

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 12, 2025

Secretary Brooke Rollins
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Pennsylvania S.W.
Washington, DC 2050

Dear Secretary Rollins,

It has come to our attention that hundreds of grantees of the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Forest Service (USFS) are unable to fully access their Urban and Community Forestry Grant awards.

In September 2023, the Forest Service announced more than \$1 billion in funding for 385 grant proposals from entities working to combat extreme heat, improve air quality, and promote food security, public health and safety. Communities in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and several U.S. territories and Tribal Nations received grant funding. We now understand the distribution of these grants has been illegally paused, causing considerable harm to our communities and creating chaos for the hundreds of organizations who were already carrying out spending on these approved projects in every corner of the country.

National grant pass-through partners and grantees have not received appropriate guidance from USFS, leaving community organizations in an uncertain limbo as they are left to decide whether to risk implementing their projects with no guarantee of reimbursement. Some pass-through partners have advised their grantees to pause project implementation and many organizations are facing the possibility of cutting jobs and shutting down operations in light of this funding uncertainty. Congressional office inquiries to the USDA and USFS have been ignored.

The Urban and Community Forestry Program is the only federal government program dedicated to enhancing and expanding the nation's urban forest resources. These grants support projects that make all of our states healthier, more resilient, and economically stronger. These awards also create jobs, enhance job training initiatives, and create economic opportunity in our communities.

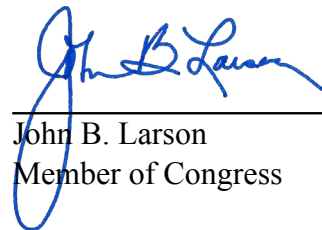
The Department of Agriculture must immediately restore all Urban and Community Forestry Grants. In the meantime, USFS must provide clear guidance to grantees to allow them to continue this critical work while payment systems are restored.

We stand ready to work with the Department of Agriculture and Forest Service to enhance the quality of life in all of our communities.

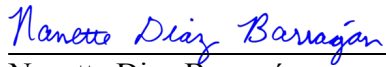
Sincerely,



Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



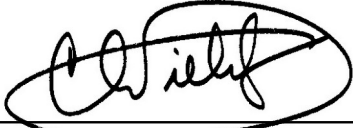
John B. Larson
Member of Congress



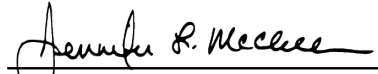
Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Cleo Fields
Member of Congress



Jennifer L. McClellan
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LaMonica McIver
Member of Congress



Shri Thanedar
Member of Congress



Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress



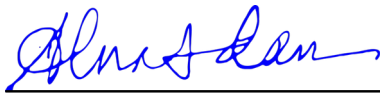
Shontel M. Brown
Member of Congress



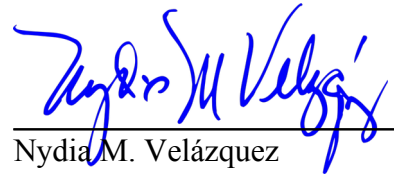
Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress



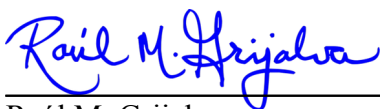
Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress



Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



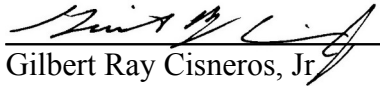
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Summer L. Lee
Member of Congress



Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



Gilbert Ray Cisneros, Jr.
Member of Congress



Sharice L. Davids
Member of Congress



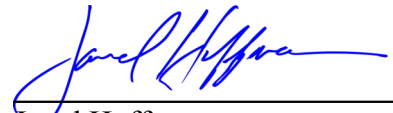
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



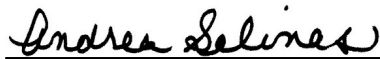
Delia C. Ramirez
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Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress



André Carson
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Chris Pappas
Member of Congress



Jim Tokuda
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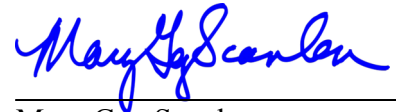
Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress



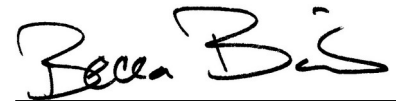
Lori Trahan
Member of Congress



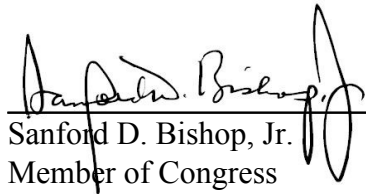
Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress



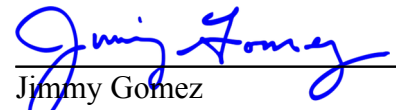
Robert J. Menendez
Member of Congress



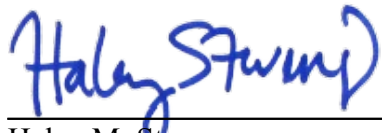
Becca Balint
Member of Congress



Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress



Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress



Haley M. Stevens
Member of Congress



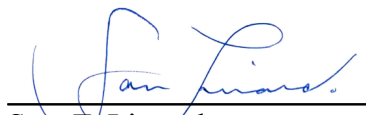
Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



Ed Case
Member of Congress



Sam T. Liccardo
Member of Congress