



Write Here! Write Now!

Contact: advocacy@uusj.org or 202.600.9132

Delivery of Letters - Organizers: Letters are due by **April 17th, for best impact**, online will stay open ***NEW* use the QR code**, or [Online HERE](#), or send via [Upload Form](#) or an Email: advocacy@uusj.org

Mail to: UUSJ c/o Paulette DeMers, 1530 1st Ave N, Moorhead MN 56560

Tell Congress to Advance A Climate-Smart Farm Bill In 2023

Why Are We Writing? We have a critical opportunity to advocate for a climate-smart agricultural sector that advances justice. The five-year proposal now being drafted offers the chance to reduce hunger, promote environmental stewardship and promote fairness to all farmers and farmworkers. Our UU values call on us to advocate for a Farm Bill that brings about fairness, especially to farmers and farm workers of color who have been left out of earlier bills, and that encourages production of sustainably grown, healthful food rather than commodity crops grown in ways that deplete soil and pollute our waterways.

Why now? The current Farm Bill expires on September 30, 2023, so both the House and Senate are actively working on drafting a new five-year Farm Bill. Our Representatives and Senators need to hear from us now so that the Farm Bill as enacted reflects our UU values.

Background: Past Farm Bills have primarily directed agricultural subsidies to growers of corn, soybeans, and similar commodities grown primarily as feed for animals raised in concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs). That skewed funding functions to pad corporate profits while driving small farms out of business and supporting animal suffering and pollution caused by CAFOs. Moreover, due to long-running and persistent discrimination in the administration of farm loans, BIPOC farmers have received far less than their fair share of loans and other support and have consequently lost much of the land they and their ancestors farmed. Small and family farms that have received few benefits from past bills are more likely to deploy sustainable practices. Past Farm Bills have also encouraged massive consolidation and mechanization of farms without adequately promoting good environmental stewardship.

There is a pressing need to redirect Farm Bill funding to reducing hunger, promoting sustainable farming practices, fighting climate change, and making our agricultural sector more equitable.

UU Grounding: Promoting sustainable farming techniques and reducing carbon emissions falls within our UU 7th Principle: "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part." The 2019 UU G.A.y adopted an Action of Immediate Witness entitled "Build the Movement for a Green New Deal," that recognized the intersectional nature of climate issues and [environmental] justice issues and urged that UUs "Develop a new morality, rebuilding our political and economic structures to prioritize the well-being of future generations, grounded in sustainability." Supporting programs that assist farmers of color and farm workers is consistent with promoting "Justice, equity and compassion in human relations," as stated in our 2nd Principle.

Key Message & Our Ask

Message: The 2023 Farm Bill presents an important opportunity to create an agricultural sector that serves the needs of consumers and farmers in a way that is fair to all and that protects the environment and helps avoid a climate crisis.

Ask: We need a Farm Bill that reduces hunger, promotes environmental stewardship, reduces carbon emissions, fairly treats Black farmers and others harmed by past discrimination, and builds an agricultural infrastructure that allows all people to access sustainably grown, healthful food.

Suggested Talking Points

(use your own examples, tell your story, and/or draw on some of these suggested points)

As a person of faith, I ask you to work toward crafting a new Farm Bill that would curb hunger, protect our environment, reduce injustice and support vibrant agricultural economies rather than promoting cheap raw materials for animal feeding. In particular, the new Farm Bill should:

- Strengthen, not cut, programs that reduce hunger and improve nutrition such as SNAP (food stamp) benefits.
- Strengthen programs that promote conservation, reduce carbon emissions, and protect land, water and biodiversity from degradation.
- Protect communities and water sources from the devastating effects of concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs).
- Support fairness to farmers of color by incorporating provisions of the Justice for Black Farmers Act (118th Cong. S.96) which would restore land lost due to past discrimination and help a new generation of Black farmers get started.
- Protect the health, safety, and fair compensation of those who work the land and pick the produce on which we all depend.
- Curb corporate excesses and promote competition in the food and agriculture sectors by incorporating into the bill the Food and Agribusiness Merger Moratorium and Antitrust Review Act (117th Cong. S.4245, H.R. 7827).

Sample Letter to Your Senators

[Use your own words. Speak from your heart -- this is only a sample letter. Follow the link below to see if your senators are co-sponsors of the bill, if yes thank the senator.]

[Today's date]

Dear Senator (or Representative) _____, *[write to both of your Senators and your Representative]*

I'm a Unitarian Universalist from *[optional: name of congregation and location]*, and supporter of the Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice. Fundamental principles of our faith include promoting justice, equity and compassion in human relations and respecting the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

As Congress works toward crafting the 2023 Farm Bill, I urge you to do all you can to strengthen programs that reduce hunger, promote environmental stewardship, and reduce carbon emissions. In addition, Congress should not miss this opportunity to support fairness to farmers of color and to those who work the land and pick the produce on which we depend.

[To support the message include in your own words a personal experience, a story, or concern relating to how food is grown and distributed in this country. Or use a talking point from above to adapt.]

[adapt a closing... I look forward to hearing your plans to ensure that the 2023 Farm Bill promotes these vital objectives.]

Sincerely, *[YOUR NAME and include your COMPLETE ADDRESS]*

(See other side for Why We Are Writing, Background, UU Grounding, and Instructions for Delivering Letters)