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Congress of the United States
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COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION

October 29, 2018

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Mr. Secretary,

I am writing in support of Montgomery County, Maryland's Expression of Interest for relocation of the USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS) and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). Montgomery County (MC) is an ideal choice for USDA's relocation due to the county's many attributes.

Montgomery County provides access to one of the best educated workforces in the United States, with more than 60% of adults over 25 possessing a post-secondary degree. According to the MC Economic Development Corporation (MCEDC), this is amongst the highest percentage in the nation.

There is strong transportation connectivity within the Washington, D.C. metro region, including three close-by international airports. Also, when completed, the Washington Metro's Purple Line will strongly link Montgomery County to the University of Maryland, College Park (UMD). UMD is a world-class land grant research institution and provides a strong pipeline to talent. Relocating to Montgomery County would also be advantageous due to its proximity to other federal agencies including the National Institutes of Health, the Food and Drug Administration and the National Science Foundation.

MCEDC indicates that Montgomery County stands out from the DC region for affordable housing options. The County has been a leader in innovative housing solutions including creating the nation's first inclusionary zoning program in 1974.

Notably, Montgomery County's 93,000-acre Agricultural Reserve is one of the best examples of land conservation policies in the country. Its commitment to agriculture sustainability and growth is closely aligned to the missions of the ERS and NIFA providing the best of both worlds: proximity to policymakers and the highest percentage of farmland under agricultural land preservation easements in the nation.

In addition to the many reasons noted above to relocate to Montgomery County, the County has indicated their strong commitment to making USDA's relocation efficient and successful. I strongly support the County's proposal and urge your fullest consideration.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jamie Raskin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress