

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 10, 2023

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse  
Chairman  
Committee on the Budget  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jodey Arrington  
Chairman  
Committee on the Budget  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Grassley  
Ranking Member  
Committee on the Budget  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Brendan Boyle  
Ranking Member  
Committee on the Budget  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dr. Phillip Swagel  
Director  
Congressional Budget Office  
United States Congress  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Whitehouse and Arrington, Ranking Members Grassley and Boyle, and Director Swagel,

Thank you for your previous responses to inquiries from the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry and the House Committee on Agriculture (collectively, the Committees) regarding the Congressional Budget Office's (CBO) May updates to the 2023 baselines for commodity, conservation, and nutrition programs as well as scoring legislation related to the reauthorization of the farm bill. As you know, we are currently drafting the 2023 farm bill, and are acutely aware of the September 30, 2023, expiration date for many of the programs authorized by this critical legislation. This process depends, among other things, on the timely receipt of accurate scores from CBO for proposed changes to farm and nutrition programs.

In recent weeks, we have become increasingly concerned at the volume of outstanding requests. Given the breadth of programs authorized by the farm bill, we expect several hundred more preliminary scores will be needed before each chamber, and eventually, the Congress, has a farm bill completed for final scoring. Additionally, with both House and Senate Committees aiming for similar timetables for the introduction of legislation, it is imperative that feedback on similar policy proposals is timely and consistent across requesters. We are aware of the ongoing demands from leadership and other committees in both the Senate and House on CBO's time and resources. As such, we strongly encourage the Senate and House Budget Committees and CBO

to use all available resources and authorities to ensure CBO can reorganize staff to prioritize farm bill requests, hire or contract additional staff, or find available qualified professionals who can be assigned on detail. To avoid further delays, any new hires or detailees should have relevant technical expertise and experience in scoring commodity, conservation, and nutrition program legislation.

We appreciate your prompt attention to our concerns and look forward to your response. We understand the enormous pressures CBO faces as Congress considers critical spending and authorization bills. Any efforts undertaken to ease the strain on CBO analysts' time and address the growing backlog of scoring requests from the Committees are appreciated. Our nation's farmers and consumers are dependent on us delivering a farm bill that strengthens our food and farm safety nets.

Sincerely,



Debbie Stabenow

Chairwoman

Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

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