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the Program Counsel, U.S. Office of Government Ethics (OGE), Suite 500, 1201 New York Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20005-3917.

Pursuant to the Paperwork Reduction Act, as amended, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and no person is required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number (that number, 3209-0001, is displayed here and at the top of the first page of this OGE Form 278e).

July 27, 2021

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow, Chairwoman Committee on  
Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Boozman, Ranking Member  
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow and Ranking Member Boozman:

Please be advised that pursuant to section 101(b) of the Ethics in Government Act of 1978, as amended, I have informed the appropriate ethics officials that the information required by section 102(a)(1)(A) of the Act with respect to income and honoraria contained in OGE Form 278e (Executive Branch Public Financial Disclosure Report) executed by me on May 10, 2021 is correct.

This information is current as of Tuesday, July 27, 2021. This date is within five days prior to the date of the first hearing scheduled to consider my nomination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Xochitl Torres Small', with a large, sweeping flourish above the name.

Xochitl Torres Small



**U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION & FORESTRY  
Questions for Executive Nominees  
117<sup>th</sup> Congress**

**1. Basic Biographical Information**

Please provide the following information.

<i>Position to Which You Have Been Nominated</i>	
<u>Name of Position</u>	<u>Date of Nomination</u>
<u>Under Secretary, Farm Production and Conservation</u>	

<i>Current Legal Name</i>			
<u>First Name</u>	<u>Middle Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Suffix</u>
Robert	Farrell	Bonnie	

<i>Addresses</i>					
<u>Residential Address</u> (do not include street address)			<u>Office Address</u> (include street address)		
			Street: 1400 Independence Ave., SW		
City: Middleburg	State: VA	Zip: 20117	City: Washington	State: DC	Zip: 20250

<i>Other Names Used</i>						
<u>First Name</u>	<u>Middle Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Suffix</u>	<small>Check if  Maiden Name</small>	<u>Name Used From</u> (Year) (Check box if estimate)	<u>Name Used To</u> (Month/Year) (Check box if estimate)
					Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Est <input type="checkbox"/>
					Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Est <input type="checkbox"/>

<i>Birth Year and Place</i>	
<b>Year of Birth</b> (Do not include month and day.)	<b>Place of Birth</b>
1967	Louisville, Kentucky

<i>Marital Status</i>					
<b>Check All That Describe Your Current Situation:</b>					
<b>Never Married</b>	<b>Married</b>	<b>Separated</b>	<b>Annulled</b>	<b>Divorced</b>	<b>Widowed</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<i>Spouse's Name</i> (current spouse only)			
<b>Spouse's First Name</b>	<b>Spouse's Middle Name</b>	<b>Spouse's Last Name</b>	<b>Spouse's Suffix</b>
Julie	Ann	Gomena	

<i>Spouse's Other Names Used</i> (current spouse only)						
<b>First Name</b>	<b>Middle Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Suffix</b>	<small>Check if Maiden Name</small>	<b>Name Used From (Year)</b> (Check box if estimate)	<b>Name Used To (Month/Year)</b> (Check box if estimate)
					Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Est <input type="checkbox"/>
					Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Est <input type="checkbox"/>

<i>Children's Names (if over 18)</i>			
<b>First Name</b>	<b>Middle Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Suffix</b>
Camilla	Clementine	Bonnie	

**2. Education**

List all post-secondary schools attended.

<b><u>Name of School</u></b>	<b><u>Type of School</u></b> (vocational/technical/trade school, college/university/military college, correspondence/distance/extension/online school)	<b><u>Date Began School</u></b> (month/year) (check box if estimate)	<b><u>Date Ended School</u></b> (month/year) (check box if estimate) (check "present" box if still in school)	<b><u>Degree</u></b>	<b><u>Date Awarded</u></b>
Duke University	Nicholas School of the Environment	9/1992    Est <input type="checkbox"/>	12/1994    Est <input type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/>	MEM, MF	12/1994
Harvard College	Liberal arts college	9/1985    Est <input type="checkbox"/>	6/1989    Est <input type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/>	AB	6/1989
		Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Est <input type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Est <input type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/>		

**3. Employment**

**(A) In reverse chronological order, list all of your employment activities, including unemployment and self-employment. If the employment activity was military duty, list separate employment activity periods to show each change of military duty station. Do not list employment before your 18th birthday unless to provide a minimum of two years of employment history.**

<b>Type of Employment</b> (Active Military Duty Station, National Guard/Reserve, USPHS Commissioned Corps, Other Federal employment, State Government (Non-Federal Employment), Self-employment, Unemployment, Federal Contractor, Non-Government Employment (excluding self-employment), Other	<b>Name of Your Employer/Assigned Duty Station</b>	<b>Most Recent Position Title/Rank</b>	<b>Location</b> (City and State only)	<b>Date Employment Began</b> (month/year) (check box if estimate)	<b>Date Employment Ended</b> (month/year) (check box if estimate) (check "present" box if still employed)
Federal Employee	USDA	Deputy Chief of Staff, Senior Advisor	Washington, DC	1/2021	Est <input type="checkbox"/> Present
	Biden-Harris Presidential Transition Team	Lead, Agency Review Team for US Dept. of Agriculture	Washington, DC	11/2020	1/2021 Est <input type="checkbox"/>
Non-government	Bipartisan Policy Center	Director, Farm and Forests Carbon Solutions Initiative	Washington, DC	7/2020 Est <input type="checkbox"/>	11/2020 Est <input type="checkbox"/>
Non-government	Consulting	Consultant	Middleburg, VA	1/2020 Est <input type="checkbox"/>	11/2020 Est <input type="checkbox"/>
Non-government	Duke University	Executive in Residence, Nicholas Inst.	Durham, NC	4/2017 Est <input type="checkbox"/>	12/31/20 Est <input type="checkbox"/>
Unemployed				1/2017 Est <input type="checkbox"/>	4/2017 Est <input type="checkbox"/>
Federal Employee	USDA	Under Secretary, NRE	Washington, DC	8/2013 Est <input type="checkbox"/>	1/2017 Est <input type="checkbox"/>
Federal Employee	USDA	Senior Adv. to the Secretary	Washington, DC	4/2009	8/2013
Non-government	Environmental Defense Fund	Vice President, Land Conservation and Wildlife	Washington, DC	1/1995	4/2009

Unemployed (graduate school)				6/1992	1/1995
Non-government	Scenic America	Acting Policy Director	Washington, DC	3/1990	6/1992

**(B) List any advisory, consultative, honorary or other part-time service or positions with federal, state, or local governments, not listed elsewhere.**

<u>Name of Government Entity</u>	<u>Name of Position</u>	<u>Date Service Began</u> (month/year) (check box if estimate)	<u>Date Service Ended</u> (month/year) (check box if estimate) (check "present" box if still serving)
N/A		Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Est Present <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
		Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Est Present <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
		Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Est Present <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

**4. Honors and Awards**

**List all scholarships, fellowships, honorary degrees, civilian service citations, military medals, academic or professional honors, honorary society memberships and any other special recognition for outstanding service or achievement.**

Ducks Unlimited Wetlands Conservation Achievement Award	2016
National Association of State Foresters Outstanding Service in Forest Policy Award	2016
Land Trust of Virginia, Conservationist of the Year Award	2016
Nicholas School of the Environment Rising Star Award	2007

**5. Memberships**

**List all memberships that you have held in professional, social, business, fraternal, scholarly, civic, or charitable organizations in the last 10 years.**

**Unless relevant to your nomination, you do NOT need to include memberships in charitable organizations available to the public as a result of a tax deductible donation of \$1,000 or less, Parent-Teacher Associations or other organizations connected to schools attended by your children, athletic clubs or teams, automobile support organizations (such as AAA), discounts clubs (such as Groupon or Sam’s Club), or affinity memberships/consumer clubs (such as frequent flyer memberships).**

<b><u>Name of Organization</u></b>	<b><u>Dates of Your Membership</u></b> (You may approximate.)	<b><u>Position(s) Held</u></b>
Society of American Foresters	1994-present	Member
The Conservation Fund	2018 – 11/2020	Board Member
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership	2018—11/2020	Board Member
National Steeplechase Association	2017 – 11/2020	Board Member
Saratoga Reading Room	2018-present	Member
Steeplechase Owners and Trainers Association	2017-2018	Board Member
Western Goose Creek Initiative	2005-2013	Advisory Board Member
Groton Land Company	2017-1/2021	Board Member
Jones Center at Ichauway	2020	Advisor
Bonnie Rye Stable LLC	2012-present	Managing Member
Bonnie Management Company	2000-2013	Director, Vice President
Bonnie Conservation LLC	2020—present	Managing Member
Blue Ridge Limited Partnership	2001 – 2013	Limited Partner
Bonnie Family Foundation	2000-2013	Director
Piedmont Fox Hounds	2003-2013; 2017-2021	Director

## **6. Political Activity**

(A) Have you ever been a candidate for or been elected or appointed to a political office?

Yes  No (If yes, please complete the chart below)

<u>Name of Office</u>	<u>Elected/Appointed/ Candidate Only</u>	<u>Year(s) Election Held or Appointment Made</u>	<u>Term of Service (if applicable)</u>

(B) List any offices held in or services rendered, including volunteer services, to a political party or election committee during the last 10 years that you have not listed elsewhere.

<u>Name of Party/Election Committee</u>	<u>Office/Services Rendered</u>	<u>Responsibilities</u>	<u>Dates of Service</u>
Biden-Harris Campaign, Climate, Energy and Environment Committee	Volunteer member of the Committee	Chaired the Agriculture and Rural Development Subcommittee	8/2020 – 10/2020

**(C) Itemize all individual political contributions of \$200 or more that you have made in the past five years to any individual, campaign organization, political party, political action committee, or similar entity. Please list each individual contribution and not the total amount contributed to the person or entity during the year.**

<u>Name of Recipient</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Year of Contribution</u>
Montanans for Bullock	\$1000	2020
Josh Hicks for Congress	\$800	2020
Biden for President	\$1000	2020
Biden Victory Fund	\$1000	2020
Josh Hicks for Congress	\$1000	2020
Montanans for Bullock	\$1000	2020
Biden for President	\$1000	2020
Biden Victory Fund	\$1000	2020
Josh Hicks for Congress	\$1000	2020
Biden for President	\$800	2020
Biden for President	\$1000	2020
Biden for President	\$1000	2020
Kaine for Virginia	\$500	2018
Weston for Congress	\$2700	2018
Kaine Victory Fund	\$500	2018
Leslie Cockburn for Congress	\$500	2018
Amy McGrath for Congress	\$500	2018
Big Sky Values PAC	\$500	2018
MJ For Texas	\$500	2018
Doug Jones for Senate Committee	\$250	2017
Salerno for Congress	\$500	2017
Salerno for Congress	\$500	2017
Kier for Congress	\$1000	2017
Martin Heinrich for Senate	\$1000	2017



Hillary for America	\$1000	2016
Randall for Loudon County Chair	\$2000	2018
Briskman for Loudon County Supervisor	\$1000	2018
Herring for Attorney General	\$1000	2017
Northam for Governor	\$1000	2017
Turner for Loudoun County Supervisor	\$1000	2019
Bell for Delegate	\$500	2017

**7. Publications and Speeches**

(A) List the titles, publishers and dates of books, articles, reports or other published materials that you have written, including articles published on the Internet. Please provide the Committee with all listed publications via email or other digital format and list all required publications even if no copy of the publication is available to provide.

<u>Title</u>	<u>Publisher</u>	<u>Date(s) of Publication</u>
See attached list		

**(B) List any formal speeches you have delivered during the last 10 years relevant to the position to which you have been nominated, and all speeches you have delivered related to any topic for the last five years. Include any testimony to Congress or any other legislative or administrative body. Please provide the Committee with copies of all listed speeches via email or other digital format and list all known required speeches even if no copy is available to provide.**

<u>Title/Topic</u>	<u>Place/Audience</u>	<u>Date(s) of Speech</u>
See attached list.		

**8. Lobbying**

**In the past 10 years, have you registered as a lobbyist? If so, please indicate the state, federal, or local bodies with which you have registered (e.g., House, Senate, California Secretary of State).**

**NO**

Attachment to Core Questionnaire for Robert Bonnie  
Speeches and Presentations

Where online records exist of the presentation or materials, the link is provided. Where presentation/speech transcripts or files are available, it is noted and the files have been sent to the Committee.

**Speeches**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Publisher</b>	<b>Date(s) of Publication</b>
Where the deer and the antelope play: conserving big game migrations as an endangered phenomena <a href="https://scholarship.law.duke.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&amp;httpsredir=1&amp;article=1376&amp;context=delpf">https://scholarship.law.duke.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&amp;httpsredir=1&amp;article=1376&amp;context=delpf</a>	Duke Env. Law and Policy Forum. Vol XXXI:81-161	Fall 2020
Bridging the rural-urban divide <a href="https://law.utah.edu/bridging-the-rural-urban-divide-on-the-environment/">https://law.utah.edu/bridging-the-rural-urban-divide-on-the-environment/</a>	UEDRBlog.org	May 18, 2020
Climate 21 Project Transition Memo Department of Agriculture <a href="https://climate21.org/documents/C21_USDA.pdf">https://climate21.org/documents/C21_USDA.pdf</a>	Climate 21 Project	2020
Attitudes of Rural Westerners on the Environment and Conservation <a href="https://nicholasinstitute.duke.edu/sites/default/files/publications/Attitudes-of-Rural-Westerners-on-the-Environment-and-Conservation_0.pdf">https://nicholasinstitute.duke.edu/sites/default/files/publications/Attitudes-of-Rural-Westerners-on-the-Environment-and-Conservation_0.pdf</a>	Duke University Nicholas Institute	2020
Rural Investment: Building a Natural Climate Solutions Policy Agenda that Works for Rural America and the Climate <a href="https://nicholasinstitute.duke.edu/sites/default/files/publications/Rural-Investment-Building-a-Natural-Climate-Solutions-Policy-Agenda.pdf">https://nicholasinstitute.duke.edu/sites/default/files/publications/Rural-Investment-Building-a-Natural-Climate-Solutions-Policy-Agenda.pdf</a>	Duke University Nicholas Institute	2020
Farm and forest carbon incentives can help climate and rural economies <a href="https://thehill.com/opinion/energy-environment/510021-farm-and-forest-carbon-incentives-can-help-climate-and-rural">https://thehill.com/opinion/energy-environment/510021-farm-and-forest-carbon-incentives-can-help-climate-and-rural</a>	<i>The Hill</i>	July 31, 2020
Wood energy as a climate change solution <a href="https://thehill.com/opinion/energy-environment/494708-wood-energy-as-a-climate-change-solution">https://thehill.com/opinion/energy-environment/494708-wood-energy-as-a-climate-change-solution</a>	<i>The Hill</i>	April 26, 2020
Rural Attitudes on Climate Change: Lessons from National and Midwest Polling and Focus Groups <a href="https://nicholasinstitute.duke.edu/sites/default/files/publications/Rural-Attitudes-on-Climate-Change-Midwest_1.pdf">https://nicholasinstitute.duke.edu/sites/default/files/publications/Rural-Attitudes-on-Climate-Change-Midwest_1.pdf</a>	Duke University Nicholas Institute	2020
Putting America's forests to work for climate change	<i>The Hill</i>	June 23, 2019

<a href="https://thehill.com/opinion/energy-environment/449917-putting-americas-forests-to-work-on-climate-change">https://thehill.com/opinion/energy-environment/449917-putting-americas-forests-to-work-on-climate-change</a>		
How the capital markets can conserve America's forests. <a href="https://www.realclearmarkets.com/articles/2019/12/12/how_the_capital_markets_can_conserve_americas_forests_104002.html">https://www.realclearmarkets.com/articles/2019/12/12/how_the_capital_markets_can_conserve_americas_forests_104002.html</a>	<a href="http://www.realclearmarkets.com">www.realclearmarkets.com</a>	December 12, 2019
New forestry for a changing climate. <a href="https://americanforests.medium.com/new-forestry-for-a-changing-climate-3d01d1fe716f">https://americanforests.medium.com/new-forestry-for-a-changing-climate-3d01d1fe716f</a>	American Forests – Medium	July 23, 2018
We worked for Bush and Obama: here's a bipartisan solution to America's wildfire problem <a href="https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2017/08/11/we-worked-bush-obama-heres-bipartisan-solution-americas-wildfire-problem-column/552536001/">https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2017/08/11/we-worked-bush-obama-heres-bipartisan-solution-americas-wildfire-problem-column/552536001/</a>	<i>USA Today</i>	August 11, 2017
Guest commentary: Clean water in the west means tackling wildfire threats <a href="https://www.eastbaytimes.com/2016/03/31/guest-commentary-clean-water-in-the-west-means-tackling-wildfire-threats/">https://www.eastbaytimes.com/2016/03/31/guest-commentary-clean-water-in-the-west-means-tackling-wildfire-threats/</a>	<i>East Bay Times</i>	March 31, 2016
"Bi-State Sage-Grouse Success Shows Importance of Voluntary Conservation Partnerships" <a href="https://www.usda.gov/media/blog/2015/04/21/bi-state-sage-grouse-success-shows-importance-voluntary-conservation">https://www.usda.gov/media/blog/2015/04/21/bi-state-sage-grouse-success-shows-importance-voluntary-conservation</a>	USDA blog	April 21, 2015 (date is wrong in posting)
"Robert Winthrop: lessons from a sporting gentleman."	John Tomke, ed., <i>Legends, Leaders and Characters of Ducks Unlimited</i> . Ducks Unlimited, Memphis, TN	2012
Financing private lands: conservation and management through conservation incentives in the Farm Bill.	In James Leavitt ed., <i>From Walden to Wall Street: Frontiers of Conservation Finance</i> . Island Press, Washington, DC	2008
Com Ethanol: Importance of Performance Standards <a href="http://blogs.edf.org/climate411/2008/04/29/com_ethanol_standards/">http://blogs.edf.org/climate411/2008/04/29/com_ethanol_standards/</a>	EDF BlogPost	April 29, 2008
Ecological Considerations. <a href="https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781849770842-15/ecological-considerations-robert-bonnie-david-wilcove">https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781849770842-15/ecological-considerations-robert-bonnie-david-wilcove</a>	Chapter 5, In Nathaniel Carroll, Jessica Fix and Ricardo Bayon eds., <i>Conservation and Biodiversity Banking</i> . Earthscan, Sterling, VA	2007
Program will give longleaf pine a fighting chance.	Atlanta Journal-Constitution	October 30, 2006.
Feathered Friend.	<i>The Pilot</i> (Southern Pines, NC)	March 6, 2006.
From Cone's Folly to Brosnan Forest and beyond: protecting red-cockaded woodpeckers on private lands	In Ralph Costa and Susan J. Daniels eds., <i>Red-Cockaded Woodpecker: Road to Recovery</i> . Hancock House Publishers, Blaine, WA	2004
Protecting terrestrial ecosystems and the climate through a global carbon market	<i>Phil. Trans. R. Soc. Lond. A</i> 360:1853-1873	June 25, 2002

