



November 20, 2017

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue:

This past January I wrote on behalf of the American Association of the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the world's largest general scientific society, to offer assistance in accessing the scientific resources and technological know-how that you may need as Secretary of Agriculture. I wanted to reiterate this commitment as you seek to address the country's most pressing challenges.

As you well know, the Department of Agriculture benefits tremendously from the outcomes of scientific research and input from scientists and engineers across a range of fields. The Department funds research and development programs that affect food, nutrition, rural development, and land management policies and impact the lives of all Americans. Positions traditionally held by scientists in the agency, like that of the Chief Scientist at the USDA which oversees the agency's over \$2 billion research budget, benefit from intellectual rigor and scientific integrity. This means following the data wherever it leads and providing scientific evidence in support of decision-making. The United States has some of the most qualified and dedicated scientists in the world, and I urge you to utilize this amazing resource when selecting individuals to oversee research at the Department.

Bringing insights from scientific research to bear on U.S. agriculture issues can make life safer and more prosperous for all. The AAAS counts more than 100,000 members across every science and engineering discipline. We welcome the opportunity to work you and your team at the Department of Agriculture to ensure that you are able to draw on high-quality scientific information to craft policies that best serve the American people.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rush D. Holt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Rush D. Holt
Chief Executive Officer
Executive Publisher, *Science* Family of Journals