

Dear Senator,

The undersigned farming, food, consumer and environmental organizations and businesses strongly oppose the nomination of Sam Clovis — a climate change denier with no background in food or agriculture — as the Undersecretary for Research, Education and Economics (REE) at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The USDA needs strong leadership to support the hard-working scientists who ensure the agency's scientific integrity and provide policymakers and the American public with the best information available. If confirmed, Mr. Clovis would serve as the USDA's chief scientist and oversee the agency's entire scientific mission, including its work on climate change. However, Mr. Clovis, a former economics professor, radio talk show host, and co-chair to Donald Trump's campaign, lacks formal training in the hard sciences and expertise in food and agriculture policy — credentials that are necessary to assess the complicated scientific issues that affect our agricultural systems, nutrition, and food safety.

Mr. Clovis has also [stated that climate science is “junk science”](#) and has made clear that Donald Trump's administration will not prioritize climate science in its agriculture policy. This is alarming given that our industrial agriculture systems are a leading cause of climate change and [contribute at least 30 percent of greenhouse gas emissions globally](#). Our country's food and agriculture systems face complex challenges — from pollinator declines and deteriorating soil health to severe drought and flooding due to our rapidly changing climate — and without competent, science-based leadership, the USDA will be unable to protect our environment and help thousands of farmers and their communities adapt to these worsening burdens.

Our farmers and food and agriculture workers who work in [one of the most hazardous industries](#) in our country also deserve the attention of an Undersecretary who understands, rather than dismisses, their challenges— especially around fair labor and immigration. Almost 90% of workers in our food system earn low or poverty-level wages. These workers need a Chief Scientist who will be fair in his or her oversight of statistical reporting on farm labor, wages, and finances. Sam Clovis is not that person. He is vocally against fair wages for working people and [believes raising the minimum wage is “nonsensical.”](#) He is also [against a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants](#) and supports the construction of a [U.S.-Mexico border wall](#). Our agriculture system is driven by hard-working people who come to the U.S. from around the world, and having someone who does not understand the complexities of this system in a top position at the USDA is an insult to farmers and the workers who harvest, process, transport, prepare, and serve the food that we all eat.

Finally, Donald Trump's nomination of Sam Clovis violates the law. The [2008 Farm Bill states](#) that the nominee for undersecretary of REE, "shall be appointed by the President...from among distinguished scientists with specialized training or significant experience in agricultural research, education, and economics." Past REE Undersecretaries include highly credentialed scientists such as biochemists, plant physiologists and nutritionists. Donald Trump's pick of an anti-science, climate-denying talk show host with no credible science or agriculture background is a direct attack on science and our food and farm system, and is an insult to this law.

On behalf of the many people and organizations that are working to protect the environment, a safe and abundant food supply, and the well-being of our food and farming communities, we strongly urge you to oppose the nomination of Sam Clovis as the Undersecretary for Research, Education and Economics at the USDA.

Sincerely,

Friends of the Earth  
Health, Environment, Agriculture, Labor (HEAL)  
Food Alliance  
ActionAid USA  
Alaska Wilderness League  
Center for Biological Diversity  
Center for Environmental Health  
Center for Food Safety  
Central Florida Jobs with Justice  
Citizens for Sludge-Free Land  
Climate Hawks Vote  
ClimateTruth.org  
Community Alliance for Agroecology  
Community Alliance for Global Justice  
Earthjustice  
EPIC Bar  
Family Farm Defenders  
Farmworker Association of Florida  
Food & Water Watch  
Food Democracy Now!  
Food for Maine's Future  
GMO Free California  
GMO Free PA  
Guayaki SRP  
Hip Hop Caucus  
IFOAM - Organics International  
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy  
Kiss The Ground  
Mangrove Action Project  
MBA Polymers  
National Family Farm Coalition  
National Latino Farmers and Ranchers Trade Association  
Nature's Path Foods Inc.  
NextGen America  
Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance  
Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT)  
Occidental Arts and Ecology Center

Oil Change International  
Organic Consumers Association  
Organic Seed Alliance  
OSC2  
Oswald Farms  
Ozark Alliance of Retired Americans  
Partners for the Land & Agricultural Needs of Traditional Peoples (PLANT)  
Patagonia  
Pesticide Action Network North America  
Public Justice  
Regeneration International  
Regeneration Vermont  
Rural Coalition  
Sierra Club  
The Carbon Underground  
Toxic Free North Carolina  
Warehouse Worker Resource Center  
Web of Life Permaculture Design