<a href="https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/10.1098/rsta.2002.1036">https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/10.1098/rsta.2002.1036</a>		
Saving forests, earning credits.	<i>Environmental Finance</i>	May 2001
Counting the costs of deforestation.	<i>Science</i> 288: 1763-1764	2000
The government's green economic incentives.	<i>Washington Times</i>	June 27, 1999
Bold plan to save rare woodpecker from extinction.	<i>Mobile Register</i>	March 18, 1999
Endangered species mitigation banking: promoting recovery through habitat conservation planning under the Endangered Species Act.	<i>The Science of the Total Environment</i> 240: 11-19	1999
'Safe Harbors' foes have ulterior motive.	<i>Dallas Morning News</i>	August 3, 1998
Safe harbor for the red-cockaded woodpecker.	<i>Journal of Forestry</i> 95(4): 17-22	1997
Strategies for conservation of the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker on private lands.	<i>Endangered Species Update</i> . Vol. 14, Nos. 7 & 8	1997
Giving animals safe harbor	<i>Washington Times</i>	October 15, 1996
Habitat trading for red-cockaded woodpeckers: enhancing recovery, reducing conflicts.	<i>Endangered Species Update</i> . Vol. 13, Nos. 4 & 5	1996
A market-based approach to conservation of the red-cockaded woodpecker.	In Rhett Johnson, ed., <i>Symposium on the Economics of Wildlife Resources on Private Lands</i> . Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama	1996

**Presentations**

<b>Title/Topic</b>	<b>Place/Audience</b>	<b>Date(s) of Speech</b>
PBS Learning Media Robert Bonnie on Financial Incentives for Preserving Forests – Full <a href="https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/b93f39ce-7f28-4bc5-a912-b247c8573700/robert-bonnie-on-financial-incentives-for-preserving-forests-full/">https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/b93f39ce-7f28-4bc5-a912-b247c8573700/robert-bonnie-on-financial-incentives-for-preserving-forests-full/</a>	PBS	N/A
PBS Learning Media – Earth and Sky Podcast Robert Bonnie on Financial Incentives for Preserving Forests <a href="https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/42f4fb2f-33ab-4c5f-8397-f8e8bcf2d535/robert-bonnie-on-financial-incentives-for-preserving-forests-earth-and-sky-podcast/">https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/42f4fb2f-33ab-4c5f-8397-f8e8bcf2d535/robert-bonnie-on-financial-incentives-for-preserving-forests-earth-and-sky-podcast/</a>	PBS Earth and Sky Podcast	N/A
Second US National Food Systems Dialogue Remarks: The UN Food Systems Summit  <i>Remarks available.</i>	virtual event	May 2021
Land Trust Alliance conference Virtual Keynote: Land Conservation Policy in the Biden Administration	Washington, DC	April 2021
National Cotton Council – American Cotton Producers Board Meeting Remarks: USDA Policy and Climate Smart Agriculture	virtual	April 2021
Farm Foundation: Trade and Climate Conference Remarks: USDA Climate Smart Agriculture Under the Biden Administration  <a href="#">Session Six: Trade Policy and Climate Measurement Implications - YouTube</a>	virtual	April 2021
California State Board of Food and Agriculture Remarks: USDA Climate Smart Agriculture Under the Biden Administration	virtual	April 2021
Agri-Pulse Speech Subject: USDA Climate Smart Agriculture Under the Biden Administration  <a href="https://www.agri-pulse.com/media/videos/play/741">https://www.agri-pulse.com/media/videos/play/741</a>	virtual	March 2021
American Soybean Association Remarks: USDA Climate Smart Agriculture Under the Biden Administration	virtual	March 2021
Ceres Remarks: USDA Climate Smart Agriculture Under the Biden Administration	virtual	March 2021
North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference Remarks: Wildlife conservation and USDA policy  <i>Short video was recorded to play at the conference</i>	virtual	March 2021
National Association of Counties Agriculture and Rural Committee Remarks: Wildland fire, climate change, conservation	virtual	March 2021
National Center for Appropriate Technology/ATTRA Remarks: USDA Climate Smart Agriculture Under the Biden Administration	Virtual conference	March 2021



National Association of Conservation Districts Annual Meeting Remarks: NACD 75th Anniversary, Conservation and Climate Change	Virtual meeting	February 2021
Agree Climate Webinar Remarks: USDA Climate Smart Agriculture Under the Biden Administration	Virtual webinar	February 2021
Environmental Protection Network Webinar Remarks: Rural Attitudes toward the Environment	Virtual webinar	October 2020
University of Utah SJ Quinney School of Law, Stegner Center for Land, Resources and the Environment. Presentation: Bridging the Rural/Urban Divide on the Environment.  <a href="#">Stegner Center Green Bag: Bridging the Rural/Urban Divide on the Environment - YouTube</a>	Virtual webinar	October 2020
Chesapeake Funders Network Webinar. Presentation: Understanding Rural Attitudes toward the Environment and Conservation in America	Virtual webinar	June 2020
Salazar Center for North American Conservation, Colorado State University Panel: Connecting for Conservation: Building Community Trust  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qA7qgwOkBJg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qA7qgwOkBJg</a>	Virtual webinar	May 2020
American University Center for Environmental Policy and CONSERV America Webinar. Presentation: Environmental Attitudes and Innovations in Rural America  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5zFFUF3-2g0">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5zFFUF3-2g0</a>	Virtual webinar	April 2020
Washington Agriculture Roundtable Panelist: Agriculture and Climate Change	Virtual	April 2020
American Farmland Trust Board of Directors Remarks: Rural Attitudes on the Environment and Conservation	Washington, DC	February 2020
Training Resources for the Environmental Community Remarks: Rural Perspectives in the United States  <a href="#">Rural Perspectives in the United States - Training Resources for the Environmental Community (tree.org)</a>	Virtual webinar	January 2020
Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition Annual Meeting Remarks: Understanding Rural Americans' Attitudes on the Environment	Silverton, OR	January 2020
Beveridge and Diamond Remarks: Agriculture, Forests and Climate Change	Washington, DC	October 2019
Resources Radio Finding a Future for Forests in Energy and Climate Solutions, with Robert Bonnie  <a href="https://www.resources.org/resources-radio/finding-future-forests-energy-and-climate-solutions-robert-bonnie/">https://www.resources.org/resources-radio/finding-future-forests-energy-and-climate-solutions-robert-bonnie/</a>	Resources Radio, podcast	August 2019
Duke University Nicholas School Timberland Investment Conference Briefing: Climate Change Policy and Forests	Washington, DC	May 2019

American Climate Leadership Summit, ecoAmerica Subject: Climate Change and Natural Climate Solutions  Speech at 2:47: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vOV18ip-Pg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vOV18ip-Pg</a>	Washington, DC	May 2019
Citizens' Climate 10th Annual International Conference & Lobby Day Panel: Outdoor Conservation Groups and Climate Advocacy	Washington, DC	June 2019
Coastal Conservation League Briefing: Red-Flag Warning: Wildfire in the Age of Smoky Bear, Climate Change and Suburbanization	Charleston, SC	April 2019
University of Wyoming, Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources Briefing: Beyond Confrontation and Regulation: toward a new conservation paradigm  <i>Partial transcript available.</i>	University of Wyoming	April 2019
Princeton University, Center for Policy Research on Energy and Environment Briefing: Red-Flag Warning: Wildfire in the Age of Smoky Bear, Climate Change and Suburbanization	Princeton University, NJ	February 2019
American Forests Interview: "Earthkeepers: Uniting for the Land"  <a href="https://www.americanforests.org/magazine/article/earthkeepers-uniting-for-the-land/">https://www.americanforests.org/magazine/article/earthkeepers-uniting-for-the-land/</a>	American Forests magazine online audience	October 2018
Recreational Aviation Foundation Briefing: Federal Lands Policy and Recreation	Montana	May 2018
Environmental Defense Fund North Carolina Board Meeting Briefing: Conservation and Working Lands	North Carolina	May 2018
International Land Conservation Network, 2018 Congress Panel moderator: Land Conservation on Working Lands in the US	Santiago, Chile	January 2018
The Nature Conservancy, Forestry Staff Briefing: Forest Restoration and Wildfire	Washington, DC	November 2017
Robert Bonnie on Government Funding to Fight Wildfires  <a href="https://www.c-span.org/video/?435732-5/washington-journal-robert-bonnie-discusses-government-funding-fight-wildfires">https://www.c-span.org/video/?435732-5/washington-journal-robert-bonnie-discusses-government-funding-fight-wildfires</a>	CSPAN	October 2017
Duke Society of American Foresters Subject: Wildland Fire in the Wildland Urban Interface  <a href="#">Robert Bonnie speaking on Forest Fires in the Wildland-Urban Interface - YouTube</a>	Duke University	October 2017
University of Montana, guest lecturer Subject: Conservation and Polarization on the Environment.  <i>Transcript available.</i>	University of Montana	September 2017
Conservation Finance Network Boot Camp Briefing: How public policies leverage private and philanthropic capital	The Nicholas School of the Environment at Duke University	June 2017
Piedmont Environmental Council Annual Meeting Subject: Depolarizing Conservation in the Virginia Piedmont and Beyond	Middleburg Agricultural Research Extension (MARE) Center, Virginia	May 2017

<i>Transcript available.</i> <a href="https://www.pccva.org/work/communities/presentations-from-our-2017-annual-meeting/">https://www.pccva.org/work/communities/presentations-from-our-2017-annual-meeting/</a>		
Why fighting wildfires often fails -- and what to do about it  <a href="https://www.cbsnews.com/news/whv-fighting-wildfires-often-fails-and-what-to-do-about-it/">https://www.cbsnews.com/news/whv-fighting-wildfires-often-fails-and-what-to-do-about-it/</a>	60 Minutes: CBS News	May 2017
NRCS Conservation Conference Panel: Collaborative Conservation	Atlanta, GA	December 2016
Capitol Christmas Tree Reception Speaker: National Christmas Tree	Washington, DC	December 2016
Gallatin National Forest Withdrawal Announcement Speaker: Mineral Withdrawal	Yellowstone National Park	November 2016
Marrakech UNFCCC Conference of the Parties, Panel participant Subject: Climate Smart Agriculture Subject: US Action on Climate Smart Agriculture	Marrakech, Morocco	November 2016
US Forest Service International Smoke Symposium Video remarks: Wildland Fire and Smoke	Reno, NV – submitted video	November 2016
<i>Transcript available.</i> National Forest Foundation Board of Directors Meeting Keynote: Forest Restoration, Conservation, and Partnerships  <a href="https://usfs.adobeconnect.com/p8ksnns9hir/">https://usfs.adobeconnect.com/p8ksnns9hir/</a>	University of Utah, Stegner Center for Land, Resources and the Environment	October 2016
Conservation Finance Roundtable Opening Remarks: Conservation Finance and USDA Programs	Washington, DC	October 2016
Chesapeake Executive Council Speaker: USDA Actions on the Chesapeake Bay	Boyce, VA (Virginia Arboretum)	October 2016
C-AGG Meeting Remarks: Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry, Carbon Markets	Washington, DC	September 2016
National Association of State Foresters Annual Meeting Remarks: Forest Restoration and Conservation	Savannah, GA	September 2016
Federation of Southern Cooperatives Annual Meeting Remarks: USDA Efforts on Equity, Conservation, MOU with the Federation	Eps, Alabama	August 2016
Beyond Boundaries Cody Wyoming Wildlife Migration Conference Remarks: Conservation of Wildlife through USDA Programs	Cody, Wyoming	August 2016
Montana Event with Governor Bullock Remarks: Montana Good Neighbor Authority MOU	Montana	July 2016
Bears Ears Public Event Remarks: Consideration of Monument Designation for Bears Ears	Bluff, UT	July 2016

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Testimony: Wildfire Prevention and Forest Management Budget <a href="https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/bonnie-senate-enr-6-23-16.pdf">https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/bonnie-senate-enr-6-23-16.pdf</a>	Washington, DC	June 23, 2016
Collaborative Forest Restoration Conference Keynote: Collaborative Forest Restoration <a href="https://www.nationalforests.org/collaboration-resources/collaborative-forest-restoration-workshop">https://www.nationalforests.org/collaboration-resources/collaborative-forest-restoration-workshop</a>	Denver, CO	April 2016
American Loggers Council DC Meeting Remarks: Forest Restoration and Management	Washington, DC	April 2016
Land Trust Alliance DC Fly-In Remarks: Land Conservation	Washington, DC	April 2016
Energy Future Coalition Remarks: Agriculture and Forestry Role in Climate Change	Washington, DC	March 2016
House Agriculture Committee Testimony: Farm Bill Implementation (submitted testimony only) <a href="https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/bonnie-house-ag-3-18-16.pdf">https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/bonnie-house-ag-3-18-16.pdf</a>	Washington, DC	March 18, 2016
North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference Remarks: Forest Health and Restoration <a href="https://www.ducks.org/press-room/news-releases/du-recognizes-contributions-to-wetlands-waterfowl-conservation">https://www.ducks.org/press-room/news-releases/du-recognizes-contributions-to-wetlands-waterfowl-conservation</a>	Pittsburgh, PA	March 2016
Joint Chief's Project Announcement with Arkansas Assoc. of Cons. Districts, Annual Meeting Remarks: Joins Chiefs Project  <i>Remark notes available.</i>	North Little Rock, AR	February 2016
Precision Conservation Management, RCPP Project Announcement in Illinois Remarks: RCPP Project Announcement with Illinois Corn Growers	Illinois	February 2016
Restore Council Meeting Remarks: Restore Council and USDA Funding	Carriere, MS	December 2015
Western Governors Association Annual Meeting Remarks: Wildland Fire and Forest Restoration	Las Vegas, NV	December 2015
Migration Forum Subject: Conservation of Migration Corridors  <i>Remark notes available.</i> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0eSjLLYLJg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0eSjLLYLJg</a>	Laramie, WY	November 2015
San Gabriel Mountains National Monument Celebration Remarks: San Gabriel Mountains National Monument	Los Angeles, CA	October 2015
Sand to Snow National Monument Celebration Remarks: Sand to Snow National Monument	Palm Springs, CA	October 2015

Sage Grouse Event Remarks: Decision not to List the Sage Grouse	Reno, NV	September 2015
Federation of Southern Cooperatives Annual Meeting Remarks: USDA Efforts on Equity and Conservation  <a href="#">USDA's Under-Secretary Robert Bonnie - YouTube</a>	Birmingham, AL	August 2015
Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee Testimony: US Forest Service Issues and Wildfire  <a href="https://www.agriculture.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Testimony_Bonnie.pdf">https://www.agriculture.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Testimony_Bonnie.pdf</a>	Washington, DC	July 2015
White House Drought Symposium Remarks: USDA Drought Response	Washington, DC	July 2015
USDA Forest Service Remarks: Tenderfoot Forest Legacy Project	Helena, MT	July 2015
National Network on Water Quality Trading Webinar Opening Remarks: Water Quality Trading  <a href="https://www.wri.org/events/2015/06/building-water-quality-trading-program">https://www.wri.org/events/2015/06/building-water-quality-trading-program</a>	Washington, DC	June 2015
Sustainable Agriculture Round Table at the White House Subject: Climate Smart Agriculture  <i>Remark notes available.</i>	Washington, DC	June 2015
Remarks: Williams Canyon Flood Control Project	Colorado	May 2015
Western Forestry Leadership Coalition Spring Meeting Remarks: Forest Restoration	Orinda, CA	May 2015
Tongass Advisory Council, Meridian Institute Remarks: Tongass National Forest Transition Plan	Ketchikan, AK	May 2015
25 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Forest Legacy event on the Hill Remarks	Washington, DC	April 2015
Center for Heirs Property Preservation Event Remarks: Conservation of Black-Owned Forests in South Carolina	Charleston, SC	April 2015
Pheasant Fest & Quail Classic Keynote Speaker: Pheasant and Quail Conservation	Des Moines, IA	February 2015
Idaho Forest Restoration Conference Remarks: Forest Collaboratives and Forest Restoration	Boise, ID	February 2015
Regional Conservation Partnership Program Announcement Remarks: RCPP Roll Out and Georgia Project	Georgia Forestry Association, Forsyth, GA	January 2015
Public Meeting for Proposed Berryessa National Monument Remarks: Proposed Monument	Napa, CA	December 2014

United Nations International Year of the Soils Remarks: International Year of the Soils <a href="#">USDA Official Speaks at UN International Year of Soils Event - YouTube</a>	United Nations, New York, NY	December 2014
Capitol Christmas Tree Celebration Subject: Capitol Christmas Tree <a href="https://www.c-span.org/video/?323018-1/us-capitol-christmas-tree-lighting-ceremony">https://www.c-span.org/video/?323018-1/us-capitol-christmas-tree-lighting-ceremony</a>	Washington, DC	December 2014
Tongass Advisory Council Remarks: Transition to Young Growth	Sitka, AK	November 2014
Chevy, Carbon Credits Project Announcement Remarks: NRCS Project Announcement <a href="https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2014/11/17/usda-and-partners-complete-first-its-kind-sale-carbon-credits">https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2014/11/17/usda-and-partners-complete-first-its-kind-sale-carbon-credits</a>	USDA event, Washington, DC	November 2014
ACE Basin Celebration at Nemours Wildlife Foundation Keynote Speaker: ACE Basin and Collaborative Conservation	Beaufort County, SC	November 2014
American Farmland Trust Annual Meeting Keynote Speaker: Farmland Conservation	Lexington, KY	October 2014
Arizona Healthy Forest Conference, announcement of watershed restoration project Remarks: <a href="https://www.doi.gov/news/pressreleases/interior-usda-partnership-protects-and-restores-important-central-arizona-watershed">https://www.doi.gov/news/pressreleases/interior-usda-partnership-protects-and-restores-important-central-arizona-watershed</a>	Payson, AZ	October 2014
International Union of Forest Research Organizations World Congress Remarks: Forest Management and Conservation <a href="#">IUFRO XXIV World Congress: Opening Ceremony - YouTube</a>	Salt Lake City, Utah	October 2014
Forest Landowner Magazine Interview: Robert Bonnie <a href="http://digital.graphcompubs.com/article/Forest+Landowner+Interview%3A+Robert+Bonnie/1749621/215482/article.html">http://digital.graphcompubs.com/article/Forest+Landowner+Interview%3A+Robert+Bonnie/1749621/215482/article.html</a>	Forest Landowner Magazine	July/August 2014
American Longleaf 5th Anniversary Celebration Remarks: Longleaf Pine Conservation <a href="http://www.americaslongleaf.org/media/sj3luovv/2014-accomplishment-report.pdf">http://www.americaslongleaf.org/media/sj3luovv/2014-accomplishment-report.pdf</a>	Washington, DC	July 2014
House Agriculture Committee, Subcommittee on Conservation, Energy, and Forestry Testimony: Clean Water Act, Waters of the US and the Interpretive Rule <a href="https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/OCR-061914-Bonnie.pdf">https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/OCR-061914-Bonnie.pdf</a>	Washington, DC	June 2014
Wildland Fire Leadership Council Opening Remarks: Forest Restoration and Management	Washington, DC	May 2014
National Ski Area Association Meeting Remarks: Recreation and the National Forests	Savannah, GA	May 2014



