

REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE AND HEALTHY FOOD

The Problem

The way we produce food is unhealthy, unfair, and unsustainable. In a food system dominated by a handful of corporations, exploitation of farm workers and family farmers is pervasive. Status quo agricultural policies favor agribusiness giants, which undercut small-scale farms and use highly polluting practices that poison our air, land, and water and threaten the health and safety of farmworkers, communities, and consumers. Moreover, this model cannot be sustained. Soil degradation has eroded the nutritional content of our food and depleted agricultural ecosystems to the point that, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, there are fewer than 60 years of harvests left if current practices continue. The climate change impact of our food system is similarly concerning: Intensively managed soils have lost 50 percent to 70 percent of their pre-cultivation carbon, releasing billions of tons of carbon into the atmosphere. Under current practices, agriculture accounts for nearly 10 percent of aggregate U.S. greenhouse gas emissions.

The Solution

We urgently need to rebuild our food system to support family farmers, farmworkers, and rural economic security, while regenerating healthy ecosystems and safe, nutritious food. That means investing in marginalized farmers who have been historically exploited and excluded. It means equipping family farmers to protect communities and consumers from land, water, and air pollution, while cutting greenhouse gas emissions and expanding climate resilience.

The Jobs

Investments to build a healthier, more resilient food system would provide hundreds of thousands of good jobs for workers. Specifically, Congress should:

- **Provide nearly 2 million jobs by supporting marginalized farmers and farmworkers:** Congress needs to invest \$91 billion per year for 10 years to support Black, Latinx, Indigenous, immigrant, young, and other marginalized farmers by funding training, research, land transfer programs, and



health and safety measures like the Asuncion Valdivia Illness and Fatality Prevention Act, which Congress should immediately pass and fund.

- **Provide over 975,000 jobs by equipping farmers to transition to ecologically regenerative practices:** Congress needs to invest \$41 billion per year for 10 years to transition away from a system of dependency on large, highly polluting multinational corporations and toward ecologically regenerative practices. Funds should be made available to subsidize costs for family farmers who commit to fully transition to regenerative farming practices and to support displaced workers and their families.
- **Provide over 482,000 jobs by supporting farmland conservation:** Congress needs to invest \$25 billion per year for 10 years to bolster existing programs like the Conservation Stewardship, Agricultural Conservation Easement, and Regional Conservation Partnership programs, which have demonstrated improvements in environmental quality.

And More ...

For a complete list of agricultural investments, see economic analysis from the Political Economy Research Institute and Sierra Club's letter to Congress, which outlines specific priorities for a bold stimulus package that puts millions of people back to work to build a healthier, more equitable clean energy economy.