

Adams, Tokuda Call on USDA to Reinstate Rural Business Center Program for Farmers



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WASHINGTON, DC—Today, **Representatives Alma S. Adams, Ph.D. (NC-12) and Jill Tokuda (HI-02), Members of the House Agriculture Committee**, sent [a letter](#) signed by 38 House Democrats to U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Brooke Rollins calling for the USDA to reverse the reckless elimination of the Regional Food Business Center (RFBC) program.

In January, the USDA froze funding for the RFBC program and on July 15, the department announced it was [cancelling the program](#) entirely.

In their letter, the lawmakers wrote, **“Eliminating [the RFBC] program will reduce market opportunities for small farmers and food producers, weaken local food supply chains, and set back efforts to build a more resilient food system. We urge you to immediately reverse this decision and reinstate this valuable program.”**

They continued by highlighting the impact RFBCs have already had on farmers and agriculture communities: **“To date, the 12 established Centers have developed critical market and business development support to more than 5,000 farms and businesses nationwide. Leveraging robust partner networks, each Center effectively serves the unique agricultural needs of rural, metro, Tribal, and remote communities.”**

[A USDA report](#) from October 2024 found that RFBCs led to 2,800 individuals receiving technical assistance, 1,500 new partnerships formed by recipients, and 287 businesses reporting increased revenue as a result of the program.

The lawmakers emphasized how freezing funds for the RFBC program has already had immediate and damaging consequences for these communities: **“The loss of funding has disrupted vital partnerships and threatened local and regional supply chains, undermining the food and economic security of communities across the country. Eliminating the program entirely would not only erase the progress made but severely impede a future pathway forward and slow the continuation of this essential work to build resilient food systems in these communities.”**

They also called attention to the USDA’s *Family First* agenda and how the RFBC program aligns with the agenda’s commitment to small family farms: **“It was unexpected to see this program eliminated, especially after your department’s release of the *Farmers First* agenda, which underscores the critical role of small family farms and the barriers they face in accessing markets and infrastructure... Created by USDA in 2022, the RFBC program offers the solutions – including technical assistance, coordination, and capacity-building support – needed to help small, mid-sized, and family farmers overcome these very challenges and contribute to a more resilient and competitive food system for our country.”**

The lawmakers concluded by saying, **“At a time when farmers continue to experience uncertainty, industry consolidation, and extreme weather events, we must not reduce the opportunities that support their viability and resilience. We urge you to restore the RFBC program and continue working with small- and mid-sized farms to strengthen our nation’s food system and local economies.”**

The letter calls for a response from the USDA by August 31, 2025 on the elimination of the RFBC program and how the department plans on supporting farmers, agriculture producers, and rural communities in its absence.

The full letter can be found [here](#).

For press inquiries, contact Congresswoman Adams Communications Director Kaleb Harmon by email at kaleb.harmon@mail.house.gov.

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Congresswoman Alma S. Adams, Ph.D. represents North Carolina's 12th Congressional District (Charlotte, Mecklenburg County) and serves on the House Committee on Agriculture and the House Committee on Education & Workforce, where she serves as ranking member of the Higher Education and Workforce Development (HEWD) Subcommittee.

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