Montana Public Radio Interview with Robert Bonnie, Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment  <a href="https://www.mtpr.org/post/robert-bonnie-undersecretary-natural-resources-and-environment">https://www.mtpr.org/post/robert-bonnie-undersecretary-natural-resources-and-environment</a>	Montana Public Radio	March 2014
Unveiling of National Forest and Watershed Restoration Initiative Remarks  <a href="https://www.mtpr.org/post/usda-unveils-30-million-national-forest-and-watershed-restoration-initiative-helena">https://www.mtpr.org/post/usda-unveils-30-million-national-forest-and-watershed-restoration-initiative-helena</a>	Montana Public Radio	February 2014
House Committee on Natural Resources Subject: Secure Rural Schools and the Budget Sequestration  <a href="https://www.fs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/legacy_files/media/types/testimony/USDA_HNRC_01-14-2014_Testimony.pdf">https://www.fs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/legacy_files/media/types/testimony/USDA_HNRC_01-14-2014_Testimony.pdf</a>	Washington, DC	January 2014
NACD Convention Remarks: Conservation, Climate Change, USDA's Role  <a href="#">2014 NACD Annual Meeting: Robert Bonnie - Bing video</a>	Anaheim, CA	January 2014
21st Century Conservation Service Corps Event Remarks: Conservation Corps	Washington, DC	January 2014
50th Anniversary Commemoration of the Grey Towers Gift Remarks: Gifford Pinchot, Forest Conservation  <i>Transcript available.</i>	Milford, PA	September 2013
Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee Testimony: Nomination Hearing for Under Secretary of Natural Resources and Environment  <a href="https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/OCR-20130723-Robert-Bonnie-Nomination-Testimony.pdf">https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/OCR-20130723-Robert-Bonnie-Nomination-Testimony.pdf</a>	Washington, DC	July 2013

UNITED STATES OFFICE OF  
GOVERNMENT ETHICS



June 2, 2021

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
Chairwoman  
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition,  
and Forestry  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Madam Chairwoman:

In accordance with the Ethics in Government Act of 1978, I enclose a copy of the financial disclosure report filed by Robert Bonnie, who has been nominated by President Biden for the position of Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation, Department of Agriculture.

We have reviewed the report and have obtained advice from the agency concerning any possible conflict in light of its functions and the nominee's proposed duties. Also enclosed is an ethics agreement outlining the actions that the nominee will undertake to avoid conflicts of interest. Unless a date for compliance is indicated in the ethics agreement, the nominee must fully comply within three months of confirmation with any action specified in the ethics agreement.

Based thereon, we believe that this nominee is in compliance with applicable laws and regulations governing conflicts of interest.

Sincerely,

**DAVID APOL**

David J. Apol  
General Counsel

Digitally signed by DAVID  
APOL  
Date: 2021.06.02 11:38:33  
-0400'

Enclosures





May 28, 2021

Mr. Stuart Bender  
Designated Agency Ethics Official  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
J.L. Whitten Building  
Room 347-W  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Mr. Bender:

The purpose of this letter is to describe the steps that I will take to avoid any actual or apparent conflict of interest in the event that I am confirmed for the position of Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It is my responsibility to understand and comply with commitments outlined in this agreement.

#### SECTION 1 – GENERAL COMMITMENTS

As required by the criminal conflicts of interest law at 18 U.S.C. § 208(a), I will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter in which I know that I have a financial interest directly and predictably affected by the matter, or in which I know that a person whose interests are imputed to me has a financial interest directly and predictably affected by the particular matter, unless I first obtain a written waiver, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 208(b)(1), or qualify for a regulatory exemption, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 208(b)(2). I understand that the interests of the following persons are imputed to me:

- Any spouse or minor child of mine;
- Any general partner of a partnership in which I am a limited or general partner;
- Any organization in which I serve as an officer, director, trustee, general partner, or employee; and
- Any person or organization with which I am negotiating or have an arrangement concerning prospective employment.

In the event that an actual or potential conflict of interest arises during my appointment, I will consult with an agency ethics official and take the measures necessary to resolve the conflict, such as recusal from the particular matter or divestiture of an asset.

If I have a managed account or otherwise use the services of an investment professional during my appointment, I will ensure that the account manager or investment professional obtains my prior approval on a case-by-case basis for the purchase of any assets other than cash, cash equivalents, investment funds that qualify for the regulatory exemption for diversified mutual funds and unit investment trusts at 5 C.F.R. § 2640.201(a), obligations of the United States, or municipal bonds.

I will receive a live ethics briefing from a member of the Office of Ethics after my confirmation but not later than 15 days after my appointment pursuant to the ethics program regulation at 5 C.F.R. § 2638.305. Within 90 days of my confirmation, I will submit my Certification of Ethics Agreement Compliance which documents my compliance with this ethics agreement.

I understand that as an appointee I must continue to abide by the Ethics Pledge (Exec. Order No. 13989) that I previously signed and that I will continue to be bound by it. Among other obligations, I will be required to recuse from particular matters involving specific parties involving my former employer or former clients for a period of two years after I am appointed, with the exception of federal, states and local governments.

I will not modify this ethics agreement without your approval and the approval of the U.S. Office of Government Ethics pursuant to the ethics agreement requirements contained in the financial disclosure regulation at 5 C.F.R. § 2634.803(a)(4).

#### SECTION 2 – BONNIE CONSERVATION, LLC

Upon confirmation, I will resign my position as Managing Member of Bonnie Conservation, LLC. This company has been dormant since January 20, 2021. Upon confirmation, the LLC will continue to not engage in any business, including the representation of clients. During my appointment to the position of Under Secretary, the LLC will remain dormant and will not advertise. I will not perform any services for the LLC, except that I will comply with any requirements involving legal filings, taxes, and fees that are necessary to maintain the LLC while it is in an inactive status. As Under Secretary, I will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter that to my knowledge has a direct and predictable effect on the financial interests of Bonnie Conservation, LLC. In addition, pursuant to the impartiality regulation at 5 C.F.R. § 2635.502, I will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter involving specific parties in which I know a former client of mine is a party or represents a party for a period of one year after I last provided service to that client, unless I am first authorized to participate, pursuant to 5 C.F.R. § 2635.502(d).

#### SECTION 3 – BONNIE RYE STABLES, LLC

Upon confirmation, I will resign my position as Manager, Bonnie Rye Stables, LLC. During my appointment as Undersecretary for Farm Production and Conservation, I will retain a passive equity investment in this entity; however, I will not provide any services material to the production of income to this entity. Additionally, management of this entity will be transferred to my spouse. I will also transfer or suspend any voting rights and I will not have any right to control, direct, or supervise the operations of this entity or any person employed by these entities or acting on their behalf, for the duration of my appointment. I also will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter that to my knowledge has a direct and predictable effect on the financial interests of Bonnie Rye Stables, LLC, unless I first obtain a written waiver, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 208(b)(1).

## SECTION 4 – GROTON LAND COMPANY

While I resigned my position as a Board Member of the Groton Land Company in January 2021, I retain a financial interest in the Groton Land Company. This entity, which owns undeveloped land, may occasionally, from time to time, sell wood. I will continue to have a financial interest in this entity, but I will not provide services material to the production of income. Instead, I will receive only passive investment income from it. As Under Secretary, I will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter that to my knowledge has a direct and predictable effect on the financial interests of Groton Land Company, unless I first obtain a written waiver, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 208(b)(1).

## SECTION 5 – OTHER RESIGNATIONS

Upon confirmation, I will resign from my position as a Co-Trustee in Family Trust #2, a trust in which I have no beneficial interests. Additionally, I have already resigned from the following positions:

- Executive-in-Residence, Duke University (resigned December 2020)
- Consultant, Bipartisan Policy Center (resigned October 2020)
- Consultant, Property and Environment Research Center (resigned August 2020)
- Consultant, Jones Ecological Research Center (resigned October 2020)
- Board Member, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (resigned November 2020)
- Board Member, The Conservation Fund (resigned November 2020)
- Board Member, Piedmont Fox Hounds (resigned January 2021)
- Agency Review Team Lead, Biden-Harris Presidential Transition Team (resigned January 2021)

For each of the above listed entities, pursuant to the impartiality regulation at 5 C.F.R. § 2635.502, for a period of one year after my resignation from each of these entities, I will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter involving specific parties in which I know that entity is a party or represents a party, unless I am first authorized to participate, pursuant to at 5 C.F.R. § 2635.502(d).

## SECTION 6 – RETENTION OF TRUSTEE POSITIONS

I will retain my position as a trustee of Family Trust # 1 and Family Trust # 3. I will not receive any fees for the services that I provide as a trustee during my appointment to the position of Under Secretary. I will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter that to my knowledge has a direct and predictable effect on the financial interests of Family Trust #1 or Family Trust #2, unless I first obtain a written waiver, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 208(b)(1), or qualify for a regulatory exemption, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 208(b)(2).

## SECTION 7: CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

If I rely on a *de minimis* exemption under 5 C.F.R. § 2640.201(b) with regard to any of my financial interests in sector mutual funds, I will monitor the value of those interests. If the aggregate value of my interests in sector mutual funds that concentrate in any one sector exceeds \$50,000, I will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter that to my knowledge has a direct and predictable effect on the financial interests of any holdings of the funds that are in the specific sector in which the funds concentrate, unless I first obtain a written waiver pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 208(b)(1)

## SECTION 8 – DIVESTITURES

Within 90 days of my confirmation, I will divest my interests in the Vanguard Communications Services Index Fund and the Financial Select Sector Index Fund. With regard to each of these funds, until I have divested it, I will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter that to my knowledge has a direct and predictable effect on the financial interests of any holding of the fund that is invested in its respective sector, unless I first obtain a written waiver, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 208(b)(1), or qualify for a regulatory exemption, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 208(b)(2).

I understand that I may be eligible to request a Certificate of Divestiture for qualifying assets and that a Certificate of Divestiture is effective only if obtained prior to divestiture. Regardless of whether I receive a Certificate of Divestiture, I will ensure that all divestitures discussed in this agreement occur within the agreed upon timeframes and that all proceeds are invested in non-conflicting assets. I understand that I must timely submit my request for a Certificate of Divestiture to allow for adequate time for OGE to process the Certificate of Divestiture, and in order to divest assets within the agreed upon timeframe.

I (including my spouse and dependent children if applicable) will not repurchase any asset I was required to divest without consulting with my agency ethics official and the U.S. Office of Government Ethics.

## SECTION 9 – SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT

My spouse is the sole proprietor and owner of Over Creek Stables, LLC, for which she receives no annual salary. I will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter that to my knowledge has a direct and predictable effect on the financial interests of Over Creek Stables, LLC, unless I first obtain a written waiver, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 208(b)(1).

## SECTION 10 – BLAKE LAND LLC

My sibling and I own Blake Land LLC., a limited liability company managed solely by my advisor and my brother. I do not hold a position with this entity. I will continue to have a financial interest in this entity, but I will not provide services material to the production of income. Instead, I will receive only passive investment income from it. I will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter that to my knowledge has a direct and

predictable effect on the financial interests of Blake Land, LLC, unless I first obtain a written waiver pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 208(b)(1).

SECTION 11 – PUBLIC POSTING

I have been advised that this ethics agreement and the Certification of Ethics Agreement Compliance will be posted publicly, consistent with the public information law at 5 U.S.C. § 552, on the website of the U.S. Office of Government Ethics with ethics agreements of other Presidential nominees who file public financial disclosure reports.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Bonnie", written in a cursive style.

Robert Bonnie

**Executive Branch Personnel  
Public Financial Disclosure Report (OGE Form 278e)**

**Filer's Information**

Bonnie, Robert

Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation, Department of Agriculture

Other Federal Government Positions Held During the Preceding 12 Months:

Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy and Senior Advisor, Climate, U.S. Department of Agriculture (1/2021 - Present)

Names of Congressional Committees Considering Nomination:

- Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

Electronic Signature - I certify that the statements I have made in this form are true, complete and correct to the best of my knowledge.  
/s/ Bonnie, Robert [electronically signed on 03/30/2021 by Bonnie, Robert in Integrity.gov]

Agency Ethics Official's Opinion - On the basis of information contained in this report, I conclude that the filer is in compliance with applicable laws and regulations (subject to any comments below).

/s/ Bender, Stuart, Certifying Official [electronically signed on 05/29/2021 by Bender, Stuart in Integrity.gov]

Other review conducted by

U.S. Office of Government Ethics Certification  
/s/ Apol, David, Certifying Official [electronically signed on 06/02/2021 by Apol, David in Integrity.gov]

## 1. Filer's Positions Held Outside United States Government

#	ORGANIZATION NAME	CITY, STATE	ORGANIZATION TYPE	POSITION HELD	FROM	TO
1	Duke University	Durham, North Carolina	University/College	Executive In Residence	4/2017	12/2020
2	Bonnie Conservation LLC	MIDDLEBURG, Virginia	Consulting LLC	Managing Member	8/2020	Present
3	Bipartisan Policy Center	WASHINGTON, District of Columbia	Non-Profit	Consultant	4/2020	10/2020
4	Property and Environment Research Center	Bozeman, Montana	Non-Profit	Consultant	5/2020	8/2020
5	Jones Ecological Research Center	Newton, Georgia	Non-Profit	Consultant	1/2020	10/2020
6	Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership	Washington, District of Columbia	Non-Profit	Member, Board of Directors	1/2018	11/2020
7	The Conservation Fund	Arlington, Virginia	Non-Profit	Member, Board of Directors	1/2018	11/2020
8	Piedmont Fox Hounds	Upperville, Virginia	Organization operates a fox hunt in Virginia	Member, Board of Directors	1/2018	1/2021
9	Family Trust #1	Prospect, Oldham County, Kentucky	Trust	Co-Trustee	5/2019	Present
10	Family Trust #2	Nassau County, New York	Trust	Co-Trustee	5/2018	Present
11	Family Trust #3	Nassau County, New York	Trust	Co-Trustee	5/2018	Present
12	Groton Land Company, Inc.	Athens, Georgia	Corporation	Board Member	4/2017	1/2021



#	ORGANIZATION NAME	CITY, STATE	ORGANIZATION TYPE	POSITION HELD	FROM	TO
13	Biden-Harris Presidential Transition Team (PT Fund, Inc.)	Washington, DC, District of Columbia	Presidential Transition	Lead, Agency Review Team (Department of Agriculture)	11/2020	1/2021
14	Bonnie Rye Stables, LLC	Middleburg, Virginia	Corporation	Sole Member	7/2012	Present
15	Copess Consulting LLC	Urbana, Illinois	Corporation	Consultant	1/2020	7/2020

2. Filer's Employment Assets & Income and Retirement Accounts

#	DESCRIPTION	EIF	VALUE	INCOME TYPE	INCOME AMOUNT
1	Duke University	N/A		Salary	\$102,754
2	Bipartisan Policy Center (Organization dedicated to addressing challenges in the United States)	N/A		Consulting Fees	\$10,000
3	Property and Environment Research Center (Free market environmentalism) - Hosted a wildfire workshop May 2020	N/A		Consulting Fees	\$6,500
4	Bonnie Conservation LLC	N/A	None (or less than \$1,001)	Consulting income derived from a contract with the Bipartisan Policy Center paid to Bonnie Conservation LLC	\$37,500
5	Jones Ecological Research Center (Studies the longleaf pine ecosystem)	N/A		Consulting Fees	\$1,500
6	Duke Retirement Savings Plan	No			

#	DESCRIPTION	EIF	VALUE	INCOME TYPE	INCOME AMOUNT
6.1	Vanguard Institutional Index Plus	Yes	\$50,001 - \$100,000		None (or less than \$201)
6.2	Vanguard Total Bond Market Index Fund Institutional Shares (VBPIX)	Yes	\$1,001 - \$15,000		None (or less than \$201)
6.3	Pimco Income Institutional	Yes	\$15,001 - \$50,000		None (or less than \$201)
6.4	Vanguard Federal Money Market Fund Investor Shares (VMFXX)	Yes	\$1,001 - \$15,000		None (or less than \$201)
7	Environmental Defense Fund Retirement Savings Plan	No			
7.1	Lord Abbett Short Duration Income Fund Class R6 Shares (LDLVX)	Yes	\$50,001 - \$100,000		None (or less than \$201)
7.2	Pioneer Bond Fund Class K Shares (PBFXX)	Yes	\$100,001 - \$250,000		None (or less than \$201)
7.3	Fidelity 500 Index Fund (FXAIX)	Yes	\$250,001 - \$500,000		None (or less than \$201)
8	Copress Consulting LLC	N/A		Consulting Fees	\$2,000

3. Filer's Employment Agreements and Arrangements

#	EMPLOYER OR PARTY	CITY, STATE	STATUS AND TERMS	DATE
1	Duke University	Durham, North Carolina	I will continue to participate in this defined contribution plan. The plan sponsor has not made further contributions after my separation.	4/2017
2	Environmental Defense Fund	New York, New York	I will continue to participate in this defined contribution plan. The plan sponsor has not made further contributions after my separation.	1/1995

4. Filer's Sources of Compensation Exceeding \$5,000 in a Year

#	SOURCE NAME	CITY, STATE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DUTIES
1	Duke University	Durham, North Carolina	Executive in Residence
2	Bipartisan Policy Center	WASHINGTON, District of Columbia	Consultant
3	Property and Environment Research Center	Bozeman, Montana	Consultant
4	Bonnie Conservation LLC	MIDDLEBURG, Virginia	Managing Member

