

April 27, 2026

Dear Leader Jeffries and Members of the House Democratic Caucus,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations and individuals, we urge you to oppose the Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026. As doctors, nurses, physicians assistants, health professionals, and community advocates, we see firsthand how deeply our food and agriculture systems are inherently tied to the nation's health. A strong Farm Bill can protect our patients and neighbors, both urban and rural, by championing policies that enhance access to nutritious foods and prevent exposure to air, water, and chemical pollution.<sup>1</sup> Simply put, the current House proposal does not meet this mark and would be detrimental to public health if passed into law.

**Congress must reject any Farm Bill that will leave families, farmworkers, and farming communities hungry and more susceptible to cancer and other serious illnesses.**

The proposed Farm Bill will **gut federal safeguards protecting communities from pesticides** and will leave potentially harmful chemicals on the market without timely review of impacts on human health. Many of the most widely used pesticides in both residential and agricultural applications are reliably linked to increased risk of chronic illnesses and diseases that result in reduced quality of life and even death, including:

- Various cancers, especially for individuals exposed to “agricultural mixtures,” or cocktails of different applied chemicals.<sup>2</sup>
- Brain and nervous system disorders, including Parkinson's Disease, Alzheimer's, ALS, dementia, and chronic seizures.
- Asthma, lung cancer, and respiratory illnesses.
- Birth defects, neurodevelopmental disorders, endocrine disruption, and sexual and reproductive dysfunction.<sup>3</sup>

These health risks are particularly elevated for children, who face increased rates of exposure and more serious consequences for their developing brains and bodies.<sup>4</sup>

The bill also proposes devastating **pesticides preemption riders** which would nullify stronger labelling requirements in states and eliminate the ability of local governments to protect consumers through stronger requirements that address heightened risks in agricultural communities, such as regulating pesticide application near schools and homes. As farming families grapple with rising cancer rates and elevated occupational health risks, this legislation

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<sup>1</sup> Patel, L. and Rudolph, L. (2023) *Supporting Climate, Health, and Equity under the Farm Bill*. The New England Journal of Medicine. [doi:10.1056/NEJMp2307507](https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMp2307507)

<sup>2</sup> Taiba, J., Beseler, C., Zahid, M., et al. (2025). *Exploring the joint association between agrichemical mixtures and pediatric cancer*. GeoHealth. [doi:10.1029/2024GH001236](https://doi.org/10.1029/2024GH001236)

<sup>3</sup> Beyond Pesticides. [Pesticide-Induced Diseases Database](https://pesticide-induced-diseases-database.org/).

<sup>4</sup> Ferdinand, P. (2025). [Agricultural pesticide exposure linked to childhood cancers. study says](https://www.righttoknow.org/agricultural-pesticide-exposure-linked-to-childhood-cancers-study-says). U.S. Right to Know.

would also strip harmed individuals of their ability to hold pesticides manufacturers liable for failing to adequately warn of risks to human health.

We are also deeply concerned with the uptick in environmental health hazards that would result from this bill's **cuts to conservation programs** which reduce agricultural runoff, reliance on chemicals, and air and water pollutants harmful to human health.<sup>5</sup> The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) will have a \$1 billion cut under this proposal, hurting farmers' ability to adopt practices such as no-till farming that have measured impacts in reducing harmful air pollution and correlated infant mortality in farming communities.<sup>6</sup> EPA also cites EQIP as a key program in mitigating agricultural impacts on drinking water and avoiding public health crises from nitrate poisoning.<sup>7</sup>

The proposed Farm Bill will also **nullify state-level laws** that promote safer standards for animal confinement and operations. Concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) are disastrous for the health of surrounding communities, emitting harmful airborne emissions, such as particulate matter and ammonia, polluting waterways and drinking water sources, and contributing to antibiotic resistance.<sup>8</sup> CAFOs have also been associated with increased risk of childhood cancers and an increased incidence of cancer at the county-level for areas with dense animal operations.<sup>9</sup>

Lastly, the proposed **bill will leave families hungry**, without access to adequate nutrition, and more susceptible to costly and serious health problems.<sup>10</sup> This Farm Bill does not reverse the cuts or changes to federal nutrition programs that put millions of Americans at risk of losing assistance. The bill also fails to adequately enhance opportunities for local produce to better reach local or underserved communities.<sup>11</sup> At the same time, the proposal would change federal nutrition guidelines and the research and development process behind them, undermining

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<sup>5</sup> Horrigan, L., Lawrence, R. S., & Walker, P. (2002). *How sustainable agriculture can address the environmental and human health harms of industrial agriculture*. Environmental Health Perspectives. [doi:10.1289/ehp.02110445](https://doi.org/10.1289/ehp.02110445)

<sup>6</sup> Ferguson, J., Gardeazabal-Monsalve, A., Govaerts, B. (2026). *Air quality and human health benefits of conservation agriculture diffusion*. University of Wisconsin-Madison.

