



# Continuous Improvement and Accountability in Organic Standards Act

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AMERICAN SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS COUNCIL



animal wellness action



ORGANIC PRODUCE WHOLESALERS COALITION



CROPP COOPERATIVE organic and farmer-owned since 1988



THE ORGANIC CENTER



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### Statements of Support

“We thank Representatives DeFazio and Davis, and leading members of the House Organic Caucus, for introducing this consequential bill, and for their recognition of the importance of organic and of the need for organic to keep pace with the increasing demands from the environment and consumers on the Organic label,” said **Laura Batcha, CEO and Executive Director of the Organic Trade Association**. “This legislation is the result of a broad coalition of farmers, industry, consumers and other organizations working together with Congress to preserve organic’s place at the cutting edge of a progressive food and farming system that cares about people and the planet.”

“Continuous improvement is a fundamental tenet of organic. As organic farmers, we are always adapting our practices and becoming better stewards. This bill directs the USDA to reform its management of the NOP and respect the work of organic farmers, the advice of the NOSB and the demands of consumers for a dynamic standard that recognizes positive innovation and maintains organic as the “gold standard” of agriculture,” said **Doug Crabtree, organic farmer and owner of Vilicus Farms**.

“Progress is imperative for organic agriculture’s continued growth, and the Continuous Improvement & Accountability in Organic Standards Act is needed to maintain the overall integrity of this successful public-private partnership with USDA,” said **Domenic Borrelli, President of Premium Dairy and Plant-Based Food & Beverages, Danone North America**. “We look forward to continued work with our farming partners to propel the entire industry forward.”

“More than three decades ago, farmers, food manufacturers and consumers looked to the federal government as partners in creating a National Organic Program rather than a private certification system. While the partnership has been successful, the backlog of regulatory action poses a threat to consumer confidence and hampers businesses and farms in making operational decisions and investments. Continuous improvement is the foundation for ongoing trust and value in this public-private partnership. This bill provides a path forward and can serve the needs and concerns of all stakeholders,” said **Matthew Dillion, VP Government Affairs & Social Impact, Clif Bar & Company**.

"As longstanding advocates for organic farming, Rodale Institute fiercely believes that the USDA organic standards need to remain stringent and transparent to uphold the trust of organic consumers," said **Jeff Moyer, Rodale Institute CEO**. "As a former member of the NOSB, I know it's important to continually examine and reinforce the standards to ensure they are in alignment with the principles of regenerative organic farming, and that they are prepared to address emerging threats to our movement."

“A key principle of organic management is continuous improvement. This bill ensures the USDA upholds its obligation to evolve organic standards as knowledge on best practices increases, innovation occurs and the organic sector grows,” said **Chris Schreiner, Executive Director, Oregon Tilth**.



**Kate Mendenhall, Executive Director of the Organic Farmers Association**, stated, "Organic farmers continually rank organic integrity as a top priority and we encourage the USDA to move quickly to create a plan for moving the long backlog of NOSB recommendations to practical rules that protect organic integrity."

"As a leader in the organic movement for over four decades, and the largest independent distributor of organic fruits and vegetables in the Pacific Northwest, Organically Grown Company (OGC) applauds Congressman DeFazio for his leadership in the organic industry. OGC's longstanding involvement in the USDA-NOP rulemaking process is based on our trust in the NOSB to make recommendations that lead to continuous improvement and fair standards. This bill will ensure long term viability of the USDA organic seal, with standards adapted to current production needs and strengthened operating procedures," said **Elizabeth Nardi, CEO, Organically Grown Company**.

"**Organic Produce Wholesalers Coalition** urges the USDA to address the backlog of NOSB recommendations in order to establish and update standards used to regulate the organic trade. We believe that the regulations of the National Organic Program must evolve in response to the growth and expansion of the organic sector and to address emerging issues. We thank Representative DeFazio for bringing a bill to Congress to ensure these issues are addressed."

"Our grocery customers are expecting USDA to close the gap between Consumer expectations of Organic and the implementation of the National Organic Program. This bill will really go a long way to accomplish that," said **Mark Squire, President, Good Earth Natural Foods**.

"Over the last decade the National Organic Program hasn't upgraded high profile standard topics the organic community wants resolved. For example, clarity on how dairy farms source organic cows, Origin of Livestock, has been stuck in the mire since 2015. We need a better process and that's what this bill does," said **Adam Warthesen, Director of Government & Industry Affairs for the organic dairy cooperative Organic Valley**.

"Consumer confidence in the USDA Organic Program requires transparency and integrity. As a leading organic certifier, we need clear standards and guidance to ensure the rules are consistently applied across different certifiers and certified operations," said **Connie Karr, Certification Director, Oregon Tilth Certified Organic (OTCO)**.

"I would absolutely be willing to endorse the CIAO bill as a former NOSB member. I am frustrated by USDA's inaction on so many recommendations that represent NOSB consensus decisions on very specific ways to improve the organic standards and build consumer trust in the USDA seal. Having worked directly on many of these recommendations, both as an NOSB member and retail industry member, I fully support the bill's measures to both address the backlog of recommendations and create a more



efficient and transparent framework for the implementation of future recommendations,” said **Joe Dickson, former NOSB Retail member, 2010 – 2015**

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