Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable James Inhofe
Chairman
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Adam Smith
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mac Thornberry
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

October 15, 2020

As you work to finalize a conference agreement on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), we urge you to retain the provision that includes the Seeding Rural Resilience Act (S. 2599/H.R. 4820). It is essential that Congress support folks in production agriculture, especially as they face uncertainty due to weather, trade, and COVID-19.

The Senate and the House of Representatives both recently voted to include the bipartisan text of our Seeding Rural Resilience Act in the FY21 NDAA. Seeding Rural Resilience implements a voluntary stress training across farmer-facing U.S. Department of Agriculture programs, authorizes a Public Service Announcement campaign to reduce the stigma of addressing mental health in agriculture, and directs the Secretary of Agriculture to develop best practices so that local communities can also work to address this issue. While this bill is not a silver bullet in solving the mental health crisis in rural America, it provides important investments for the well-being of folks in farm country. We need to ensure that producers have the resources they need to weather this storm so that they can continue to do what they do best -- feeding the world.

By retaining these critical measures in a conference agreement, Congress can support farm and ranch mental health during a trying time, and broadly continue to support global food security. We respectfully request that you include the Seeding Rural Resilience Act in the FY2021 NDAA conference agreement.

Sincerely,

/s/ Jon Tester
Jon Tester
United States Senator

/s/ Charles E. Grassley
Charles E. Grassley
United States Senator

/s/ Anthony Brindisi
Anthony Brindisi
Member of Congress

/s/ John Katko
John Katko
Member of Congress