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## SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED FARMERS AND RANCHERS POLICY RESEARCH CENTER

May 5, 2023

Dr. Dewayne Goldman  
Senior Advisor for Racial Justice & Equity  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., SW.  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Dr. Goldman:

I have received several calls from USDA staff in the last week asking if the Policy Center was interested in providing outreach and or technical assistance to farmers who can provide evidence of discrimination in response to the \$2.2 billion to be distributed as a result of IRA Section 22007(e). I decided to send a written response on the position of the Policy Center after meeting with our Advisory Board members.

Although we have received limited information on the specific implementation of IRA Section 22007(e), which details how USDA will work with third party entities to provide financial assistance for borrowers suffering from discrimination in farm lending programs, the Policy Center is interested in doing its part to ensure transparent implementation of this important initiative.

Our overall goal is to maximize funds available for farmers who have suffered from discrimination. We are willing and requesting to conduct technical assistance and outreach with funds available in our existing operating budget and will not request any additional funds from 22007(e). We are particularly interested in doing this in our primary area of influence, which coincides with areas where descendants of African slaves operate.

The Policy Center and Advisory Board members are willing to orchestrate activities needed to accomplish this mission and remain convinced that the most critical part of this effort will be to provide assistance to farmers in completing the application.

However, before agreeing to do this work, we request to see more details on USDA's specific plans for implementation, including but not limited to the following:

1. the identity and role of the national administrator.
2. the identity and role of the regional hubs, including the contracted entity and their plans for identifying stakeholders and partners.

3. the standards that will be used to make determinations on discrimination and financial assistance.
4. the specific role that the Policy Center and its members will have in deciding if discrimination occurred and the amount of financial assistance to be awarded. For clarity, the Policy Center requests the opportunity to provide the initial determinations on whether discrimination occurred and an appropriate amount of related financial assistance.

The Policy Center would also like to review the application and have an opportunity to provide feedback before the form is finalized. We are requesting meaningful input into the process.

Thanks for your consideration in this matter.

Respectfully,



Eloris D. Speight  
Director

**Advisory Board Members Who Support Position**

Mr. Phillip J. Haynie, III, *National Black Growers Council*  
Mr. Cornelius Blanding, *Federation of Southern Cooperatives*  
Mr. Mike Espy, *Mike Espy PLLC*  
Ms. Carolyn Jones, *Mississippi Minority Farmers Alliance*  
Ms. Oleta Fitzgerald, *Childrens Defense Fund*  
Mr. Lloyd Wright, *Retired USDA*  
Dr. Charles Magee, *Florida A&M University*  
Mr. William Crutchfield, *Virginia State University*  
Dr. Alton Thompson, *Association of 1890 Research Directors*  
Dr. Ron Rainey, *University of Arkansas*  
Dr. Cindy Ayers, *Foot Print Farms*  
Ms. Kimberly Ratcliff, *100 Ranchers*  
Mr. Frank Taylor, *Winston County Self-Help Cooperative*  
Mr. Igalious "Ike" Mills, *Texas AgriForestry Small Farmers and Ranchers*  
Mr. Abraham Carpenter, Jr, *Carpenter's Farm*