

The Committee on Economic Statistics of the American Economic Association  
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February 18, 2019

The Honorable Sanford Bishop, Chairman  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture,  
Rural Development, Food and Drug  
Administration, and Related Agencies  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Hoeven, Chairman  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture,  
Rural Development, Food and Drug  
Administration and Related Agencies  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeff Fortenberry, Ranking Member  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture,  
Rural Development, Food and Drug  
Administration, and Related Agencies  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jeff Merkley, Ranking Member  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture,  
Rural Development, Food and Drug  
Administration and Related Agencies  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairmen Bishop and Hoeven and Ranking Members Fortenberry and Merkley,

We write on behalf of the members of the American Economic Association's (AEA) Committee on Economic Statistics to thank you for including in the FY2019 omnibus appropriations bill, language that would postpone or preclude the relocation and realignment of USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS)

With 20,000 members, the AEA is the primary professional association of economists from academia, government and the private sector. ERS data and research findings are valued by AEA members who use them in formulating and conducting their own applied research and decision making. Our letter to these Subcommittees' 2018 leadership (attached) outlines the reasons we are opposed to the Secretary of Agriculture's decision.

The language in the new omnibus appropriations bill directly addresses our fundamental concern that USDA's planned relocation and realignment of ERS would undermine the quality and integrity of the research and statistics produced by ERS.

We appreciate your inclusion of this language, and trust that USDA will recognize your concerns and halt any further action on relocation or reorganization.

Thank you again for your leadership on and attention to this issue. Please let us know if the American Economic Association can be of assistance to you in any way.

Sincerely,

John C. Haltiwanger, Chair  
American Economic Association Committee on Economic Statistics, and  
Professor, Department of Economics, University of Maryland

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