

**For Immediate Release**

Contact: **Kevin Hunt**  
**Acting Vice President**  
**AFGE Local 3403**  
Phone: 573-268-5884  
Email: KevinHunt85@gmail.com

### **Statement Regarding Secretary Perdue's Announcement of Final Relocation Site**

[Washington, DC, June 14, 2019] Secretary Perdue's announcement today of a final site selection for the relocation of the Economic Research Service (ERS) is met with no enthusiasm by ERS employees.

ERS employees spoke loud and clear when forming a collective bargaining unit that the Secretary's coldhearted plan of forced relocations must be stopped. ERS employees know Washington, DC is the exact location they need to be to achieve its mission as a designated statistical agency that produces nonpartisan research and analysis. Furthermore, through congressional hearings as recent as last week we have heard testimony from our stakeholders outside the beltway that they want us right here, performing our important and necessary work in the Nation's Capital.

Secretary Perdue has stated that his rush to finalize the relocation is an attempt to limit the anxiety and burden on employees. In reality, his announcement today will bring nothing but further burden to the agency with an acceleration of the loss of mission critical staff and senior leadership who cannot or will not move to a new location. Despite the assurance that the relocation is not an attempt to shrink the agency, ERS has been prevented from on-boarding new employees during this time of induced uncertainty.

Notification that a final site would be announced today was not provided to either ERS employees or managers, both of whom learned of the announcement through the press. Employee Union representatives were not provided an opportunity to attend site visits, despite previous assurances. The Union believes that a comprehensive cataloging of the costs and benefits associated with moving the agency will indicate that the move is a bad investment for the American taxpayer.

Secretary Perdue continually speaks of transparency and communicating to employees but has failed on both fronts. The announcement today highlights his disregard for the rights and wellbeing of employees. He also failed to communicate to the Union this very announcement. Instead of soliciting input from stakeholders or negotiating with bargaining unit employees, the Secretary went behind closed doors to solicit 'best offers' and 'incentives' from the short list sites. The announcement today should be met with great skepticism that Secretary Perdue has the best interests of either federal employees or American agriculture in mind.

###