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May 27, 2026

The Honorable Brooke L. Rollins
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Rollins:

We write regarding the April 30, 2026, announcement to convert the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA or the Department) Food and Nutrition Service¹ (FNS) into the "Food and Nutrition Administration" and relocate staff from Washington, DC, and regional offices to alternate locations across the country.² As you are aware, FNS is a critical component of the Department as it administers 16 federal nutrition assistance programs.³ These programs include those authorized by statutes within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Education and Workforce (the Committee), including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program (SBP), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).⁴

The Fiscal Year 2026 appropriations law⁵ requires the Secretary of Agriculture to notify and receive approval from Congress⁶ before taking any action to relocate an office or employees and reorganize offices, programs, or activities. To date, this approval has not occurred. Concerningly, the Committee, which has jurisdiction over a number of nutrition programs administered by FNS, was neither directly notified nor briefed on the reorganization.

¹ U.S. Dep't of Agric., Press Release No. 0062.26, USDA Announces Actions to Better Serve States, Nutrition Program Recipients, and the American Taxpayer (Apr. 30, 2026), <https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/news/press-releases/2026/04/30/usda-announces-actions-better-serve-states-nutrition-program-recipients-and-american-taxpayer>.

² The Supplemental Nutrition and Safety Programs team, which administers WIC, will be relocated to Kansas City, MO, while the Child Nutrition Programs team will be relocated to Dallas, TX; *Id.*

³ Food & Nutrition Servs., FNS Nutrition Programs, U.S. Dep't of Agric. (July 2025), <https://www.fns.usda.gov/programs>.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ Continuing Appropriations, Agriculture, Legislative Branch, Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Extensions Act, 2026, Pub. Law No. 119-37, div. B, tit. VII, § 716, 139 Stat. 544 (2026).

⁶ The Secretary of Agriculture is required to notify in writing and receive approval from the Committee on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress at least 30 days in advance of any reorganization of offices or relocation of employees; *Id.*

While you claim that the reorganization is an effort to “[reduce] duplicative management and complexity within the agency” and “[prioritize] State service and participant needs,”⁷ this was not the case with the most recent staff relocation in 2019 when staff of two research agencies—the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and the Economic Research Service (ERS)—were relocated from Washington, DC, to Kansas City, Missouri.⁸ A 2022 report from the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) revealed that after the relocation, ERS produced fewer key reports and NIFA took longer to process grants.⁹ GAO also revealed that two years after the relocation, the majority of the agencies’ workforce was comprised of new employees with less experience compared to the prior workforce.¹⁰ Most notably, the relocation resulted in 75 percent of employees declining to move and ultimately leaving the agencies.¹¹ We previously raised these concerns along with a number of specific questions on how FNS operations would be impacted in an August 21, 2025, letter¹² after the proposed Department-wide reorganization was announced; however, our questions went largely unanswered in your September 5, 2025, response.¹³ The inability to provide comprehensive responses to our questions is concerning, especially as Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Stephen Alexander Vaden admitted that there were lessons to be learned from the ERS and NIFA relocation when he appeared before the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry last summer.¹⁴

Based on the unintended consequences of the ERS and NIFA relocation, there is no reason to expect that a widespread relocation will not have similar negative impacts on operations, agency capacity, and diversity of the workforce. These concerns are in line with a 2025 analysis of more than 14,000 public comments that were submitted last year during the comment period for the Department-wide reorganization.¹⁵ According to your own analysis, more than 80 percent of comments “expressed negative sentiment” toward the reorganization, as many of the respondents had concerns over the loss of local oversight and expertise, reduced personnel and resources, and a lack of transparency in the reorganization process.¹⁶ Our concerns about FNS turnover and loss of capacity are compounded by the fact that the dismissal of probationary employees,

⁷ U.S. Dep’t of Agric., *supra* note 1.

⁸ U.S. Gov’t Accountability Off., GAO-22-104540, Evidence-Based Policy Making: USDA’s Decision to Relocate Research Agencies to Kansas City was Not Fully Consistent with an Evidence-Based Approach (2022), <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-22-104540>.

⁹ U.S. Gov’t Accountability Off., GAO-23-104709, Agency Relocations: Following Leading Practices Will Better Position USDA to Mitigate the Ongoing Impacts on Its Workforce (2022), <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-23-104709.pdf>.

¹⁰ *Id.* at 13.

¹¹ Genevieve K. Croft. Cong. Rsch. Serv., IFI 1527, Relocation of the USDA Research Agencies: NIFA and ERS (2020), https://www.congress.gov/crs_external_products/IFI/PDF/IFI1527/IFI1527.3.pdf.

¹² Letter from Rep. Robert C. “Bobby” Scott, Ranking Member, U.S. House Comm. on Educ. and Wrkf., and Rep. Suzanne Bonamici, Ranking Member, Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Educ. Subcomm., to the Hon. Brooke L. Rollins, Sec’y, Dep’t of Agric. (Oct. 1, 2025), https://democrats-edworkforce.house.gov/imo/media/doc/scott_bonamici_letter_to_rollins_re_usda_reorganization.pdf.

¹³ Letter from the Hon. Brooke L. Rollins, Sec’y, Dep’t of Agric., to Rep. Robert C. “Bobby” Scott, Ranking Member, U.S. House Comm. on Educ. and Wrkf. (Sept. 5, 2025) (on file with Committee staff).