5. Spouse's Employment Assets & Income and Retirement Accounts

#	DESCRIPTION	EIF	VALUE	INCOME TYPE	INCOME AMOUNT
1	Over Creek Stables LLC- Horse Training- Loudoun County, VA	N/A	\$15,001 - \$50,000		None (or less than \$201)

6. Other Assets and Income

#	DESCRIPTION	EIF	VALUE	INCOME TYPE	INCOME AMOUNT
1	JP Morgan Chase Brokerage Account #1	No			
1.1	Abbott Laboratories (ABT)	N/A	\$15,001 - \$50,000	Dividends	\$201 - \$1,000
1.2	AbbVie, Inc. (ABBV)	N/A	\$1,001 - \$15,000	Dividends	\$201 - \$1,000

#	DESCRIPTION	EIF	VALUE	INCOME TYPE	INCOME AMOUNT
1.3	American Century Intermediate-Term Tax-Free Bond Fund Class Y Shares (ATBYX)	Yes	\$15,001 - \$50,000		\$2,501 - \$5,000
1.4	American Funds International Vantage Fund Class F3 Shares (AIVGX)	Yes	None (or less than \$1,001)		\$5,001 - \$15,000
1.5	Amgen Inc. (AMGN)	N/A	\$50,001 - \$100,000	Dividends	\$1,001 - \$2,500
1.6	Automatic Data Processing, Inc. (ADP)	N/A	\$50,001 - \$100,000	Dividends	\$1,001 - \$2,500
1.7	Becton, Dickinson and Company (BDX)	N/A	None (or less than \$1,001)		None (or less than \$201)
1.8	BlackRock High Yield Bond Portfolio Class K Shares (BRHYX)	Yes	\$15,001 - \$50,000		\$5,001 - \$15,000
1.9	Broadridge Financial Solutions, Inc. (BR)	N/A	\$15,001 - \$50,000	Dividends	\$201 - \$1,000
1.10	Cardinal Health, Inc. (CAH)	N/A	\$1,001 - \$15,000	Dividends	\$201 - \$1,000
1.11	Carrier Global Corporation	N/A	\$1,001 - \$15,000		None (or less than \$201)
1.12	CDK Global, Inc. (CDK)	N/A	\$1,001 - \$15,000		None (or less than \$201)
1.13	Chubb Ltd. (CB)	N/A	\$1,001 - \$15,000	Dividends	\$201 - \$1,000
1.14	Comcast Corp. (CMCSA)	N/A	\$15,001 - \$50,000	Dividends	\$201 - \$1,000
1.15	Consumer Discretionary Select Sector SPDR Fund (XLY)	Yes	\$15,001 - \$50,000		None (or less than \$201)
1.16	Consumer Staples Select Sector SPDR Fund (XLP)	Yes	\$15,001 - \$50,000		\$201 - \$1,000
1.17	CVS Health Corp. (CVS)	N/A	\$15,001 - \$50,000	Dividends	\$1,001 - \$2,500

#	DESCRIPTION	EIF	VALUE	INCOME TYPE	INCOME AMOUNT
1.18	Edgewood Growth Fund Institutional Class Shares (EGFIX)	Yes	\$100,001 - \$250,000		\$15,001 - \$50,000
1.19	JP Morgan Deposit Money Market Fund	Yes	\$500,001 - \$1,000,000		\$1,001 - \$2,500
1.20	FedEx Corp. (FDX)	N/A	\$15,001 - \$50,000	Dividends	\$201 - \$1,000
1.21	Fidelity 500 Index Fund (FXAIX)	Yes	\$500,001 - \$1,000,000		\$5,001 - \$15,000
1.22	Financial Select Sector SPDR Fund (XLF)	Yes	\$50,001 - \$100,000		\$1,001 - \$2,500
1.23	General Dynamics Corp. (GD)	N/A	\$15,001 - \$50,000	Dividends	\$201 - \$1,000
1.24	General Mills, Inc. (GIS)	N/A	None (or less than \$1,001)	Dividends	\$1,001 - \$2,500
1.25	Health Care Select Sector SPDR Fund (XLV)	Yes	\$50,001 - \$100,000		\$2,501 - \$5,000
1.26	Consumer Discretionary Select Sector SPDR Fund (XLY)	Yes	\$100,001 - \$250,000		\$201 - \$1,000
1.27	Invesco High Yield Municipal Fund Class R6 Shares (ACTSX)	Yes	\$50,001 - \$100,000		\$2,501 - \$5,000
1.28	Invesco S&P 500 Equal Weight ETF (RSP)	Yes	\$50,001 - \$100,000		\$201 - \$1,000
1.29	iShares 3-7 Year Treasury Bond ETF (IEI)	Yes	\$50,001 - \$100,000		\$201 - \$1,000
1.30	iShares Core MSCI Emerging Markets ETF (IEMG)	Yes	\$100,001 - \$250,000		\$2,501 - \$5,000
1.31	iShares MSCI EAFE ETF (EFA)	Yes	\$100,001 - \$250,000		\$5,001 - \$15,000

#	DESCRIPTION	EIF	VALUE	INCOME TYPE	INCOME AMOUNT
1.32	iShares National Muni Bond ETF (MIUB)	Yes	\$100,001 - \$250,000		\$1,001 - \$2,500
1.33	iShares Russell 1000 Growth ETF (IWF)	Yes	\$100,001 - \$250,000		\$5,001 - \$15,000
1.34	iShares Russell 1000 Value ETF (IWD)	Yes	\$100,001 - \$250,000		\$5,001 - \$15,000
1.35	iShares Russell 2000 ETF (IWM)	Yes	\$50,001 - \$100,000		\$201 - \$1,000
1.36	iShares Russell Mid-Cap ETF (IWR)	Yes	\$100,001 - \$250,000		\$2,501 - \$5,000
1.37	iShares S&P 500 Growth ETF (IVW)	Yes	\$100,001 - \$250,000		\$5,001 - \$15,000
1.38	iShares S&P 500 Value ETF (IVE)	Yes	\$100,001 - \$250,000		\$2,501 - \$5,000
1.39	JPMorgan BetaBuilders Developed Asia ex-Japan ETF (BBAX)	Yes	\$100,001 - \$250,000		\$1,001 - \$2,500
1.40	JPMorgan High Yield Fund Class R6 Shares (JHYUX)	Yes	None (or less than \$1,001)		\$1,001 - \$2,500
1.41	JPMorgan US Large Cap Core Plus Fund Class R6 Shares (JLPYX)	Yes	\$50,001 - \$100,000		\$15,001 - \$50,000
1.42	JPMorgan BetaBuilders Canada ETF (BBCA)	Yes	\$100,001 - \$250,000		\$2,501 - \$5,000
1.43	JPMorgan BetaBuilders Europe ETF (BBEU)	Yes	\$15,001 - \$50,000		\$201 - \$1,000
1.44	JPMorgan BetaBuilders Japan ETF (BBJP)	Yes	\$100,001 - \$250,000		\$1,001 - \$2,500
1.45	JP Morgan Chase	N/A	\$15,001 - \$50,000	Dividends	\$1,001 - \$2,500

#	DESCRIPTION	EIF	VALUE	INCOME TYPE	INCOME AMOUNT
1.46	Medtronic Plc (MDT)	N/A	\$15,001 - \$50,000	Dividends	\$201 - \$1,000
1.47	Neuberger Berman Multi-Cap Opportunities Fund Institutional Class Shares (NMULX)	Yes	None (or less than \$1,001)		\$15,001 - \$50,000
1.48	Norton LifeLock Inc.	N/A	\$1,001 - \$15,000	Dividends	\$2,501 - \$5,000
1.49	Nuveen Intermediate Duration Municipal Bond Fund Class I Shares (NUVBX)	Yes	\$100,001 - \$250,000		\$5,001 - \$15,000
1.50	Otis Worldwide Corp	N/A	\$1,001 - \$15,000		None (or less than \$201)
1.51	PepsiCo, Inc. (PEP)	N/A	\$15,001 - \$50,000	Dividends	\$201 - \$1,000
1.52	PGIM High Yield Fund Class R6 Shares (PHYQX)	Yes	\$100,001 - \$250,000		\$5,001 - \$15,000
1.53	PIMCO High Yield Fund Institutional Class Shares (PHYX)	Yes	None (or less than \$1,001)		\$5,001 - \$15,000
1.54	PPG Industries, Inc. (PPG)	N/A	\$15,001 - \$50,000	Dividends	\$201 - \$1,000
1.55	PRIMECAP Odyssey Stock Fund (POSKX)	Yes	\$50,001 - \$100,000		\$15,001 - \$50,000
1.56	Raytheon Co. (RTN)	N/A	\$15,001 - \$50,000	Dividends	\$201 - \$1,000
1.57	Six Circles MGD Eq Intl Uncon	Yes	\$100,001 - \$250,000		\$1,001 - \$2,500
1.58	Six Circles MGD EQ US Uncon	Yes	\$250,001 - \$500,000		\$5,001 - \$15,000
1.59	Six Circles Intl Uncon Eq	Yes	\$100,001 - \$250,000		\$2,501 - \$5,000
1.60	Six Circles Tax Aware Bond Fund	Yes	\$250,001 - \$500,000		\$201 - \$1,000

#	DESCRIPTION	EIF	VALUE	INCOME TYPE	INCOME AMOUNT
1.61	Six Clrtces US Unconstr Equity	Yes	\$250,001 - \$500,000		\$5,001 - \$15,000
1.62	SPDR S&P 500 ETF Trust (SPY)	Yes	\$500,001 - \$1,000,000		\$5,001 - \$15,000
1.63	T Rowe Price Summit Municipal Income Fund Class I Shares (PRMIX)	Yes	\$100,001 - \$250,000		\$5,001 - \$15,000
1.64	T Rowe Price Summit Municipal Intermediate Fund Class I Shares (PRTMX)	Yes	\$100,001 - \$250,000		\$5,001 - \$15,000
1.65	Target Corp. (TGT)	N/A	\$50,001 - \$100,000	Dividends	\$1,001 - \$2,500
1.66	Texas Instruments Incorporated (TXN)	N/A	\$50,001 - \$100,000	Dividends	\$1,001 - \$2,500
1.67	Vanguard Communication Services Index Fund ETF Shares (VOX)	Yes	\$50,001 - \$100,000		\$1,001 - \$2,500
1.68	Vanguard Emerging Markets Stock Index Fund ETF Shares (VWO)	Yes	\$15,001 - \$50,000		\$201 - \$1,000
1.69	Vanguard High-Yield Tax-Exempt Fund Admiral Shares (VWALX)	Yes	None (or less than \$1,001)		\$5,001 - \$15,000
1.70	Vanguard Information Technology Index Fund ETF Class Shares (VGT)	Yes	\$15,001 - \$50,000		\$5,001 - \$15,000
1.71	Vanguard Limited-Term Tax-Exempt Fund Admiral Shares (VMLUX)	Yes	\$100,001 - \$250,000		\$5,001 - \$15,000
1.72	Vanguard Tax-Exempt Bond Index Fund ETF Shares (VTIEB)	Yes	\$100,001 - \$250,000		\$1,001 - \$2,500
1.73	Zimmer Biomet Holdings, Inc. (ZBH)	N/A	\$1,001 - \$15,000		None (or less than \$201)
1.74	Tax-Exempt Bond Fund of America Class F3 Shares (TFEBX)	Yes	None (or less than \$1,001)		\$5,001 - \$15,000



#	DESCRIPTION	EIF	VALUE	INCOME TYPE	INCOME AMOUNT
1.75	DoubleLine Total Return Bond Fund Class I Shares (DBLTX)	Yes	None (or less than \$1,001)		\$201 - \$1,000
1.76	Energy Select Sector SPDR Fund (XLE)	Yes	None (or less than \$1,001)		\$201 - \$1,000
1.77	iShares 7-10 Year Treasury Bond ETF (IEF)	Yes	None (or less than \$1,001)		\$1,001 - \$2,500
1.78	iShares Core Dividend Growth ETF (DGRO)	Yes	None (or less than \$1,001)		\$201 - \$1,000
1.79	iShares Edge MSCI USA Quality Factor ETF (QUAL)	Yes	None (or less than \$1,001)		\$5,001 - \$15,000
1.80	iShares Short Treasury Bond ETF (SHV)	Yes	None (or less than \$1,001)		\$201 - \$1,000
1.81	PIMCO Income Fund Institutional Class Shares (PIMIX)	Yes	None (or less than \$1,001)		\$201 - \$1,000
1.82	Six Circles Tax Aware US Fund	Yes	None (or less than \$1,001)		\$201 - \$1,000
1.83	T Rowe Price Summit Municipal Intermediate Fund (PRSMX)	Yes	None (or less than \$1,001)		\$201 - \$1,000
1.84	United Technologies Corp. (UTX)	N/A	None (or less than \$1,001)		None (or less than \$201)
1.85	Fidelity International Index Fund (FSPSX)	Yes	\$50,001 - \$100,000		None (or less than \$201)
1.86	Nuveen Short Duration High Yield Municipal Bond Fund Class I Shares (NVHIX)	Yes	\$50,001 - \$100,000		\$201 - \$1,000
1.87	Six Circles Credit Opportunity Fund	Yes	\$100,001 - \$250,000		None (or less than \$201)
2	JP Morgan Trust Account				
2.1	JP Morgan Chase Money Market Fund	Yes	\$15,001 - \$50,000		\$201 - \$1,000

#	DESCRIPTION	EIF	VALUE	INCOME TYPE	INCOME AMOUNT
2.2	American Century Intermediate-Term Tax-Free Bond Fund Class Y Shares (ATBYX)	Yes	\$1,001 - \$15,000		\$2,501 - \$5,000
2.3	BlackRock High Yield Bond Portfolio Class K Shares (BRHYX)	Yes	\$15,001 - \$50,000		\$2,501 - \$5,000
2.4	Consumer Discretionary Select Sector SPDR Fund (XLY)	Yes	\$15,001 - \$50,000		\$2,501 - \$5,000
2.5	Consumer Staples Select Sector SPDR Fund (XLP)	Yes	\$15,001 - \$50,000		\$1,001 - \$2,500
2.6	Fidelity 500 Index Fund (FXAIX)	Yes	None (or less than \$1,001)		None (or less than \$201)
2.7	Financial Select Sector SPDR Fund (XLF)	Yes	\$100,001 - \$250,000		\$2,501 - \$5,000
2.8	Health Care Select Sector SPDR Fund (XLV)	Yes	\$50,001 - \$100,000		\$2,501 - \$5,000
2.9	Industrial Select Sector SPDR Fund (XLI)	Yes	\$100,001 - \$250,000		\$2,501 - \$5,000
2.10	Invesco High Yield Municipal Fund Class R6 Shares (ACTSX)	Yes	\$15,001 - \$50,000		\$1,001 - \$2,500
2.11	Invesco S&P 500 Equal Weight ETF (RSP)	Yes	\$50,001 - \$100,000		None (or less than \$201)
2.12	iShares Core MSCI Emerging Markets ETF (IEMG)	Yes	\$50,001 - \$100,000		\$2,501 - \$5,000
2.13	iShares National Muni Bond ETF (MUB)	Yes	\$50,001 - \$100,000		\$201 - \$1,000
2.14	iShares Russell 1000 Growth ETF (IWF)	Yes	\$100,001 - \$250,000		\$5,001 - \$15,000
2.15	iShares Russell 1000 Value ETF (IWD)	Yes	\$100,001 - \$250,000		\$5,001 - \$15,000

#	DESCRIPTION	EIF	VALUE	INCOME TYPE	INCOME AMOUNT
2.16	iShares S&P 500 Growth ETF (IVW)	Yes	\$100,001 - \$250,000		\$2,501 - \$5,000
2.17	iShares S&P 500 Value ETF (IVE)	Yes	\$100,001 - \$250,000		\$2,501 - \$5,000
2.18	JPMorgan BetaBuilders Developed Asia ex-Japan ETF (BBAX)	Yes	\$15,001 - \$50,000		\$201 - \$1,000
2.19	JP Morgan High Yield Fund	Yes	None (or less than \$1,001)		\$2,501 - \$5,000
2.20	JPMorgan BetaBuilders Canada ETF (BBCA)	Yes	\$15,001 - \$50,000		\$2,501 - \$5,000
2.21	JPMorgan BetaBuilders Japan ETF (BBJP)	Yes	\$100,001 - \$250,000		\$2,501 - \$5,000
2.22	Nuveen Intermediate Duration Municipal Bond Fund Class I Shares (NUVBX)	Yes	\$50,001 - \$100,000		\$201 - \$1,000
2.23	PGIM High Yield Fund Class R6 Shares (PHYQX)	Yes	\$15,001 - \$50,000		\$2,501 - \$5,000
2.24	Six Circles MGD Equity Intl Uncon	Yes	\$100,001 - \$250,000		\$1,001 - \$2,500
2.25	Six Circles MGD EQ US Uncon	Yes	\$250,001 - \$500,000		\$5,001 - \$15,000
2.26	Six Circles Tax Aware Bond	Yes	\$100,001 - \$250,000		\$201 - \$1,000
2.27	SPDR S&P 500 ETF Trust (SPY)	Yes	\$500,001 - \$1,000,000		\$15,001 - \$50,000
2.28	T Rowe Price Summit Municipal Income Fund Class I Shares (PRIMX)	Yes	\$50,001 - \$100,000		\$2,501 - \$5,000
2.29	Vanguard Communication Services Index Fund ETF Shares (VOX)	Yes	\$50,001 - \$100,000		\$2,501 - \$5,000

