Chairman Scott
House Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Thompson
House Committee on Agriculture
1010 Longworth House Office Building
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The farmers, cooperatives, researchers, retailers, seed producers, scientists and technology developers represented by the organizations signed below appreciate the opportunity to provide a statement for the record for the House Agriculture Committee hearing on February 25, 2021 addressing "Climate Change and the U.S. Agriculture and Forestry Sectors." We commend the Committee for addressing this important and complex issue. As organizations who embrace the use of crop varieties improved through biotechnology and recognize the many benefits this has enabled American agriculture to achieve, we want to specifically highlight the fact that agricultural biotechnology needs to be a part of any climate change discussion. Agriculture has achieved notable and well documented environmental improvements through the adoption of crop varieties improved through biotechnology that have enabled improved tillage practices, improved soil health and greatly reduced greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, to name just a few. We are proud of the accomplishments achieved to date but are even more excited about the potential environmental benefits and climate change mitigation that could be possible through the continued development and adoption of new crop varieties improved with the help of innovative breeding methods such as gene editing, marker assisted selection, genomic selection and genetic engineering; new crop varieties that can produce more with less — less water, less land, less inputs.

We support the ongoing public and private investment in the research and development of new breeding methods which have the potential to enhance the sustainability of agriculture, the environment, and our global food system. In order for U.S. agriculture to lead in the future, we must have access to every tool available to address pressing challenges caused by climate change such as severe weather events and rapidly evolving pests and diseases. We must do this while meeting societal expectations for reductions in the use of crop inputs and increasing new varieties of healthy and affordable food and fiber options. Technology will be helpful in confronting these challenges but we believe that biotechnology has demonstrated a unique ability to meet these demands.

Our associations strongly support a regulatory system which fosters innovation, values the environmental benefits that crops improved using biotechnology enable, and recognizes the long and safe track record of plant breeding, and the overwhelming evidence of the safe use of genetic engineered plants. Congress should continue to encourage Federal agencies to broadly communicate how their policy decisions related to new plant varieties enable agriculture and forestry to further contribute to climate solutions. In 2020, the United States Department of Agriculture called for public input on the Agriculture Innovation Agenda to help "stimulate innovation so that American agriculture can achieve the goal of increasing U.S. agricultural production by 40 percent while cutting the environmental footprint of U.S. agriculture in half by 2050."[1] In a summary of the key findings from all of the feedback received, USDA published the "Agriculture Innovation Agenda: Scorecard Report." A key finding of that report was that a primary driver of productivity growth is "improvements in animal and

[1] https://www.usda.gov/aia

crop genetics."[2] Biotechnology is a critical tool in plant breeding to enhance the efficiency and efficacy of improvements in genetics that will maintain American agriculture as the world leader in efficiency and sustainability.

The men and women represented by our associations believe in the vital contributions that our agriculture community can make to mitigate climate change and build toward a more sustainable and equitable food system. We believe in science and evidence-based solutions. We must acknowledge that scientific innovations, such as agricultural biotechnology, have resulted in environmental and societal benefits; and must continue to be a part of the comprehensive strategy on climate change and U.S. agriculture.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide this statement for the record.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Retailers Association
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Seed Trade Association
American Soybean Association
American Sugarbeet Growers Association
Beet Sugar Development Foundation
Biotechnology Innovation Organization
Crop Science Society of America
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Corn Growers Association
National Cotton Council
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Sorghum Producers
Produce Marketing Association
Syngenta
U.S. Canola Association

[2] Agriculture Innovation Agenda: Scorecard Report, https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/aia-scoreboard-report.pdf, page 4.