

**Yes**, please hand-deliver my signed proxy letter, below, to the offices of the USDA Secretary.

**Dear USDA Secretary Vilsack,**

There is a crisis of confidence at the USDA's National Organic Program (NOP). The NOP is dysfunctional. Senior management has treated industry stakeholders arrogantly and overridden decisions by the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB), even when their advice to you was based on overwhelming public input.

We need change at the "People's Department," with new management to create a culture supporting the thousands of ethical family farmers and their allies who have built the vibrant organic market. The NOP needs to uphold the original intent of Congress in creating the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 (OFPA). The NOP must:

- **Cease ignoring the advice and counsel of the National Organic Standards Board:** The NOSB has been bypassed, and policy resolutions it has adopted have been ignored or countermanded. These include recommendations to prohibit engineered nanomaterials in organics, carrageenan in organic infant formula, and soilless/hydroponic production from being certified as organic.
- **Stop undermining the authority of the NOSB:** In a break with congressional intent and a 20+ year precedent of respecting the NOSB's authority, NOP leadership stripped the board's ability to set their own procedures, work plan, and agenda. This demonstrates gross disrespect to the organic community.
- **Restore the Sunset provision Congress established to limit synthetics/non-organic ingredients and inputs in organics:** The two primary authors of OFPA, Senator Leahy and Congressman DeFazio, both have stated to you that the action to gut the Sunset provisions was a violation of the intent of Congress. This decision should be reversed and its architect should be removed from his position of authority.
- **Establish judicious enforcement:** The NOP has allowed "factory farms" to operate that are clearly in violation of the law, refusing to investigate scofflaws. In cases where willful violation of organic standards has been found, the NOP has failed to publicly identify these operations, preventing their examples from acting as a deterrent to other industry players. Furthermore, the NOP has let violators off the hook with "sweetheart" negotiated deals (again, in secrecy) and has mishandled serious cases of alleged fraud.
- **Safeguard the integrity of seats on the NOSB:** Congress specifically created designated positions on the board to assure diverse representation by all organic stakeholders: farmers, certifiers, consumer advocates, retailers, manufacturers, environmentalists, and scientists. This mandate has been illegally violated by the appointment of corporate executives representing agribusiness interests and by individuals who have never even attended an NOSB meeting. The appointment process should be open to public scrutiny, and only the best and brightest in the organic community should be appointed to the NOSB.
- **Cease the investments in public relations and disingenuous proclamations about "transparency":** Start posting all public documents on the NOP website and fully complying with requests under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

As a \_\_\_\_\_ (farmer/consumer/retailer/other), I call for the appointment of new management at the NOP.

Respectfully yours,

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

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