#	DESCRIPTION	EIF	VALUE	INCOME TYPE	INCOME AMOUNT
2.30	Vanguard High-Yield Tax-Exempt Fund Admiral Shares (VWALX)	Yes	None (or less than \$1,001)		\$2,501 - \$5,000
2.31	Vanguard Information Technology Index Fund ETF Class Shares (VGT)	Yes	\$50,001 - \$100,000		\$5,001 - \$15,000
2.32	Vanguard Limited-Term Tax-Exempt Fund Admiral Shares (VMLUX)	Yes	\$100,001 - \$250,000		\$1,001 - \$2,500
2.33	Vanguard Tax-Exempt Bond Index Fund ETF Shares (VTEB)	Yes	\$50,001 - \$100,000		\$1,001 - \$2,500
2.34	iShares Core Dividend Growth ETF (DGRO)	Yes	None (or less than \$1,001)		\$1,001 - \$2,500
2.35	iShares Edge MSCI Multifactor USA Index Fund Class K Shares (BKMFX)	Yes	None (or less than \$1,001)		\$15,001 - \$50,000
2.36	PIMCO High Yield Fund Institutional Class Shares (PHYX)	Yes	None (or less than \$1,001)		\$2,501 - \$5,000
2.37	PIMCO Income Fund Institutional Class Shares (PIMIX)	Yes	None (or less than \$1,001)		\$201 - \$1,000
2.38	Six Circles Tax Aware Bond	Yes	None (or less than \$1,001)		\$201 - \$1,000
2.39	Vanguard Intermediate-Term Tax-Exempt Fund Admiral Shares (VWILX)	Yes	None (or less than \$1,001)		\$2,501 - \$5,000
2.40	Nuveen Short Duration High Yield Municipal Bond Fund Class I Shares (NVHIX)	Yes	\$15,001 - \$50,000		None (or less than \$201)
2.41	Six Circles Credit Opportunity Fund	Yes	\$15,001 - \$50,000		None (or less than \$201)
3	Deutsche Bank Trusts				
3.1	Johnson & Johnson (JNJ)	N/A	\$250,001 - \$500,000	Dividends	\$5,001 - \$15,000
3.2	United Technologies Corp. (UTX)	N/A	None (or less than \$1,001)	Dividends	\$5,001 - \$15,000

#	DESCRIPTION	EIF	VALUE	INCOME TYPE	INCOME AMOUNT
3.3	DeutscheBank Money Market Fund	Yes	\$1,000,001 - \$5,000,000		\$15,001 - \$50,000
3.4	Raytheon Co. (RTN)	N/A	None (or less than \$1,001)	Dividends Capital Gains	\$100,001 - \$1,000,000
3.5	Carrier Global	N/A	None (or less than \$1,001)	Capital Gains	\$100,001 - \$1,000,000
3.6	Otis Worldwide	N/A	None (or less than \$1,001)	Capital Gains	\$100,001 - \$1,000,000
3.7	Vanguard Energy Fund Investor Shares (VGENX)	Yes	\$15,001 - \$50,000		\$1,001 - \$2,500
3.8	iShares MSCI EAFE ETF (EFA)	Yes	\$1,000,001 - \$5,000,000		\$15,001 - \$50,000
3.9	iShares Russell 2000 ETF (IWM)	Yes	\$1,000,001 - \$5,000,000		\$15,001 - \$50,000
3.10	iShares Russell Mid-Cap ETF (IWR)	Yes	\$5,000,001 - \$25,000,000		\$100,001 - \$1,000,000
3.11	Vanguard Emerging Markets Stock Index Fund ETF Shares (VWO)	Yes	\$1,000,001 - \$5,000,000		\$15,001 - \$50,000
3.12	SPDR S&P 500 ETF Trust (SPY)	Yes	\$5,000,001 - \$25,000,000		\$100,001 - \$1,000,000
3.13	iShares TIPS Bond ETF (TIP)	Yes	\$1,000,001 - \$5,000,000		\$15,001 - \$50,000
3.14	Vanguard Inflation-Protected Securities Fund Investor Shares (VIPSX)	Yes	\$1,000,001 - \$5,000,000		\$15,001 - \$50,000
3.15	Fidelity Advisor Series II Floating Rate High Income Fund	Yes	\$500,001 - \$1,000,000		\$15,001 - \$50,000
4	Citibank Trusts				
4.1	Western Asset Institutional Government Reserves Institutional Shares (INGXX)	Yes	\$15,001 - \$50,000		\$201 - \$1,000

#	DESCRIPTION	EIF	VALUE	INCOME TYPE	INCOME AMOUNT
4.2	Vanguard Total Stock Market Index Fund ETF Class Shares (VTI)	Yes	\$1,000,001 - \$5,000,000		\$100,001 - \$1,000,000
4.3	Vanguard Emerging Markets Stock Index Fund ETF Shares (VWO)	Yes	\$250,001 - \$500,000		\$5,001 - \$15,000
4.4	iShares Global REIT ETF (REET)	Yes	\$50,001 - \$100,000		\$201 - \$1,000
4.5	iShares Mortgage Real Estate ETF (REM)	Yes	\$15,001 - \$50,000		\$1,001 - \$2,500
4.6	Vanguard Intermediate-Term Tax-Exempt Fund Investor Shares (VWITX)	Yes	\$1,001 - \$15,000		\$1,001 - \$2,500
4.7	SPDR Nuveen Bloomberg Barclays Municipal Bond ETF (TFI)	Yes	\$1,001 - \$15,000		\$201 - \$1,000
4.8	iShares JPMorgan US Emerging Markets Bond ETF (EMB)	Yes	None (or less than \$1,001)		\$201 - \$1,000
4.9	iShares Gold Trust (IAU)	Yes	\$1,001 - \$15,000		None (or less than \$201)
4.10	Vanguard Developed Markets Index Fund ETF Shares (VEA)	Yes	\$500,001 - \$1,000,000		\$100,001 - \$1,000,000
5	Morgan Stanley Trust				
5.1	Morgan Stanley Money Market	Yes	\$15,001 - \$50,000		None (or less than \$201)
5.2	Xtrackers Japan JPX-Nikkei 400 Equity ETF (JPN)	Yes	\$15,001 - \$50,000		\$201 - \$1,000
5.3	Invesco Opt Yld Dvs Cmd Str No K-1 ETF (PDBC)	Yes	\$15,001 - \$50,000		None (or less than \$201)
5.4	iQ Hedge Multi-Strategy Tracker ETF (QAI)	Yes	None (or less than \$1,001)		\$5,001 - \$15,000
5.5	iShares Core MSCI Emerging Markets ETF (IEMG)	Yes	\$15,001 - \$50,000		\$201 - \$1,000

#	DESCRIPTION	EIF	VALUE	INCOME TYPE	INCOME AMOUNT
5.6	iShares Core MSCI Europe ETF (IEUR)	Yes	\$50,001 - \$100,000		\$201 - \$1,000
5.7	iShares Core S&P 500 ETF (IVV)	Yes	\$50,001 - \$100,000		\$2,501 - \$5,000
5.8	iShares iBoxx \$ High Yield Corporate Bond ETF (HYG)	Yes	\$15,001 - \$50,000		\$1,001 - \$2,500
5.9	iShares Russell 2000 Growth ETF (IWO)	Yes	\$1,001 - \$15,000		None (or less than \$201)
5.10	iShares Russell Mid-Cap Growth ETF (IWP)	Yes	\$1,001 - \$15,000		None (or less than \$201)
5.11	iShares Russell Mid-Cap Value ETF (IWS)	Yes	\$1,001 - \$15,000		None (or less than \$201)
5.12	iShares Core S&P Mid-Cap ETF (IJH)	Yes	\$15,001 - \$50,000		\$201 - \$1,000
5.13	iShares Core S&P Small-Cap ETF (IJR)	Yes	\$1,001 - \$15,000		\$201 - \$1,000
5.14	SPDR Gold Shares (GLD)	Yes	\$1,001 - \$15,000		None (or less than \$201)
5.15	Vanguard Tax-Exempt Bond Index Fund ETF Shares (VTEB)	Yes	\$50,001 - \$100,000		\$2,501 - \$5,000
5.16	Abbey Capital Futures Strategy Fund Class I Shares (ABYIX)	Yes	\$15,001 - \$50,000		\$201 - \$1,000
5.17	SPDR Blackstone/GSO Senior Loan ETF (SRLN)	Yes	None (or less than \$1,001)		\$201 - \$1,000
5.18	iShares TIPS Bond ETF (TIP)	Yes	None (or less than \$1,001)		\$201 - \$1,000
5.19	Vanguard European Stock Index Fund ETF Shares (VGK)	Yes	None (or less than \$1,001)		\$201 - \$1,000
5.20	FT North American Energy	Yes	None (or less than \$1,001)		\$201 - \$1,000

#	DESCRIPTION	EIF	VALUE	INCOME TYPE	INCOME AMOUNT
5.21	VanEck Vectors Gold Miners ETF (GDJ)	Yes	None (or less than \$1,001)		\$201 - \$1,000
5.22	VanEck Vectors Junior Gold Miners ETF (GDJ)	Yes	None (or less than \$1,001)		\$201 - \$1,000
5.23	iShares Russell 2000 Value ETF (IWN)	Yes	\$1,001 - \$15,000		None (or less than \$201)
6	Vanguard Brokerage				
6.1	Vanguard Federal Money Market Fund Investor Shares (VMFXX)	Yes	None (or less than \$1,001)		None (or less than \$201)
6.2	Vanguard Emerging Markets Stock Index Fund Admiral Class Shares (VEMAX)	Yes	\$15,001 - \$50,000		\$201 - \$1,000
6.3	Vanguard European Stock Index Fund Admiral Shares (VEUSX)	Yes	\$15,001 - \$50,000		\$201 - \$1,000
6.4	Vanguard Short-Term Investment-Grade Fund Investor Shares (VFSTX)	Yes	\$15,001 - \$50,000		\$201 - \$1,000
6.5	Vanguard Real Estate Index Fund Admiral Shares (VGSLX)	Yes	\$15,001 - \$50,000		\$201 - \$1,000
6.6	Vanguard Inflation-Protected Securities Fund Investor Shares (VIPSX)	Yes	\$15,001 - \$50,000		\$201 - \$1,000
6.7	Vanguard Pacific Stock Index Fund Admiral Shares (VPADX)	Yes	\$15,001 - \$50,000		\$201 - \$1,000
6.8	Vanguard Small-Cap Index Fund Admiral Shares (VSMAX)	Yes	\$50,001 - \$100,000		\$201 - \$1,000
6.9	Vanguard Total Stock Market Index Fund Admiral Class Shares (VTSAX)	Yes	\$50,001 - \$100,000		\$201 - \$1,000
6.10	Vanguard High-Yield Corporate Fund Investor Shares (VWEHX)	Yes	\$15,001 - \$50,000		\$1,001 - \$2,500
6.11	VanEck Vectors Gold Miners ETF (GDJ)	Yes	\$15,001 - \$50,000		None (or less than \$201)



#	DESCRIPTION	EIF	VALUE	INCOME TYPE	INCOME AMOUNT
7	Groton Land Company, Inc. Undeveloped Real Estate (Alendale County, South Carolina	N/A	\$1,000,001 - \$5,000,000		None (or less than \$201)
8	Bonnie Management Company Inc. Financial Services	See Endnote	\$1,001 - \$15,000		None (or less than \$201)
9	U.S. bank (Cash)	N/A	\$50,001 - \$100,000	Interest	\$1,001 - \$2,500
10	Residential Rental Property Middleburg, Loudoun County Virginia	N/A	\$1,000,001 - \$5,000,000	Rent or Royalties	\$15,001 - \$50,000
11	Blake Land LLC (Undeveloped Land), Hampton County, SC	N/A	\$1,000,001 - \$5,000,000		None (or less than \$201)
12	Summary Holding Company- land Loudoun County, VA	N/A	\$15,001 - \$50,000		None (or less than \$201)
13	Stonelea Stable LLC- Horse partnership Goshen, KY	N/A	\$15,001 - \$50,000		None (or less than \$201)
14	Bonnie Rye Stable LLC- Horse related business, Loudoun County, VA	See Endnote	\$15,001 - \$50,000		None (or less than \$201)
15	Bon Nouvell Chasers LLC- Horse partnership Loudoun County, VA	N/A	\$1,001 - \$15,000		None (or less than \$201)
16	Whalerock Digital Media LLC- West Hollywood, CA	N/A	\$100,001 - \$250,000		None (or less than \$201)
17	Spokestack Inc. (This is a start up technology company involved in artificial intelligence and located in San Raphael, CA.)	N/A	\$50,001 - \$100,000		None (or less than \$201)
18	U.S. bank (cash)	N/A	\$15,001 - \$50,000		None (or less than \$201)
19	Northwest Mutual Life Whole Life Insurance Policy	N/A	\$15,001 - \$50,000		None (or less than \$201)

**7. Transactions**

(N/A) - Not required for this type of report

**8. Liabilities**

#	CREDITOR NAME	TYPE	AMOUNT	YEAR INCURRED	RATE	TERM
1	Groton Land Company, Inc.	Mortgage (investment/rental property)	\$250,001 - \$500,000	2010	5.0%	15 years

**9. Gifts and Travel Reimbursements**

(N/A) - Not required for this type of report

**Endnotes**

PART	#	ENDNOTE
1.	2	This is a conservation and environmental consulting LLC company. This company has been dormant since January 20, 2021.
1.	13	This was an uncompensated position.
1.	14	I am an uncompensated member of this entity.
6.	8	Bonnie Management Company is a financial services firm that serves the Bonnie family. I do not hold a position with this company.
6.	14	I hold the sole position with this company. This business has no reportable income.

## Summary of Contents

### 1. Filer's Positions Held Outside United States Government

Part 1 discloses positions that the filer held at any time during the reporting period (excluding positions with the United States Government). Positions are reportable even if the filer did not receive compensation.

This section does not include the following: (1) positions with religious, social, fraternal, or political organizations; (2) positions solely of an honorary nature; (3) positions held as part of the filer's official duties with the United States Government; (4) mere membership in an organization; and (5) passive investment interests as a limited partner or non-managing member of a limited liability company.

### 2. Filer's Employment Assets & Income and Retirement Accounts

Part 2 discloses the following:

- Sources of earned and other non-investment income of the filer totaling more than \$200 during the reporting period (e.g., salary, fees, partnership share, honoraria, scholarships, and prizes)
- Assets related to the filer's business, employment, or other income-generating activities (1) that ended the reporting period with a value greater than \$1,000 or (2) from which more than \$200 in income was received during the reporting period (e.g., equity in business or partnership, stock options, retirement plans/accounts and their underlying holdings as appropriate, deferred compensation, and intellectual property, such as book deals and patents)

This section does not include assets or income from United States Government employment or assets that were acquired separately from the filer's business, employment, or other income-generating activities (e.g., assets purchased through a brokerage account). Note: The type of income is not required if the amount of income is \$0 - \$200 or if the asset qualifies as an excepted investment fund (EIF).

### 3. Filer's Employment Agreements and Arrangements

Part 3 discloses agreements or arrangements that the filer had during the reporting period with an employer or former employer (except the United States Government), such as the following:

- Future employment
- Leave of absence
- Continuing payments from an employer, including severance and payments not yet received for previous work (excluding ordinary salary from a current employer)
- Continuing participation in an employee welfare, retirement, or other benefit plan, such as pensions or a deferred compensation plan
- Retention or disposition of employer-awarded equity, sharing in profits or carried interests (e.g., vested and unvested stock options, restricted stock, future share of a company's profits, etc.)

4. Filer's Sources of Compensation Exceeding \$5,000 in a Year

Part 4 discloses sources (except the United States Government) that paid more than \$5,000 in a calendar year for the filer's services during any year of the reporting period.

The filer discloses payments both from employers and from any clients to whom the filer personally provided services. The filer discloses a source even if the source made its payment to the filer's employer and not to the filer. The filer does not disclose a client's payment to the filer's employer if the filer did not provide the services for which the client is paying.

5. Spouse's Employment Assets & Income and Retirement Accounts

Part 5 discloses the following:

- Sources of earned income (excluding honoraria) for the filer's spouse totaling more than \$1,000 during the reporting period (e.g., salary, consulting fees, and partnership share)
- Sources of honoraria for the filer's spouse greater than \$200 during the reporting period
- Assets related to the filer's spouse's employment, business activities, other income-generating activities (1) that ended the reporting period with a value greater than \$1,000 or (2) from which more than \$200 in income was received during the reporting period (e.g., equity in business or partnership, stock options, retirement plans/accounts and their underlying holdings as appropriate, deferred compensation, and intellectual property, such as book deals and patents)

This section does not include assets or income from United States Government employment or assets that were acquired separately from the filer's spouse's business employment, or other income-generating activities (e.g., assets purchased through a brokerage account). Note: The type of income is not required if the amount of income is \$0 - \$200 or if the asset qualifies as an excepted investment fund (EIF). Amounts of income are not required for a spouse's earned income (excluding honoraria).

6. Other Assets and Income

Part 6 discloses each asset, not already reported, (1) that ended the reporting period with a value greater than \$1,000 or (2) from which more than \$200 in investment income was received during the reporting period. For purposes of the value and income thresholds, the filer aggregates the filer's interests with those of the filer's spouse and dependent children.

This section does not include the following types of assets: (1) a personal residence (unless it was rented out during the reporting period); (2) income or retirement benefits associated with United States Government employment (e.g., Thrift Savings Plan); and (3) cash accounts (e.g., checking, savings, money market accounts) at a single financial institution with a value of \$5,000 or less (unless more than \$200 in income was received). Additional exceptions apply. Note: The type of income is not required if the amount of income is \$0 - \$200 or if the asset qualifies as an excepted investment fund (EIF).

#### 7. Transactions

Part 7 discloses purchases, sales, or exchanges of real property or securities in excess of \$1,000 made on behalf of the filer, the filer's spouse or dependent child during the reporting period.

This section does not include transactions that concern the following: (1) a personal residence, unless rented out; (2) cash accounts (e.g., checking, savings, CDs, money market accounts) and money market mutual funds; (3) Treasury bills, bonds, and notes; and (4) holdings within a federal Thrift Savings Plan account. Additional exceptions apply.

#### 8. Liabilities

Part 8 discloses liabilities over \$10,000 that the filer, the filer's spouse or dependent child owed at any time during the reporting period.

This section does not include the following types of liabilities: (1) mortgages on a personal residence, unless rented out (limitations apply for PAS filers); (2) loans secured by a personal motor vehicle, household furniture, or appliances, unless the loan exceeds the item's purchase price; and (3) revolving charge accounts, such as credit card balances, if the outstanding liability did not exceed \$10,000 at the end of the reporting period. Additional exceptions apply.

#### 9. Gifts and Travel Reimbursements

This section discloses:

- Gifts totaling more than \$415 that the filer, the filer's spouse, and dependent children received from any one source during the reporting period.
- Travel reimbursements totaling more than \$415 that the filer, the filer's spouse, and dependent children received from any one source during the reporting period.