<sup>7</sup> Environmental Protection Agency. *Nonpoint Source: Agriculture*; U.S. Department of Agriculture. *Reducing the Impact of Farming on Water Quality*; Cox, C. (2017). *Trouble in Farm Country: Ag Runoff Fouls Tap Water Across Rural America*. EWG.

<sup>8</sup> Young, J. (2023). *What Should Health Professions Students Know About Industrial Agriculture and Disease?* AMA Journal of Ethics. [doi:10.1001/amajethics.2023.264](https://doi.org/10.1001/amajethics.2023.264); Son, J., Miranda, M., Bell, M. (2021). *Exposure to concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) and risk of mortality in North Carolina, USA*. Science of the Total Environment. [doi:10.1016/j.scitotenv.2021.149407](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2021.149407); Carlson, C. (2024). *Activists in animal agriculture-heavy areas fight nitrate pollution*. Investigate Midwest.

<sup>9</sup> San, J., Deziel, N., Bell, M. (2026). *Density of animal feeding operations, including concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs), and cancer incidence: A county-level ecological study across three U.S. states*. Environmental Research. [doi:10.1016/j.envres.2026.124298](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envres.2026.124298); Booth, B., Jones, R., Turyk, M., et al. (2017). *Livestock and poultry density and childhood cancer incidence in nine states in the USA*. Environmental Research. [doi:10.1016/j.envres.2017.08.023](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envres.2017.08.023)

<sup>10</sup> Food Research & Action Center. *Hunger & Health*.

<sup>11</sup> National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition. (2026). *Unpacking the House Farm Bill: Part 2*.

peer-reviewed science and needlessly prioritizing dairy and cattle products to the point of contradiction.<sup>12</sup>

By cutting programs to pass a budget-neutral Farm Bill, this proposal would pass increased healthcare expenditures onto the American people. Food insecurity adds \$100 billion to national annual healthcare expenditure, but this burden is reduced for SNAP participants who see an average of \$1,850 in reduced annual spending compared to food-insecure individuals who do not receive nutrition assistance (when adjusted for inflation).<sup>13</sup> Cancer care cost U.S. patients \$16 billion in out of pocket costs and \$5 billion in time costs in 2019, and these expenditures would likely increase from this bill's nullification of state standards for CAFOs and pesticides.<sup>14</sup> Slashing the conservation programs will increase nutrient pollution in our waterways, resulting in associated costs to tourism and property values, public health, and the high price tag to treat, control, and mitigate polluted drinking water.<sup>15</sup>

**The Farm Bill presents a critical opportunity to enhance public health**, yet this legislation abdicates its responsibility to effectively protect or nourish families and rural communities. The proposal will worsen exposure to environmental health harms while leaving people hungry and more susceptible to illness and chronic disease. We ask that you recognize the costs of this bill's inaction - in lives lost, in developmental harm to children, and in devastating diagnoses - and vote no on this Farm Bill and any provisions that perpetuate, expand, or shield from accountability agricultural practices that are sickening and killing our communities.

Sincerely,

Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments

Dr. Yolanda Whyte Pediatrics

Earthjustice Action

Health Equity and Environment Action League (HEAL)

OUCH-Int'l (Oncology Advocates United for Climate and Change - International)

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<sup>12</sup> Abbasi, J. (2026). *What Nutrition Experts Say About the New Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. JAMA. [doi:10.1001/jama.2026.0377](https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2026.0377); Roeder, A. (2026). *Understanding the new Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

<sup>13</sup> Berkowitz, S., Seligman, H., Meigs, J., et al. (2018). *Food Insecurity, Healthcare Utilization, and High Cost: A Longitudinal Cohort Study*. American Journal of Managed Care.

<sup>14</sup> Negoita, S., Chen, H., Sanchez, P.V., et al. *Annual Report to the Nation on the Status of Cancer, Part 2 Early assessment of the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on cancer diagnosis*. Cancer: An International Interdisciplinary Journal of the American Cancer Society. [doi:10.1002/cncr.35026](https://doi.org/10.1002/cncr.35026)

<sup>15</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Office of Water. (2015). *A Compilation of Cost Data Associated with the Impacts and Control of Nutrient Pollution*.

Physicians for Social Responsibility

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Center, on Race, Poverty & Environment, *Delano, California*

Children's Environmental Health Network, *Washington, District of Columbia*

Climate Code Blue, *Boston, Massachusetts*

Greater Boston Physicians for Social Responsibility, *Brookline, Massachusetts*

Michigan Clinicians for Climate Action, *Michigan*

American Medical Women's Association, *Albany, New York*

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