¹⁴ Senate Agric., Nutrition & Forestry Comm. Holds Hearing on USDA Reorganization Proposal, ProQuest (Jul. 30, 2025) [hereinafter Hearing before the S. Comm. on Agric.].

¹⁵ U.S. Dep’t of Agric., USDA Reorganization: Summary and Analysis of Feedback (Dec. 8, 2025), <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/usda-reorg-comments-analysis-12082025.pdf?emci=02f7d369-0efe-f011-832f-000d3a1f0e4c&emdi=35b94a56-1ffe-f011-832f-000d3a1f0e4c&ccid=5017366>.

¹⁶ *Id.* at 3.

deferred resignations, and early retirement offers under this Administration has already led to the loss of nearly 30 percent of the workforce at FNS.¹⁷

There is no doubt that the programs administered by FNS are vital for families across the country; they have consistently been shown to improve health outcomes and reduce food insecurity.¹⁸ Additionally, these programs have a complementary benefit of investing in American agriculture and supporting American farmers, especially at a time when farmers are facing economic pressures and proposals from the Administration to scale back federal programs that serve both farmers and families.¹⁹

In light of our concerns, we request that you please respond to the following no later than June 10th, 2026:

1. Provide the rationale for eliminating the Under Secretary's Office, including both the Under Secretary and Deputy Under Secretary positions.
2. Provide the rationale for converting the Food and Nutrition Service to the "Food and Nutrition Administration."
 - a. Explain how this change "reduces duplicative management and complexity within the agency" and "prioritizes State service and participant needs."²⁰
 - b. Provide the relevant stakeholders and officials who were consulted regarding the decision to convert FNS.
 - c. Provide an analysis of the estimated costs and savings, if any, associated with the conversion of FNS.
3. Provide which job and program functions, if any, currently performed by FNS staff, would be eliminated under the proposed "Food and Nutrition Administration."
4. Provide the rationale and criteria used for the relocation of current FNS staff.
 - a. What—if any—consideration has been given to the talent or institutional knowledge that will be lost from employees who are unable or unwilling to relocate?
 - b. What—if any—consideration has been made to the financial burden on employees who must now relocate themselves and their families to a different region of the country?
5. Provide an analysis of the number of FNS employees who will be impacted under this reorganization and the expected distribution of FNS employees across geographic regions.

¹⁷ U.S. Off. of Personnel Mgmt., Workforce Size & Composition (Mar. 2026), <https://data.opm.gov/explore-data/analytics/workforce-size-and-composition>; Press Release, Nat'l WIC Assoc., National WIC Association Opposes USDA Reorganization Plan, Warns of Risk to WIC Operations and Families (Apr 30, 2026), <https://www.nwica.org/press-releases/national-wic-association-opposes-usda-reorganization-plan-warns-of-risk-to-wic-operations-and-families>.

¹⁸ Food & Nutrition Servs., FNS Nutrition Programs, U.S. Dep't of Agric. (July 2025), <https://www.fns.usda.gov/programs>.

¹⁹ Farm Aid, Tracking the Farm Economy in Crisis (Apr. 27, 2026), <https://www.farmaid.org/blog/tracking-the-farm-economy-in-crisis/>; Food Rsch. & Action Ctr., FRAC Analysis of President Trump's FY 27 Budget: Implications for Food Security and Economic Stability (Apr. 3, 2026), <https://frac.org/blog/frac-analysis-of-president-trumps-fy-27-budget-implications-for-food-security-and-economic-stability>; Nat'l Sustainable Agric. Coalition, USDA Programs Freeze, Progressive Farmer (Apr. 30, 2025), <https://sustainableagriculture.net/blog/usda-programs-freeze-what-we-know/>.

²⁰ U.S. Dep't of Agric., *supra* note 1.

- a. Provide the number of employees who are expected to be reduced in cities and states with regional FNS offices.
- b. Provide the number of employees who are expected to be increased in cities and states with new hubs.
6. Provide a detailed plan of how you intend to maintain and improve regional expertise, state-specific relationships, and technical assistance while restructuring FNS regional offices into new hubs, as well as the measures you will take to ensure that states in regions that no longer have a regional office can continue to receive timely technical assistance and support.
7. Provide the proactive steps the Department will take to mitigate any disruption in FNS program operations throughout the reorganization.
8. Provide a detailed analysis of the estimated annual costs and savings associated with the reorganization plan over the course of the next five years.
 - a. Provide estimates regarding any disruptions to Department-administered benefits and services.
 - b. Provide any estimates or projections of increases or decreases in transportation costs resulting from the relocation, including for purposes of program administration, enforcement, and oversight.
 - c. Provide information on any anticipated delays, disruptions, and cancellations for Department-issued data or research products.
9. Explain how the Department took into consideration public feedback on the proposed Department-wide reorganization considering that the majority of respondents expressed concern²¹ with the Department-wide reorganization proposal.
10. Explain how the Department intends to comply with the statutory requirement²² to notify Congress and receive approval prior to any staff relocation or office reorganization.

Please send all official correspondence and information related to these requests to the Committee's Democratic staff at EWDOversight@mail.house.gov. Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Ranking Member



Suzanne Bonamici
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Early Childhood,
Elementary, and Secondary
Education

²¹ U.S. Dep't of Agric., *supra* note 14, at 4.

²² Continuing Appropriations, Agriculture, Legislative Branch, Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Extensions Act, *supra* note 5.