For purposes of this section, the filer need not aggregate any gift or travel reimbursement with a value of \$166 or less. Regardless of the value, this section does not include the following items: (1) anything received from relatives; (2) anything received from the United States Government or from the District of Columbia, state, or local governments; (3) bequests and other forms of inheritance; (4) gifts and travel reimbursements given to the filer's agency in connection with the filer's official travel; (5) gifts of hospitality (food, lodging, entertainment) at the donor's residence or personal premises; and (6) anything received by the filer's spouse or dependent children totally independent of their relationship to the filer. Additional exceptions apply.

#### Privacy Act Statement

Title I of the Ethics in Government Act of 1978, as amended (the Act), 5 U.S.C. app. § 101 et seq., as amended by the Stop Trading on Congressional Knowledge Act of 2012 (Pub. L. 112-105) (STOCK Act), and 5 C.F.R. Part 2634 of the U. S. Office of Government Ethics regulations require the reporting of this information. Failure to provide the requested information may result in separation, disciplinary action, or civil action. The primary use of the information on this report is for review by Government officials to determine compliance with applicable Federal laws and regulations. This report may also be disclosed upon request to any requesting person in accordance with sections 105 and 402(b)(1) of the Act or as otherwise authorized by law. You may inspect applications for public access of your own form upon request. Additional disclosures of the information on this report may be made: (1) to any requesting person, subject to the limitation contained in section 208(d)(1) of title 18, any determination granting an exemption pursuant to sections 208(b)(1) and 208(b)(3) of title 18; (2) to a Federal, State, or local law enforcement agency if the disclosing agency becomes aware of violations or potential violations of law or regulation; (3) to a source when necessary to obtain information relevant to a conflict of interest investigation or determination; (4) to the National Archives and Records Administration or the General Services Administration in records management inspections; (5) to the Office of Management and Budget during legislative coordination on private relief legislation; (6) when the disclosing agency determines that the records are arguably relevant to a proceeding before a court, grand jury, or administrative or adjudicative body, or in a proceeding before an administrative or adjudicative body when the adjudicator determines the records to be relevant to the proceeding; (7) to reviewing officials in a new office, department or agency when an employee transfers or is detailed from one covered position to another, a public financial disclosure report and any accompanying documents, including statements notifying an employee's supervising ethics office of the commencement of negotiations for future employment or compensation or of an agreement for future employment or compensation; (8) to a Member of Congress or a congressional office in response to an inquiry made on behalf of and at the request of an individual who is the subject of the record; (9) to contractors and other non-Government employees working on a contract, service or assignment for the Federal Government when necessary to accomplish a function related to this system of records; (10) on the OGE Website and to any person, department or agency, any written ethics agreement, including certifications of ethics agreement compliance, filed with OGE by an individual nominated by the President to a position requiring Senate confirmation; (11) on the OGE Website and to any person, department or agency, any certificate of divestiture issued by OGE; (12) on the OGE Website and to any person, department or agency, any waiver of the restrictions contained in Executive Order 13770 or any superseding executive order; (13) to appropriate agencies, entities and persons when there has been a suspected or confirmed breach of the system of records, the agency maintaining the records has determined that there is a risk of harm to individuals, the agency, the Federal Government, or national security, and the disclosure is reasonably necessary to assist in connection with the agency's efforts to respond to the suspected or confirmed breach or to prevent, minimize, or remedy such harm; and (14) to another Federal agency or Federal entity, when the agency maintaining the record determines that information from this system of records is reasonably necessary to assist the recipient agency or entity in responding to a suspected or confirmed breach or in preventing, minimizing, or remedying the risk of harm to individuals, the recipient agency or entity, the Federal Government, or national security. See also the OGE/GOVT-1 executive branch-wide Privacy Act system of records.

#### Public Burden Information

This collection of information is estimated to take an average of ten hours per response, including time for reviewing the instructions, gathering the data needed, and completing the form. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the Program Counsel, U.S. Office of Government Ethics (OGE), Suite 500, 1201 New York Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20005-3917.

Pursuant to the Paperwork Reduction Act, as amended, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and no person is required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number (that number, 3209-0001, is displayed here and at the top of the first page of this OGE Form 278e).

July 27, 2021

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow, Chairwoman Committee on  
Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Boozman, Ranking Member  
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow and Ranking Member Boozman:

Please be advised that pursuant to section 101(b) of the Ethics in Government Act of 1978, as amended, I have informed the appropriate ethics officials that the information required by section 102(a)(1)(A) of the Act with respect to income and honoraria contained in OGE Form 278e (Executive Branch Public Financial Disclosure Report) executed by me on March 30, 2021 is correct.

This information is current as of Tuesday, July 27, 2021. This date is within five days prior to the date of the first hearing scheduled to consider my nomination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Bonnie", written in a cursive style.

Robert Bonnie





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## **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

JULY 29, 2021

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## Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

Hearing to consider the nomination of the Honorable Xochitl Torres Small to be Under Secretary of  
Agriculture for Rural Development

Thursday, July 29, 2021

Questions for the Record

**Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow**

1. Over 50 percent of rural Black residents and 45 percent of rural Native American residents live in a distressed county, and 85% of persistent poverty counties are rural, with more than 60% of their residents minorities. What changes would you propose at USDA-RD to ensure its programs are reaching and benefiting these communities?

Rural Development lives its rural mission through committed, experienced career professions in state offices across the country. These civil servants build crucial connections to communities to help identify needs, navigate a complex program structure, leverage support, and stick to long term plans. If confirmed, I would like to hear more from the state offices about how the diverse responsibilities of outreach, application support, application administration, and program delivery can most effectively and efficiently be structured to reach diverse communities and those most in need. I will also work with staff to ensure metrics and priority points better reflect the work it can take to reach communities in distress. Counties in persistent poverty may also benefit from efforts to simplify Rural Development programs and increase flexibility for specific community needs. If confirmed, I will also continue to invest in strong technical assistance partners with community organizations already working with diverse and distressed communities.

2. The Administration has introduced a plan to rebuild American infrastructure, and Congress has begun taking action. What do you see as the most urgent infrastructure needs for rural communities?

Rural Development has two key objectives: increase economic opportunity and improve quality of life for rural America. Infrastructure investments provide a strong foundation to achieve both of these goals. Congress's bold investment provides a pivotal opportunity to ensure that every individual has access to clean, running water no matter where they live in America. Similarly, the future of rural communities depends on people having safe, affordable housing across our country. In addition to water and housing, rural places need access to fast, reliable internet to continue to feed, build, serve, and innovate on a level playing field. Finally, Congress's action now can pay dividends into the future if Rural Development invests in strengthening community assets, whether it's providing seed money for innovative regional business expansion or supporting community organizations that provide crucial technical assistance to change the trajectory for counties of persistent poverty.

3. USDA Rural Development also has a unique opportunity to engage in rural healthcare. How do you see USDA Rural Development playing a role in improving access to rural mental health resources? Will you commit to prioritizing rural healthcare?

Rural Development has a wide range of tools at its disposal to help bolster rural healthcare. RD business programs may be used for hospital business development, utility programs may be used to help expand telemedicine, and RD housing programs may help finance new and existing rural hospitals,

including mental health facilities. The American Rescue Plan recently expanded this suite of tools to provide \$500 million for Emergency Health Care Grants. If confirmed, I commit to making rural healthcare a priority for RD, and I look forward to being briefed on the implementation of the Emergency Health Care Grants.

4. USDA's BiopREFERRED program was recently moved under Rural Development's Business-Cooperative Service. Unfortunately, the program often struggles to secure support from federal agencies in the procurement of biobased products, despite strong bipartisan support. Will you commit to improving USDA's biobased product programs, including BiopREFERRED? Will you work with other federal agencies to improve purchasing under BiopREFERRED?

Yes. The Bioeconomy is an important and growing source of economic and environmental outcomes. The BiopREFERRED program sends important signals to the market that bio-based products are important and meaningful sources of those outcomes. If confirmed, I will work to better understand USDA's history on biobased product programs, support staff in developing ways to better communicate the benefits of the BiopREFERRED program and explore opportunities to work with other agencies to improve purchasing under the program.

5. In the 2018 Farm Bill, we included a provision that authorized the Department to permit loan guarantees to be issued for cybersecurity and grid security improvements. We've seen a lot of cyber attacks in the agriculture space lately, with JBS for example. I know your experience in Congress included time on the House Committee on Homeland Security. Will you work within the Department and with other relevant federal agencies and state and local partners to improve cybersecurity for rural infrastructure and rural businesses, and how will you champion this issue?

This is a matter of critical importance to me and the Administration. Cyber threats pose a serious danger to America's food supply, critical infrastructure, financial institutions and national security. As Under Secretary, I would fully engage with my colleagues across the federal family to develop and deploy strategies to protect our nation from any illicit incursion, especially via rural access points.

I look forward to working with the USDA's Office of Homeland Security, using the USDA/DOE and USDA/FCC/NTIA memorandums of understanding to coordinate our response and to spread the word to rural organizations that cyber vigilance and infrastructure protection are more important than ever.

6. Food insecurity is not just a problem in major cities, many rural communities and small towns also suffer from the lack of access to healthy food. Grocery stores across the country operate on razor thin margins and in poor communities struggle to meet their bottom line. The 2014 Farm Bill created the Healthy Food Financing Initiative to support grocery store development and keep existing stores open. Will you commit to supporting the Healthy Food Financing Initiative and look for new ways to improve healthy food access?

As a former Representative of rural New Mexico, I know food insecurity is too often a challenge for families, and in rural and urban food deserts alike, lack of access to healthy foods exacerbates the problem. The Healthy Food Financing Initiative is meant to address this access issue. If confirmed, I look forward to digging in on this program to identify what is working and where we can make improvements as well as looking at how Rural Development can help be part of the solutions needed to address food insecurity across the country.

7. Local and regional food systems create economic opportunities and help bridge gaps between urban, suburban, and rural communities. Will you commit to examine rural development tools and resources and better utilize them to support local and regional food systems?

The pandemic underscored the importance of ensuring our food systems are resilient, flexible, and reliable. Rural Development has a number of tools – including the Healthy Food and Financing Initiative, Rural Cooperative Development Grants, and Value-Added Producer Grants – that could play a vital role in increasing supply chain resiliency. If confirmed, I look forward to exploring all of the opportunities that Rural Development has to bolster local and regional food systems.

8. Will you commit to working with the Agriculture Marketing Service to improve coordination and administration of the Local Agriculture Market Program?

Yes, if confirmed, I commit to working closely with the Agricultural Marketing Service to improve coordination and administration of LAMP.

9. If you are confirmed, I look forward to working with you, including on the upcoming Farm Bill and other issues of importance to American farmers, ranchers, and families. If confirmed, do you agree, without reservation, to:
  - a. Promptly reply to requests for information from me or any duly constituted committee of the Congress?

Yes, if confirmed, I commit to providing information from Rural Development in a timely manner.

- b. Respond to my requests for data and technical assistance in informing or drafting legislation or implementation of the law?

Yes, if confirmed, I commit to providing technical assistance and data in a timely manner.

#### **Ranking Member John Boozman**

1. Shortly after the presidential election last year, a number of former USDA officials wrote the Climate 21 transition memo for the Department of Agriculture. This memo provided a roadmap for federal agencies to follow to help achieve the Administration's goal of reaching net zero emissions by 2050. The recommendations in this memo included developing plans for retiring fossil fuel burning power plants. What are your thoughts about the risks and opportunities of retiring fossil fuel burning power plants, especially in rural areas?

Traditional and renewable energy sources both have a huge impact on rural vitality and on the folks who live in these communities. As we take steps to promote climate resiliency, it is important that we keep this perspective top of mind. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about this issue.

- a. What is your view about the importance of ensuring that any plans to retire baseload capacity needs to be done thoughtfully, through incentives, and not through mandates that could result in stranded assets and risk the ability of electric cooperatives and other energy providers to continue providing reliable, affordable energy to rural communities across the country?



Reliable, affordable energy is essential to keeping rural communities running. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about baseload capacity retirement and working with you to ensure both climate and power resiliency.

2. Another one of your top priorities in the House was working to ensure rural residents had access to healthcare services. While Arkansas has fared much better than other parts of the country, combatting the opioid epidemic and working to treat those suffering from addiction continues to be an issue. The last farm bill included a provision prioritizing funding in the Distance Learning and Telemedicine and Community Facilities programs for projects focused on prevention and treatment of substance use disorders. If confirmed, will you work to implement these programs to support access to rural treatment facilities, and will you commit to providing us an update on which healthcare facilities have been funded since passage of the 2018 farm bill?

As you stated during the hearing, the COVID-19 pandemic has “shown us the resilience of our communities but also shined a light” on rural needs. While our nation fought to defeat COVID-19, another pandemic raged on; according to the Center for Disease Control, drug overdose deaths in the United States rose by nearly 30% in 2020. Thankfully, Congress has invested vision and funds to tackle this challenge: building the broadband and brick and mortar infrastructure necessary to deliver health care close to home and reach residents in urgent need of addiction treatment and mental health support. If confirmed, I commit to work to implement these programs and provide an update on program investments since the 2018 farm bill.

3. You have extensive background in water policy. While I understand most of your work has focused on programs within BLM and EPA, you have also supported programs within USDA Rural Development. Do you see any current deficiencies in any of the RUS water and environment programs and, if so, do you have recommendations for improving these programs?

RUS has provided rural residents with clean water for decades, investing technical assistance to identify needs, collaborating to leverage state and local funds, and ensuring support on the back end to maintain high standards. Rural Development can improve accessibility in hard-to-reach places by expanding partnerships with local community organizations and providing flexibility to address unique challenges on the ground. Based on my experience in southern New Mexico, additional assistance could be helpful when communities choose to invest in regionalization and must, as a result, expend funds to modernize failing infrastructure. Community outreach is crucial under such circumstances, to ensure that rural residents are committed to the changes necessary to achieve a more sustainable water supply. Additionally, quick work to fill vacancies across RUS can improve the timeliness with which projects are reviewed and funded.

4. Recent cyberattacks, particularly the attack on JBS and the Colonial pipeline, highlight the vulnerability of our nation’s critical infrastructure and supply chains. Section 6507 of the 2018 farm bill authorizes the Secretary to make or guarantee electric and telephone loans for cybersecurity and grid security improvements. Are there other tools USDA can provide to help ensure rural infrastructure, like electric, broadband and water systems, remain secure?

Section 6507 is a valuable addition to the Rural Electrification Act. I was pleased to see the Rural Utilities Service recently create a Grid Security Division to address Cyber Security as well as grid security issues. I also fully support the long-term continuation of the policy announced during the COVID pandemic emergency that expanded RUS financing for cyber security, grid security and fire prevention investments. Across RD, I am committed to expanding awareness of cyber and physical

threats to infrastructure, finding ways to make technical and financial resources available to enhance rural security and working with federal and state officials to close rural security gaps.

5. In June, USDA announced it would soon begin administering \$700 million worth of payments to biofuels producers as authorized by the appropriations bill passed by Congress last December. What formula do you believe is appropriate to administer these payments, and do you have any other ideas you'd like to implement, if confirmed, to help support our nation's biofuel producers.

I appreciate this question because the biofuels industry faced difficult market impacts as a result of the pandemic. I understand that USDA announced intentions to provide the funding soon. If confirmed, one of my first actions would be to get a full briefing from the RD team so we can identify means to further expedite the process. Beyond implementation of these funds, I am also interested in tools and authorities that RD can utilize to further support biofuels, with a particular interest in infrastructure investments that might be appropriate to facilitate production and utilization of biofuels.

6. An Arkansan recently reached out to my office expressing concerns about the timeliness of a decision by USDA Rural Housing Service regarding whether they qualified for assistance under the Single Family Housing Repair Program. It took three months for my constituent to receive a response, and only after my staff reached out to USDA. I think you would agree that three months to hear back from USDA is completely unacceptable. Regardless of whether someone qualifies for assistance under USDA Rural Development programs, they deserve a timely response so they have an opportunity to pursue other financial assistance options if necessary. Unfortunately, this is yet another example of this Administration's poor track record of timely responses to both my staff and constituents. Do you commit to ensuring USDA Rural Development staff changes course and responds to all future constituent inquiries in a timely fashion?

As Chairwoman Stabenow stated during the hearing, Rural Development is one of USDA's "first line[s] of customer service." That customer service is vital to building trust and serving the rural areas that sustain our nation. If confirmed, I commit to working to expeditiously fill vacancies and get the support Rural Development career professionals need to improve responsiveness to Congress and constituents.

7. Section 6212 of the 2018 Farm Bill required USDA, the FCC and NTIA submit to Congress a report on how best to coordinate federally supported broadband programs and activities. If confirmed, will you commit to having this report completed in the near future?

USDA works closely with FCC and NTIA to coordinate funding opportunities, policy initiatives, and to share data when appropriate. Section 6212 of the 2018 Farm Bill required USDA, NTIA, and FCC to submit a report to Congress on how to best coordinate federally supported broadband programs and activities. I understand that this report was released in March of 2020, and I am currently reviewing it to better prepare for this crucial coordination. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you to further coordinate federal broadband programming.

8. Section 9002 of the 2018 Farm Bill amended USDA's Biopreferred program to require the Secretary work with the Department of Commerce, through the Census Bureau, to jointly develop North American Industry Classification System codes for renewable chemical manufacturers and biobased product manufacturers. This provision was included at the behest of USDA to allow it to better measure how these industries contribute to the larger economy. Unfortunately, the Notice of Comment published on January 2 in the Federal Register did not include the development of NAICS codes for either renewable chemicals or biobased products. If confirmed, will you commit to working with OMB and Census to remind them that development

of these NAICS codes was not a recommendation but is required by statute and needs to be implemented as mandated by Congress?

I appreciate this question as I believe so much more can be done in the sector of biopreferred products in terms of spurring new economic opportunities for rural areas and increasing the sustainability of industries and manufacturing. If confirmed I look forward to establishing close relationships with staff offices throughout the Executive Branch that play a role in biopreferred products. And yes, I will commit to working with OMB, the Department of Commerce and others regarding the classification codes for biopreferred products.

**Senator Amy Klobuchar**

1. It is clear that biofuels and biobased products are key pathways toward decarbonizing our economy while lowering gas prices, driving economic growth, and creating jobs. We cannot achieve a carbon neutral future without biofuels, renewable chemicals, and biobased products. That's why I have been leading the effort to include biofuel infrastructure in the upcoming infrastructure package and why I led the effort to reauthorize the Energy Title in the 2018 Farm Bill.

How do you view the role of biofuels and biobased products as part of the broader goal of meeting our emissions reductions goals and supporting rural communities?

