

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 19, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

Organic is an increasingly important part of American agriculture and represents one of the fastest-growing food and farming sectors in the U.S., providing economic opportunities for farmers and lifting rural economies, while also utilizing sustainable farming practices proven to help mitigate the threat of climate change. Organic also provides a safe, healthy choice to consumers, who are increasingly seeking the trusted USDA Organic seal on the food and products they purchase for their families.

We are writing to urge you to reinstate the Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices Final Rule (OLPP) following the Trump administration's withdrawal and subsequent four-year legal battle to block its implementation. Reinstatement would not only restore a federal rule that was ten years in the making and a crowning product of the Obama/Biden administration, but would reset the organic policymaking authority of the Secretary of Agriculture, which was eviscerated during the previous administration.

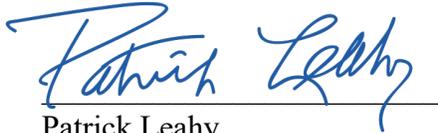
By withdrawing the final rule on Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices, the Trump administration erroneously concluded that the Organic Foods Production Act (OFPA) does not authorize existing federal organic livestock and stand-alone animal welfare standards. This conclusion, if left uncorrected, destabilizes the entire organic livestock regulatory framework, and upsets more than twenty years of well-settled organic requirements. It is also significantly out of step with organic consumers and most Americans.

Outdoor living is central to everything organic animal agriculture stands for. The Trump administration took the narrow position that "organically produced" livestock under OFPA means the "minimal administration of chemical and synthetic substances." This obviously conflicts with existing federal organic policy under which many farm-wide practices such as pasture access for ruminants and outdoor access for poultry are mandatory. Additionally, when withdrawing OLPP, the Trump administration failed to consult with the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) in violation of OFPA, which requires the Secretary of Agriculture to consult with NOSB on federal organic policy matters.

We urge the administration to take this opportunity to collaborate with the organic industry by reinstating the final rule and restoring organic policymaking authority to its proper role.

The growing organic sector is supported by millions of U.S. consumers and driven by thousands of family farms. By taking this important action, you will restore trust and confidence in the USDA Organic seal and allow organic to continue to thrive.

Sincerely,



Patrick Leahy
United States Senator



Jon Tester
United States Senator



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack, Secretary, United States Department of Agriculture