

April 6, 2017

Democratic Leader Charles Schumer  
S 221 U.S. Capitol Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Leader Schumer,

On behalf of our millions of members across the country, the undersigned organizations strongly urge you and the Senate Democratic leadership to demand a full debate and a roll call vote on the nomination of Governor Sonny Perdue to lead the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Perdue's strong ties to corporate agribusiness and pesticide companies present serious conflicts of interest that will undoubtedly affect his ability to lead the department to the detriment of independent farmers, our environment, workers and consumers. Furthermore, it is imperative that the ethics violations Perdue faced as Governor of Georgia be fully examined. The American people deserve a Secretary of Agriculture who has been fully vetted, and this cannot happen if the Senate limits debate.

The Senate Agriculture Committee's initial confirmation hearings for Governor Perdue were exceptionally brief, and a number of pressing concerns were not addressed. Not a single member of the committee asked Governor Perdue about the ethics charges brought against him while he was Governor, regarding his ties to the industries that he would regulate or his history of denying climate change science and how they will affect his tenure as Secretary of Agriculture. Climate change will undoubtedly affect farmers in this country and across the world. A full debate on the floor of the Senate will give members the opportunity to raise these and other concerns.

We urge the Senate Democrats to insist on the full 30-hour debate on Governor Perdue, so that his appointment can be thoroughly discussed. Farmers, workers, consumers, and the American people deserve a full debate. It is important that we have transparency about Governor Perdue's financial ties to industries the USDA regulates to ensure he will not continue to prioritize profits of agribusiness over those of food safety, farmer livelihoods, worker safety and the environment. We are deeply concerned that Governor Perdue will slash incentives for conservation that keep our natural resources safe. Farm workers deserve to know if Governor Perdue will be a voice for them at the USDA, or if he will cut worker protections and ignore their concerns.

Millions of Americans poured into the streets and into town halls to protest the corruption and ineptitude of the Trump administration. How can they have faith that their elected officials are representing their interests if the full Senate does not take time to deliberate on an important nominee like the future leader of the Department of Agriculture? We strongly urge you to support a debate and roll call vote on this nominee, and to ensure that the Senate fulfills its Constitutional obligation to fully vet Governor Perdue.

Sincerely,

ActionAid USA

Alabama State Association of Cooperatives  
Alliance for the Wild Rockies  
Animals Are Sentient Beings, Inc  
Berks Gas Truth  
Beyond Pesticides  
Biofuelwatch  
Bold visions conservation  
California Institute for Rural Studies  
Center for Food Safety  
Citizens For GMO Labeling  
Clean Air Watch  
Community Alliance for Global Justice  
Community Food and Justice Coalition  
Connecticut Families Against Chemical Trespass (ConnFACT)  
Connecticut Northeast Organic Farming Association  
Cottonwood Environmental Law Center  
Dogwood Alliance  
Earth Open Source Institute  
Eco-Justice Ministries  
Ecology Center  
Endangered Habitats League  
Endangered Species Coalition  
Experimental Farm Network  
Fair World Project  
Family Farm Defenders  
Farmworker Association of Florida  
Farmworker Justice  
Food and Water Watch  
Friends of the Earth U.S.  
Gap Mountain Goats  
GMO Inside  
Green America  
Greene County Democrat  
Illinois Right to Know GMO  
Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement  
Kansas Rural Center  
LabelGMOs.org  
L.A. Kitchen  
Mangrove Action Project  
Maryland Pesticide Education Network  
National Family Farm Coalition  
Occidental Arts and Ecology Center  
Ohio Environmental Council  
Olympia Beekeepers Association

Organic Consumers Association  
Organic Vision LLC  
Other Worlds  
Pesticide Action Network  
PLBA Housing Development Corporation  
Pollinate Minnesota  
Pollinator Friendly Alliance  
Real Food Challenge, University of Georgia  
Real Food Challenge, University of Utah  
Rural Coalition  
Rural Training and Research Center Federation of Southern Cooperatives  
Save Our Sky Blue Waters  
Sequoia ForestKeeper  
The Center for Biological Diversity  
The Conscious Kitchen  
Turning Green  
Turtle Island Restoration Network  
Vermont Public Interest Research Group  
Women's International League for Peace & Freedom US