Investing in biofuels leverages the power of hardworking farmers across our country to help solve one of the greatest challenges of our time. That's why the Biden-Harris Administration and Secretary Vilsack recognize that biofuels and biobased products are a crucial part of the mix to combat the climate crisis and reach net zero carbon emissions. Rural Development has unique opportunities to invest in these markets, both on a large processing scale through 9003 and expanding access to local communities through HBIP. If confirmed, I am excited to work with you and the farmers you serve to find other ways to invest in innovative biobased solutions to maximize efficiency and turn each byproduct into a new market opportunity. These investments continue a long tradition of work done in rural America that supports the success of our entire nation.

**Senator Michael Bennet**

1. We have a rural electric coop in Colorado's Yampa Valley that received a ReConnect grant to connect over 500 people, farms, and businesses to high speed broadband. They're trying to string fiber along their existing poles. But because the poles are on public land, they're running into unexpected costs and administrative challenges. It's been nearly a year since the award and they are still not close to securing the federal approvals they need. It's putting the entire project at risk and keeping hundreds of Coloradans from receiving high-speed internet.
  - a. If confirmed, will you work with our office to provide more clarity and flexibility for ReConnect recipients in Colorado?

I understand the critical importance of deploying broadband funds quickly and working through any project challenges that arise in a timely manner. If confirmed, I look forward to being briefed on this issue and working with you and your office to understand the challenges faced in this particular project. We must ensure recipients have the clarity that they need to implement these funds and I agree with you that



we need to ensure the program is flexible enough to ensure these projects can move forward expeditiously.

**Senator Kirsten Gillibrand**

1. Congresswoman Torres Small, as you may know, the discovery of high levels of PFAS chemicals in drinking water has rocked communities in New York and across the country to their core. These toxic chemicals have been linked to cancers and other serious health and developmental effects. Addressing PFAS contamination has been a top priority for me in the Senate. The 2018 Farm Bill included a provision allowing the USDA's Rural Water and Wastewater Loan and Grant program to address PFAS contamination of drinking water and surface water supplies.
  - a. If confirmed, how will you ensure USDA fully utilizes this new authority to protect rural communities from PFAS?
  - b. How else can USDA help our rural communities affected by PFAS contamination, in particular those who are on private wells?
- a. Thank you for your work to protect rural communities from PFAS. When I served New Mexico's Second Congressional District, I worked with a local dairy farmer whose health and livelihood is threatened by past military fire suppressant training operations. I quickly learned how widespread the challenges are, and how difficult it can be to act fast while the federal government continues to understand the extent of the hazard. Rural Development's new authority provides an opportunity to reach out to communities suffering from PFAS contamination and help them invest in cleaning or diversifying their water supply. If confirmed, I will work to identify at risk communities and collaborate with local partners to build and invest in projects. SEARCH grants may provide a key opportunity to work with local stakeholders to address PFAS contamination.
- b. Rural Development has a unique opportunity to serve rural residents with private wells through the Decentralized Water Systems Grant Program. These funds, provided to nonprofits that serve rural residents, can be used to create revolving loan funds and to award sub-grants that can, among other things, address PFAS contamination. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that qualified nonprofits have the tools they need to identify areas of potential PFAS contamination and opportunities to leverage the required matching grants.

**Senator Tina Smith**

1. The Rural Business Cooperative Service has the mission of supporting rural cooperatives. In recent years, the staffing for the cooperative mission has been reduced significantly at the same time that people in rural communities look to develop more cooperatives to sustain and grow their local economies. What are your plans to increase staffing and program support staff at the Rural Business Cooperative Service to meet the needs of Rural Development customers?

I agree that cooperatives are critical to the future of our rural communities. Cooperatives proved to be resilient during the pandemic and there is potential for cooperatives to engage more in the food supply chain and in industries participating in the bioeconomy. Cooperatives can also create new economic opportunities for workers in the social services sector, such as childcare and home healthcare, who are often women of color. As America builds back better across rural places, Rural Development will need



the staff capacity to support innovative opportunities to sustain and grow local economies. I understand that new staff members were recently added to the Cooperative Services Branch within the Rural Business-Cooperative Service and if confirmed, I will evaluate how to most effectively leverage our resources to support their work. As the Chairwoman for Rural Development, your expertise in identifying those opportunities will be crucial.

2. There is an affordable housing crisis in this country that has limited economic growth and exacerbated racial inequality in communities all across the country. When I look at Minnesota, it is clear to me that this is not just a problem in urban or suburban areas, but in rural areas also.

Unfortunately, the rural housing programs at USDA have been left behind when Congress thinks about how to help families stay in their homes during this ongoing public health and economic crisis.

In Minnesota we have nearly 10,000 families living in affordable, rural rental housing that was originally financed with USDA loans. Once those mortgages mature or are paid in full, the property owners are no longer required to maintain those units as affordable housing.

The average income of those residents is only \$17,061, and they are more likely to be Black, Hispanic, or Asian American/Pacific Islander compared to the rest of the state's rural population. Additionally, 67% of these households are headed by women, who we know have suffered the brunt of the recent unemployment crisis.

Losing this affordable housing would have a detrimental impact on the financial security, safety, and stability of these Minnesotans.

- a. How can we preserve affordable housing in rural communities?
  - b. How can we ensure that Native Communities and communities of color are not left out of the USDA conversations about affordable housing in rural places?
- a. Affordable housing in rural communities is both an issue of equity for communities that have been exploited and ignored, and an existential issue for entire rural places. It is so important to preserve existing multi-family properties, especially as mortgages are paid off through prepayment or maturity, which no longer allows the property tenants to receive Rental Assistance (RA). Over 35% of tenants living in USDA multifamily properties are people of color and USDA is committed to ensuring tenants have access to affordable rental housing in rural America. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you to ensure that these tenants have access to affordable housing into the future. In addition to preserving existing multi-family properties, Rural Development has a unique opportunity to invest in affordable rural housing through expanded partnerships with community organizations and builders to achieve sustainable affordable housing for future generations. In New Mexico, Tierra Del Sol has a history of success in bringing affordable housing to *colonias* along the border because it knows the people it serves and its employees live in the communities where they build. It also has experience navigating Rural Development's various financing opportunities to find the right investment for each neighborhood. Additional technical assistance to foster more organizations like this would provide sustainable, embedded solutions to serve diverse communities across rural America. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you to maintain existing housing resources and identify additional investments for tenants and prospective home owners across rural America at risk of losing affordable housing.

- b. USDA's Rural Housing Service (RHS) collaborates frequently with the Office of Tribal Relations at USDA to engage with Native communities and promote RHS programs. I will ensure that RHS staff are in regular touch with key Native American sovereign governments and stakeholders like the the National American Indian Housing Council (NAIHC). I also know that ensuring USDA offices are well staffed will strengthen our presence in Indian Country. USDA is committed to racial equity and will work to ensure that capital and affordable housing opportunities flow to Native communities and other communities of color.

- 3. The Internet is the central nervous system of our global economy. Access to strong, reliable Internet helps improve commerce, healthcare, and education opportunities in rural and underserved communities.

The USDA, FCC, NTIA, and other agencies all have a hand in ensuring Internet access. There are certainly too many cooks in this kitchen. We need a national strategy that keeps all the cooks focused on the ultimate goal of connectivity.

A national strategy includes laying fiber and making connections affordable and reliable. The federal government must work across to agencies to ensure that a national strategy succeeds.

- a. How can we achieve better coordination across federal agencies to ensure that funding is directed where it is needed?
  - b. How can the USDA take a leading a role in a national strategy?
- a. Broadband is too crucial a challenge to fumble through lack of coordination. Thankfully, both Congress and the Biden-Harris Administration have shown the foresight to plan on the collaboration necessary to connect America to strong, reliable Internet. The 2018 Farm Bill requires the USDA, FCC, and NTIA to coordinate on broadband, and these covered agencies signed a Memorandum of Understanding to exchange information and consider a shared basis for awards at the end of June. Additionally, the covered agencies have been meeting weekly with the White House to put that coordination into action. As a Representative, I hosted Acting Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel in the district I served, and I gained a unique perspective on the diverse expertise necessary to solve this multifaceted challenge. If confirmed, I will work to make sure that Rural Development is an active partner in this collaboration, leveraging Rural Development's unique assets to connect our nation.
  - b. Rural Development is a vital partner to delivering strong, reliable Internet across our country. Its unique mission to serve rural communities borne out in its allocation of resources to rural recipients and on-the-ground presence of local offices in 47 states. In its long-tenured history, Rural Development has built relationships with crucial partners for this next chapter of infrastructure investment, from rural electric cooperatives to Native American sovereign governments. In fact, Rural Development recently supported NTIA outreach efforts in Indian Country because of its previous collaborative experiences. Rural Development has also garnered significant lessons learned when tackling the challenges of broadband, having administered programs for almost 20 years. If confirmed, I will leverage these strengths and lessons learned to be an active partner, with local communities and Congress as well as FCC and NTIA, to meaningfully connect our country.

**Senator John Thune**

1. USDA has a long, successful history of connecting rural Americans to broadband. However, it is concerning that a number of providers who were provided ReConnect awards may sit for months, and in some cases well over a year, awaiting clearance of various reviews, including environmental or historical preservation requirements. While those reviews are important, it is particularly frustrating as, in many cases, the approval relates to placement of communications facilities along roadways in previously disturbed land. Addressing permitting delays should be a high priority if we want to accelerate deployment through RUS programs.
  - a. If confirmed, do you commit to addressing lengthy permitting issues at RUS?

If confirmed, I commit to reviewing the process by which ReConnect grants are obligated and deployed. As Under Secretary, I would work to identify backlogs so we can target resources and resolve permitting issues on delayed projects and improve the process moving forward.

- b. Will you commit to processing ReConnect grant applications in an efficient and timely manner?

If confirmed, I commit to ensuring that ReConnect applications are processed in a timely manner.

- c. Will you commit to responding to congressional inquiries in a timely manner?

If confirmed, I commit to responding to Congressional inquiries promptly.

## Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

Hearing to consider the nomination of the Honorable Robert F. Bonnie to be Under Secretary of  
Agriculture for Farm Production and Conservation

Thursday, July 29, 2021

Questions for the Record

**Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow**

1. You've talked about the need to leverage outside funding to support an increase in on-the-ground conservation; the need to be more flexible; and the need to focus on outcomes. I agree and I believe that the Regional Conservation Partnership Program, specifically the Alternative Funding Arrangement provision, can help achieve all of these goals. Unfortunately RCPP partners have numerous concerns with program implementation, ranging from software issues to a time-consuming partnership agreement negotiation process. If confirmed, will you commit to streamlining and improving Regional Conservation Partnership Program delivery?
  - a. How do you think RCPP could be better utilized to help conservation groups, producers and the private sector address the climate crisis, improve water quality and respond to drought?

The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) is an excellent model of maximizing federal resources through voluntary conservation efforts. It includes many elements that make for a successful program— it's voluntary, locally-designed, flexible and brings together federal, state, and private resources. I agree that there is work to be done to address partner concerns and improve program delivery, which requires the program to be prioritized. I would welcome your thoughts on areas like the Alternative Funding Arrangements. If confirmed, I will prioritize fixing administrative hurdles and will push to make sure RCPP can live up to its full potential.

2. If you are confirmed, I look forward to working with you, including on the upcoming Farm Bill and other issues of importance to American farmers, ranchers, and families. If confirmed, do you agree, without reservation, to:
  - a. Promptly reply to requests for information from me or any duly constituted committee of the Congress?
  - b. Respond to my requests for data and technical assistance in informing or drafting legislation or implementation of the law?

Yes.

Yes.

3. Dairy is the top commodity in Michigan, and our farmers have experienced unprecedented market disruptions over the last year. I know the Department is working hard to implement a number of critical dairy initiatives like the new Dairy Product Donation Program and additional support for dairy farmers to compensate for losses suffered as a result of the pandemic that is currently under review at OMB. Will you commit to seeing these programs through to completion as quickly as possible?



On June 15, USDA announced a list of pandemic assistance efforts that included several elements related to dairy farmers, including the Dairy Donation Program. USDA also previewed the basic elements of the program through communications with the dairy industry to make sure they knew the minimum elements and that the program would have some retroactivity as directed by Congress. As previewed, USDA intends to release the details of this additional dairy assistance in August and, if confirmed, I will continue to prioritize the review and implementation.

4. In Michigan we grow a little bit of everything- from soybeans and sugarbeets, to dairy and specialty crops, organics, local food, and urban agriculture, FPAC's mission is broad and responsible for supporting all types of production through farm risk management programs, loans, emergency relief, and conservation. Will you commit to working to ensure that the FPAC can do a better job of using their tools to support specialty crop, organic, and local food producers?

Yes. I will commit to ensuring that FPAC works with all of agriculture, including specialty crops, organic producers and local food producers.

5. Specialty crop and local food producers often face challenges presenting data to USDA to demonstrate losses because receipts vary and can be less comprehensive than other sectors, such as those for row crops, and there is often a lack of readily-available pricing and other market data. This has made it challenging for these producers to participate in USDA programs such as the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program or the Quality Loss Adjustment Program, and caused some producers to be left out entirely. Will you commit to ensuring that documentation requirements are flexible and not a "one size fits all" approach to ensure specialty crop and local food producers can access much-needed relief programs? How can USDA better collaborate with these industries to improve the availability of market data needed for risk management and disaster programs?

I agree that USDA needs to make sure its programs are designed to work for all types of producers and too often have been designed without the flexibility to adjust for specialty crops or business models focused on local food production. This lack of proper outreach to underserved producers was one of the reasons USDA re-opened sign-up for CFAP2. We also need to ensure we are working to improve data collection and designing programs that are flexible enough to use alternative formulas. I understand the Farm Service Agency is working with your office and specialty crop growers in Michigan to find such flexibility on the Quality Loss Adjustment Program. If confirmed, I will push to continue to make progress in these areas.

6. New and beginning farmers face several unique challenges in their first decade of production. USDA has done a good job providing training and technical assistance to help these farmers start farming but new and beginning farmers continue to struggle with access to land, capital and risk management tools to keep them farming beyond the first few years of production. Will you prioritize working to find new ways for supporting new and beginning farmers?

Yes. The average age of farmers continues to rise. It's vital that USDA prioritize attracting new and beginning farmers and ranchers to agriculture.

7. The 2018 Farm Bill authorized the Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production, one of the functions of the new office is to support a network of community gardens and coordinate with the Food and Nutrition Service to donate food grown in these gardens. This work was done under the People's Garden Initiative during the Obama Administration. Will you commit to continuing the People's Garden Initiative or a similar program under the direction of Office of Urban

Agriculture and Innovative Production? Will you commit to working with me and my office on implementation of the Office and other related programs?

Yes and, if confirmed, I look forward to working with you and your office both on implementation of the Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production and more generally on efforts to support community gardens and local food production and distribution.

8. The organic cost-share program recently moved from the National Organic Program, administered through the Agriculture Marketing Service, to the Farm Service Agency and is now delivered through many local county offices. Domestic organic production has grown steadily over the past decade and continues offers new economic opportunities for farmers. Will you commit to supporting organic production through FPAC tools and resources? How can FPAC better assist farmers who transition to organic, particularly during the 3 year transition process?

Each of the FPAC agencies have an important role to play in supporting organic agriculture and, if confirmed, I am committed to continuing and growing these efforts. A good place to start is to look at the NRCS programs already in place to help producers with the hurdle of transition to see what improvements can be made and how these programs might be built upon. If confirmed, I will also make sure to reach out to other mission areas like Marketing and Regulatory Programs and Research, Education and Economics to make sure we are coordinated and taking full advantage of the expertise available within USDA to support organic production.

9. Domestic sugar producers in Michigan and around the country are concerned about the potential expansion of eligibility to receive licenses under the Sugar Re-Export program to entities that are not truly sugar refiners and were not intended to be eligible for these programs. "Refiner" is defined in USDA regulations that grant eligibility for the Sugar Re-Export program, for which refiners can then apply for licenses. However, ten years ago, USDA granted a refiner's license to a "melt house" that cannot crystalize sugar and thus should not have been classified as refiner. The misapplication of this refiner definition reduces the availability of raw sugar supplies that real refiners need to maintain optimal operations and creates challenges in administering the U.S. sugar program, and I am concerned that USDA is considering additional application. Will you commit to ensuring domestic production and the 142,000 jobs supported by the domestic sugar industry are taken into consideration before any new "refiner" licenses are granted?

Yes. I will support domestic sugar producers in any decisions before USDA. I will review the definition of refiner and work with my colleagues at the Foreign Agriculture Service to identify appropriate next steps.

10. Staffing levels at USDA have dropped precipitously in recent years. I am particularly concerned with a lack of adequate staffing levels at local FSA and NRCS offices, which can have a real impact on the ability of farmers and ranchers to access vital risk management and conservation tools. Even worse, it places enormous stress on the remaining county office employees who have been tasked with implementing many brand new programs on short notice in recent years. Will you commit to work on improving the service levels at local USDA office and address ongoing staffing challenges?

Yes. I am concerned about staffing levels at USDA offices. While hiring picked up towards the end of the last Administration, there is more to be done to ensure our offices are adequately staffed.

11. During years with extreme weather changes, including drought and flooding, wetlands play a critical role in conserving wildlife and functioning as a safeguard for our landscapes that are

becoming more susceptible to soil erosion and drainage. If confirmed, would you work with NRCS to implement and improve the Highly Erodible Land Conservation and Wetland Conservation Compliance? Would you reemphasize the importance of environmentally friendly practices that incentive producers to keep wetlands in production and continue planting crops?

Yes. Wetlands provide a range of vital ecosystem services. I will work to improve implementation of conservation compliance drawing on recommendations from the recent GAO report. Further, I would look for ways to incentivize the conservation of wetlands through improved conservation practices.

**Ranking Member John Boozman**

1. The Administration announced their intent to conserve 30% of our nation's land and water by 2030, and the *America the Beautiful* report released several months ago provided further details for implementing this initiative. In that report there were repeated mentions of the importance of working lands to achieving the 30x30 goal, and that acres enrolled in working lands programs including CRP would be critical in meeting the 30x30 goal. Noticeably absent however was mention of true working lands programs such as EQIP and CSP that allow for production and conservation efforts to occur concurrently. Will all lands enrolled in CSP or EQIP be considered conserved and count toward the Administration's goals in meeting the 30x30 initiative?

The *America the Beautiful* report emphasizes the important role that locally-led, voluntary, incentive-based approaches have for meeting the Administration's conservation goals. Working lands programs such as EQIP and CSP have an important role to play in meeting the goals described in the *America the Beautiful* report. For example, the report states: "The USDA has an array of programs that offer effective strategies for advancing conservation on working lands, such as the Working Lands for Wildlife initiative and the Conservation Reserve Program." NRCS's Working Lands for Wildlife program has relied heavily on EQIP to work with producers and landowners to conserve habitat in ways that also support profitable agriculture and forestry. CSP will also have an important role to play in this effort.

