

February 26, 2018

Representative K. Michael Conaway
Chairman
House Committee on Agriculture
2430 Rayburn H.O.B.
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Collin S. Peterson
Ranking Member
House Committee on Agriculture
2204 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

CC: Members of the U.S. House of Representatives

RE: Reject H.R. 4879/3599's attempt to override the right of citizens to maintain local control of food and farming

Dear Representatives Conaway and Peterson:

We the undersigned organizations urge you to preserve the right of local and state governments to create policies that provide market opportunity and protect rural communities by stopping Congressman King's efforts to pass H.R. 4879/3599.

H.R. 4879/3599 would negate most state and local laws regarding the production or manufacture of agricultural products. In short, this legislation would limit consumer choice, negate the ability of local governments to protect citizens, and sacrifice market opportunities for family farmers, only to benefit a few corporate agribusiness interests.

Food and farm markets continue to be highly consolidated, providing farmers with few opportunities to find fair returns on their products. However, the opportunity to create product differentiation through local or regional standards provides the prospect of keeping family farmers and ranchers on the land. Consumers also rely heavily on mandated production standards and conditions to ensure products are safe, healthy, and responsibly produced. Many of the laws governing these market opportunities and consumer protections would be void if H.R. 4879/3599 becomes law.

Farming practices and environmental conditions vary widely throughout the United States and largely are governed by those at the local level who best understand their community. H.R. 4879/3599 seeks to mandate a one-size-fits-all approach by establishing a race to the bottom

on any standard of production or manufacture of agricultural products. If enacted, this legislation would eliminate laws governing animal health and welfare, transport and sale of forest products, community health standards related to water and air pollution, and many more. H.R. 4879/3599 seeks to dismiss the long-held U.S. Constitutional principle that states maintain broad power to protect the health, safety, and welfare of their citizens by regulating the sale of goods and services within their borders. This bill would clearly be detrimental to family farms and ranches and only advantage a very small group of mega-farms and agribusinesses.

We urge you to side with farmers, small businesses, consumers, and local governments over corporate agribusiness interests by rejecting H.R. 4879/3599's attempt to override the right of citizens to maintain control of food and farming locally.

Sincerely,

Alabama Poultry Growers Association
Alaska Farmers Union
Alianza Nacional de Campesinas (The National Farmworker Women's Alliance)
American Agriculture Movement Inc.
American Grassfed Association
California Dairy Campaign
California Farmers Union
Campaign for Contract Agriculture Reform
Carolina Farm Stewardship Association
Community Alliance for Global Justice
Community Farm Alliance
Contract Poultry Growers Association of the Virginias
Dakota Rural Action
Dawson Resource Council
Fair World Project
Family Farm Action
Family Farm Defenders
Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance
Food & Water Watch
Food Animal Concerns Trust (FACT)
Food For Maine's Future
Food Policy Council of San Antonio
Friends of Family Farmers
Future Harvest CASA
Illinois Farmers Union
Illinois Stewardship Alliance

Indiana Farmers Union
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Iowa Organic Association
Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future
Land Stewardship Project
Midwest Organic Farmers Cooperative
Minnesota Food Association, a Program of The Food Group
Missouri Farmers Union
National Dairy Producers Organization
National Family Farm Coalition
National Farmers Organization
National Organic Coalition
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
Nebraska Farmers Union
Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance
Northeast Organic Farming Association of Connecticut
Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Hampshire
Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York
Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont
Northeast Organic Farming Association/Massachusetts Chapter
Northern Plains Resource Council
Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association
Ohio Farmers Union
Organic Farmers' Agency for Relationship Marketing, Inc. (OFARM)
Organic Farmers Association
Organic Seed Alliance
Organizacion en California de Lideres Campesinas, Inc.
Organization for Competitive Markets
Pesticide Action Network
Rural Coalition
Rural Vermont
Slow Food USA
Sustainable Food Center
Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group
The Farmworker Association of Florida, Inc.
The Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Jersey
Virginia Association for Biological Farming
Western Colorado Congress