2. As you are aware, FPAC collects millions of farm records every year. This data is provided to USDA by farmers to administer many important FSA, RMA and NRCS programs. The Department recently entered into a MOA with Meridian Institute and the University of Illinois on a pilot project to study whether or not the use of conservation practices impacted planting ability during the spring of 2019. While all parties to the MOA acknowledge data security and privacy needs, what efforts will you take to ensure consent from farmers is collected prior to allowing farm-level data to be used and shared for research purposes by the Department or other stakeholders beyond the narrow original intent of the MOA?

Yes, I will work with the parties the MOA to ensure that the use of data meets the requirements of the MOA and applicable laws and regulations. As with all data collected by USDA, including farm level data collected from farmers, we monitor its use within the Department to be consistent with applicable legal requirements (including the Privacy Act, section 1619 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, and section 1770 of the Farm Security Act of 1985). We do not anticipate any sharing of any "Protected Information" under the terms of this agreement that would require legal consent of a producer under the terms of section 1619. Where those legal requirements provide that a use of the data required prior consent of the submitter, including farmers, we will obtain such prior consent.



3. The Administration has expressed their support for operating a carbon bank using the funds of the Commodity Credit Corporation to compensate farmers for climate oriented practices and to intervene in markets for carbon credits. Do you support the establishment of a carbon bank administratively, without express authority from Congress to do so?

Any use of the Commodity Credit Corporation must be consistent with the Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act through which Congress specified uses of the CCC.

4. When faced with dueling interests during your previous tenure as Undersecretary for Natural Resources and the Environment your role was for you to err on the side of conservation. While serving in the administration and in the private sector, you have historically represented conservation interests when competing interests of production agriculture were at issue. If confirmed as FPAC Undersecretary, you will be representing both productive farms, where farmers actively work the land and participate in conservation practices. How will you balance the two, sometimes competing interests?

My opening statement directly addressed this issue. Conservation of working lands is dependent upon profitable agriculture and forestry. Likewise, production requires healthy soils, clean water and a stable climate. Throughout my career, I have advocated for balanced approaches that recognize the important role that productive working lands play in conservation. For example, as Under Secretary of Agriculture for Natural Resources and Environment, I advocated for (1) increasing forest management and production on the National Forests and the Forest Service increase production to just shy of 3 billion board feet annually, and (2) increasing use of forest products as a means to increase investment in forestry and forest conservation.

5. You served at USDA for a number of years under President Obama, you were a Professor at Duke University where you wrote and spoke regularly about these topics, and you co-authored the Transition 21 paper. As an advisor to the Secretary, what is your plan for balancing grazing land needs, conservation needs, the Administration's 30X30 goals and productive farming? In addition to answering this prior question, please provide a copy of the detailed plan to the Committee.

As I said in my opening statement: "Maintaining and enhancing the profitability of agriculture – that is, keeping working lands working – is necessary to meet our conservation goals. Conserving our natural resources means keeping farmers, ranchers and forest owners on the land." The Administration's conservation goals on working rangelands and pasture lands mean that we have to find ways to integrate conservation into profitable grazing systems. During the Obama Administration, I helped lead efforts on the Sage Grouse Initiative which had strong participation from working ranches while benefitting the bird. With respect to the last sentence of the question, I don't know what detailed plan you are referring to.

6. Mr. Bonnie, in your opening statement and repeatedly in answering questions at your confirmation hearing, you emphasized that it is vital that you ensure that USDA "do all the things we can administratively to make sure our programs are available to all farmers." Your point that eligibility alone is not enough, is a good one. However, in response to a question posed by Senator Ernst regarding the forthcoming program to provide emergency assistance to contract growers of livestock and poultry, as required under the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, you indicated that swine contract growers will be eligible for the program, though you were uncertain of the degree to which they will be able to take advantage of it. Can you provide further



explanation on how you intend to implement this program, consistent with the requirements of the law, and specifically list all the things you can do administratively to ensure that swine contract growers are able to take advantage of the program?

My understanding is that during conversations between the Farm Service Agency and with producer organizations on the contract growers of livestock and poultry provision, the pork industry indicated that the majority of their contracts were structured such that the growers did not experience a drop in revenue, unlike what was observed in the poultry industry. While my answer to Senator Ernst may not have been clear, I was simply trying to point out that all livestock and poultry contract growers are potentially eligible, but that they would need to demonstrate a loss in revenue as well, which was not as likely in some sectors. The Farm Service Agency will use all of the tools at its disposal to reach all eligible growers for this and any other pandemic assistance. USDA has even added a tool that had not been used previously and has begun using cooperative agreements with community organizations to better reach underserved producers.

7. Under the Conservation Reserve Program annual payments for grasslands are limited under more than one provision of law to an amount less than the NASS estimated rental rate for grasslands in each county. There are many counties where the NASS estimated rental rate is \$3 per acre. In spite of this, USDA has announced a national minimum grassland rental rate of \$15 per acre—or more than five times the annual payments for grasslands allowed by law. If confirmed, what specific steps will you take to ensure that the grassland rental rates and annual payments comply with the law?

If confirmed, I will work with the Office of the General Counsel and the Farm Service Agency to understand how the grassland payments are determined and the legal authority on which they have been based.

8. If you believe that the grasslands payments described in Question 7, immediately above, can be legally justified, please provide a legal analysis supporting your belief.

As I said in my testimony before the Committee, it is my understanding that the policy regarding the manner in which grassland payments are currently determined was reviewed by the Office of the General Counsel for legal sufficiency and was cleared for legal sufficiency. It is also my understanding that your staff is engaged in discussions with the Office of the General Counsel regarding its views on this matter. As I stated in my answer to Question 7, if confirmed, I will work with the Office of the General Counsel and the Farm Service Agency to understand the legal authority on which they have been based.

**Senator Michael Bennet**

1. The NRCS's Emergency Watershed Protection Program is vital to wildfire recovery efforts in Colorado, but right now the account is nearly out of money. Even with funding, local project sponsors often face a hurdles when trying to access the program and complete cross-boundary projects.
  - a. If confirmed, will you work with Congress to secure consistent funding for the NRCS EWP program?

Yes, if confirmed I will support consistent funding for the NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program. EWP allows communities to quickly address serious and long-lasting damages to infrastructure and to the land. I understand that the lack of consistent funding has exacerbated difficult circumstances for communities in need of technical and financial assistance in response to disasters by

impeding the ability of NRCS to provide timely assistance. If I'm confirmed, I look forward to working with you to address this problem in order to ensure NRCS is well prepared to remain a part of the solution assisting local communities to recover from natural disasters.

- b. If confirmed, will you work with my office to ensure that project sponsors have sufficient flexibility to use these funds where they're needed most?

Yes. I know NRCS and USFS have been working through a variety of opportunities to ensure program delivery can happen seamlessly across public and private boundaries. If confirmed, I pledge to work with your office to ensure flexibility for project sponsors so that work can be prioritized where it is needed the most.

- 2. I worked to secure a provision in the last Farm Bill that would allow producers in a water-saving CREP to continue to use their land for dryland agriculture. This is important to farmers along the Republican River in eastern Colorado who are voluntarily conserving water. Despite our work, the last Administration decided to ignore the Farm Bill provision and prohibit dryland agriculture. In last year's omnibus, we included report language urging the Secretary to revise and reverse the Trump Administration's decision.
  - a. If confirmed, will you work to reverse the decision and allow for dryland agriculture in water-saving CREPs? If so, how long will this process take?

My understanding is that USDA has already begun the steps to reconsider this earlier decision and allow dryland agriculture as an option under CREPs. Similar to the previous decision, it will involve an Environmental Assessment that takes comments both from other federal agencies and the public. The exact timing depends on the comments received, but if confirmed, I would provide more specific updates to your staff as the process progresses.

- 3. The Windy Gap Connectivity Project in Grand County, Colorado is at the headwaters of the Colorado River. This project has been in the works for years and will improve the health and resilience of the River, restore habitat, and improve municipal water supplies. The USDA awarded RCPP funding to the project in 2017 and local partners have contributed significant time and money. However, they're now facing a funding shortfall. I think USDA's conservation programs could help fill the gap and get the project across the finish line.
  - a. If confirmed, will you work with my office to identify potential sources of USDA funding to address the shortfall?

Yes. I am happy to work with your office and partners in Colorado to identify potential USDA funding for this project.

- 4. One of the purposes of the Farm Bill's agricultural conservation easement program is to protect the agricultural use and future viability of eligible land by limiting non-agricultural uses of that land. Eligible land consists of land that has prime, unique, or other productive soil. The Lewis Farm is a 226 acre farm located south of Berthoud, Colorado, along Colorado's quickly growing Front Range. The NRCS has designated 94% of the Lewis Farm's soils as "Prime." The Lewis family would like to permanently conserve the farm through a conservation easement partially funded through ACEP. As part of this project, the family will also be conveying ownership in the farm to the Colorado Future Farmers of America Foundation ("CO-FFA") in order to enable CO-FFA to help educate, train, and inspire the next generation of agricultural producers. Despite the potential, the applicants have encountered barriers to securing ACEP funding.

- a. Would you agree that projects like the Lewis Farm transaction are the type of projects that ACEP was designed to fund?

I am not familiar with this project and the barriers they faced with their ACEP application, but I look forward to learning more, if confirmed, and identifying ways to address the challenges. ACEP can serve as an important tool for increasing the accessibility of land for beginning farmers or ranchers and supporting the affordability of land for these producers. Through ACEP, NRCS works directly with landowners and eligible entities to help facilitate the transfer of farmland to the next generation. If confirmed, I would be happy to follow up with you on the Lewis Farm transaction.

5. In late June, we began to hear from alfalfa growers in Colorado who are experiencing severe drought and are concerned that their crop may be ineligible for Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage this year because of what they perceive as a Farm Service Agency policy change. Often, these crops have already been planted a year or more prior, and producers have purchased NAP coverage before there is any sense of what their snowpack or water allocation may be. The lack of coverage during drought can be devastating.
- a. If confirmed, will you ensure growers of perennial crops in the West, like alfalfa, have adequate coverage under NAP for acreage that was planted in prior years, when they are unable to adequately irrigate their crops due to drought?

If confirmed, I will work with the team at the FSA to ensure that our safety net programs serve their intended purpose, and take steps to account for a lack of access to water needed for irrigation as a qualifying weather event. I encourage your staff to share the particular details on the cases with FSA and see whether there is any additional flexibility for them as well.

#### **Senator Kirsten Gillibrand**

1. As you know, the Federal Milk Marketing Order (FMMO) Hearing process enables the dairy industry and producers to submit proposals and evidence to support the establishment of and amendments to Federal order provisions. While I understand that FMMOs fall under the jurisdiction of the Agricultural Marketing Service, it is going to take a collaborative effort, cross cutting sub agencies at USDA to solve the issues currently facing dairy farmers. But so far USDA has been hesitant to hold National FMMO Hearings. This is an important issue and is something that many dairy farmers and others in the dairy industry are anxiously awaiting.
- a. If confirmed, will you commit to working with your colleagues at the Agricultural Marketing Service to start the process to hold FMMO Hearings?

It is important that we break down silos and have good communication across different agencies and mission areas. If confirmed, I will make sure to coordinate with Marketing and Regulatory Programs and the Agricultural Marketing Service on dairy issues including FMMO hearings.

#### **Senator John Hoeven**

1. Crop insurance remains the number one risk management tool for producers and one of the most successful programs in USDA history. It is critical that we protect the program from harmful cuts or changes that would reduce program effectiveness and integrity, including making sure the program remains actuarially sound, as required by law.



I'm concerned about climate-related proposals for crop insurance, including those that you have previously supported, that would negatively impact the program and ultimately undermine effectiveness.

- a. If confirmed, will you abide by congressional intent and reject any cuts to crop insurance?
- b. Will you ensure that any changes do not affect actuarial soundness, harm program integrity or place additional compliance burdens on producers?

Crop insurance is a vital safety net for producers. If confirmed, I will abide by congressional intent in administering the program. Further, President Biden's proposed FY22 budget made no cuts to crop insurance. With respect to climate change, as I noted in my testimony before the Committee, federal crop insurance is delivered through a public private partnership. Maintaining that partnership is important. Further, policies to encourage adoption of climate smart agricultural practices have to work for farmers and can be designed to work in concert with existing programs instead of forcing changes to fundamental elements such as actuarial soundness.

2. Nationwide, the sugar industry supports 142,000 jobs and generates \$20 billion a year in economic activity, all thanks to the effective operation of U.S. sugar policy. However, I am concerned about the current administration of U.S. sugar policy.
  - a. Do you agree that it is important to continue farm programs, like sugar policy, that make good use of taxpayer dollars?
  - b. Will you ensure sugar policy is administered based on Farm Bill requirements and WTO obligations?
  - c. When no credible evidence of a shortage exists, will you reject additional imports of foreign sugar?

I agree that it is important to continue farm programs that make good use of taxpayer dollars. With respect to sugar policy, if confirmed, I will support domestic sugar producers in any decisions before USDA and will ensure that sugar policy is based on the Farm Bill requirements and WTO obligations. In cases where no credible evidence of a shortage exists, there should be no need for additional imports.

3. Many producers in my state have shared their concerns with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), particularly in relation to heavy-handed enforcement of wetland compliance regulations by agency staff. While some improvements have been made, NRCS responses to a recent Government Accountability Office audit regarding wetland compliance enforcement indicate there could be additional problems on the horizon.
  - a. If confirmed, will you ensure that NRCS works cooperatively with producers to resolve wetland compliance issues, rather than applying a one-size-fits-all approach?

Yes. It is my understanding that NRCS uses feedback from producers to make ongoing improvements to the technical assistance provided under the conservation compliance provisions. If confirmed, I look forward to getting briefed on these issues and would welcome the opportunity to continue discussing your concerns.

**Senator John Thune**

1. With respect to Waters of the United States (WOTUS), although this falls within the Environmental Protection Agency's jurisdiction, USDA can assist in helping shape the new rule.

What assurances can you provide that you will work constructively with EPA to identify a rule that works for agriculture?

The USDA team has been in close communication with Administrator Regan's team. A key focus of this collaboration is ensuring that farmers and rural Americans are given an opportunity to provide their perspective and that rural concerns are incorporated into the policy development process that follows. We have seen very positive signs from this collaboration thus far as EPA has announced its intent to proceed with a series of local and regional listening opportunities. If confirmed, I will work hard to enhance the efforts underway and be an advocate for farmers, ranchers and forestry.

2. Farmers are generating incredible amounts of data as they adopt more precision ag technology, but their ability to convey that data to USDA is limited. For many department actions, farmers are still required to hand deliver paper documents to their local FSA and NRCS offices. COVID helped push USDA to digitize some of their processes, but there is still a lot of work that needs to be done to improve efficiency and customer service of FPAC programs.

If confirmed, what steps would you take to accelerate technology modernization within FPAC?

In order to improve services at FPAC we need to invest in technology. This includes keeping in place some of the digital and online access as well as e-signatures that were implemented during COVID. If confirmed, modernization of the FSA Farm Loan Program will be a top priority. In addition, I will review the current status of the Acreage Crop Reporting Streamlining Initiative.

3. With respect to 30 by 30 or "America the Beautiful," there are still concerns about this becoming a federal land grab.

What is your response to these concerns?

What assurances can you provide this committee that this is not the case?

The America the Beautiful report released by the Administration this spring included several principles that will govern the work under the initiative. Those principles include: (1) Support Locally Led and Locally Designed Conservation Effort; (2) Honor Private Property Rights and Support the Voluntary Stewardship Efforts of Private Landowners and Fishers, and (3) Build on Existing Tools and Strategies with an Emphasis on Flexibility and Adaptive Approaches. These principles will govern the work on the American the Beautiful Initiative.

4. Mr. Bonnie, as you know, the Senate passed the Growing Climate Solutions Act last month, which would give USDA important new authorities to create standards for and incentivize the growth of carbon offset markets. Some farmers in my state are considering options to participate in either the offset market or in supply chain verification programs. These farmers should be rewarded for being early adopters, not penalized for innovating.

If confirmed, will you commit to work with us to establish meaningful and inclusive practices that create certainty for the farmers in this field, including those that have already implemented conservation and other practices in this space?

I agree that addressing early adopters is a very important issue in designing incentives for climate mitigation on working farm, ranch and forest lands. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you on this issue.

5. While cost share conservation programs are vital to producers, these programs are often ineffective without robust technical assistance.

If confirmed, what would you do to ensure that NRCS's Conservation Technical Assistance program remains strong and continues to grow?

Through Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA), NRCS works with landowners and managers to develop conservation plans that outline the specific activities needed to improve farm operations and address resource concerns. There is no substitute for the one-on-one technical assistance CTA affords NRCS across more than 2,500 field offices under the agency's unique delivery system.

CTA is NRCS's foundation program, and in addition to supporting planning and the delivery of our financial assistance programs, it offers opportunities to demonstrate the value of conservation investments through demonstration sites and field days. If confirmed, I will work to ensure CTA remains strong and continues to grow to respond the on-farm needs of producers across the country.

6. The 2018 farm bill included new language that authorized cost-share for fencing and other water distribution practices. The 2018 farm bill also expanded opportunities for CRP participants to manage CRP cover through grazing and haying. Without cost-sharing for fencing, water development, and water facilities, producers cannot readily take advantage of these new grazing opportunities. Currently, USDA only offers cost-sharing for fencing and water facilities if they would help keep cattle off of buffer and filter strip practices, rather than helping producers to graze entire CRP fields. Cost-sharing for fencing and water distribution represents a win-win for producers and wildlife; and it would enable producers to manage CRP cover with grazing and make it more feasible to manage CRP fields as working grasslands after contracts expire.

If confirmed, what actions would you take to make sure the 2018 farm bill authorities are utilized to provide cost-share for fencing and water distribution practices?

The FSA team has been working to increase flexibility within all of their programs in an effort to address this very issue. If confirmed, I will ask for a briefing on the specific limitations on fencing cost share and work to find the best ways to layer our programs to provide meaningful emergency benefits while maintaining the long term conservation value of the program. The science on the benefits of grazing is evolving and moderate grazing can in many cases increase the conservation benefits of CRP and is even more critical in light of the ongoing drought as a vital tool for our livestock producers.