

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

May 11, 2020 (*Updated list of signatories & sponsors as of May 20, 2020*)

Dear Senators and Representatives:

The undersigned 84 organizations and 392 farms and ranches urge you to co-sponsor S. 1620/H.R. 2859, the Processing Revival and Intrastate Meat Exemption Act (the PRIME Act), and to support its inclusion in any future COVID-19 legislation.

This bill addresses a long-standing problem: the lack of accessible, small-scale meat processing facilities. With the current wave of closures of massive meatpacking plants, reforming the federal law that hampers small local facilities is more vital than ever. Multiple large-scale slaughterhouses owned by the largest processors have closed. Dozens more have confirmed COVID-19 cases among their employees, and even more have had to slow down their processing speeds due to social distancing requirements, as will any of the plants that re-open while the pandemic continues.

Livestock farmers and ranchers are facing devastating losses because the meatpacking companies have slowed or stopped buying livestock, and the producers have nowhere else they can go. American consumers are facing higher prices and possible meat shortages.

These issues are the logical result of the highly consolidated meatpacking industry, which puts a small handful of companies in control of our food supply. Four companies control processing of over 80% of the country's beef, and four companies control the processing of two thirds of the country's pork.ⁱ The consolidation has led to most meat being processed at massive plants where as many as 400 cattle are slaughtered an hour.ⁱⁱ **While there is no silver bullet that will solve the entire problem, the PRIME Act is an important step that could help both consumers and farmers, during this crisis and beyond.**

One of the main reasons that we lack local processing facilities is that USDA regulations are designed for massive, industrial-scale facilities, making it difficult or sometimes even impossible for small-scale facilities to comply. And federal law requires that "state inspected" facilities use the exact same USDA standards, leaving no flexibility for states to work with.

The PRIME Act restores flexibility by repealing the federal ban on the sale of meat from what are known as "custom slaughterhouses." These are facilities that meet state regulations as well as basic federal requirements.ⁱⁱⁱ They are typically very small with few employees. The extensive complicated federal regulations that apply to massive meatpacking facilities are neither needed nor appropriate for these operations, which might process as much meat in an entire year as the large facilities do in a single day. Their small scale also means that they are better able to provide necessary social distancing and sanitation measures while safely continuing operations.

Custom slaughterhouses are already legally operating in numerous states, but the meat from the animals can only go back to – and be consumed by the family of - the person who owned the animal when it entered the slaughterhouse. The meat cannot be sold. A consumer who is not

able to pay for and store hundreds of pounds of meat in one order is unable to access the meat from a custom slaughterhouse.

Under current law, a farmer who wants to sell his or her beef, lamb, goat, or pork to consumers, whether at a farm stand, farmers' market, or home delivery, cannot use a custom slaughterhouse.

Instead, the farmer has to haul their animals to a USDA-inspected or equivalent state-inspected facility. These facilities are in short supply, and many farmers must haul long distances at significant cost to reach them, if there is even one accessible. Many of these plants were already at capacity before the current crisis, and many farmers are now being told that they must wait six months or longer, as much as a full year, to be able to have their animals processed.

The PRIME Act provides flexibility to address the need for more small-scale meat processing. States would be able to permit producers to sell meat processed at a custom slaughterhouse within the state. In addition to the applicable federal regulations that custom slaughterhouses comply with,^{iv} states could choose to impose additional conditions or limitations that best suit their agricultural, food system, and social conditions.

The PRIME Act could help reduce the severity of the meat shortages and price increases for consumers in the coming months, while providing income for small farmers and ranchers across the country. In the long-term, the PRIME Act can make it feasible for more small processors to be established or expanded, helping with vital infrastructure as we seek to rebuild our economy from this crisis. And it provides long-term environmental benefits by reducing the transportation miles and vehicle emissions from livestock hauling.

H.R. 2859 was filed by Representatives Thomas Massie (R-KY), Chellie Pingree (D-ME), Justin Amash (I-MI), Andy Biggs (R-AZ), Jeff Duncan (R-SC), John Garamendi (D-CA), Jared Huffman (D-CA), Steve King (R-IA), Mark Meadows (R-NC), Scott Perry (R-PA), and Elise Stefanik (R-NY). They have been joined by 33 more co-sponsors from both parties:

Earl Blumenauer (D-OR)	Paul Gosar (R-AZ)	Lloyd Smucker (R-PA)
Mo Brooks (R-AL)	Mark Green (R-TN)	Darren Soto (D-FL)
Ken Buck (R-CO)	Glenn Grotham (R-WI)	Scott Tipton (R-CO)
Ted Budd (R-NC)	Debbie Lesko (R-AZ)	Rashida Tlaib (D-MI)
Tim Burchett (R-TN)	Billy Long (R-MO)	Greg Walden (R-OR)
Michael Cloud (R-TX)	Tom McClintock (R-CA)	Mark Walker (R-NC)
Joe Courtney (D-CT)	Carol Miller (R-WV)	Robert Wittman (R-VA)
Warren Davidson (R-OH)	Alexander Mooney (R-WV)	Ron Wright (R-TX)
Rodney Davis (R-IL)	Ralph Norman (R-SC)	Ted Yoho (R-FL)
Matt Gaetz (R-FL)	Bill Posey (R-FL)	
Louie Gohmert (R-TX)	Chip Roy (R-TX)	
Jared Golden (D-ME)	James Sensenbrenner (R-WI)	

S.1620 is sponsored by Senators Angus King (I-E), Rand Paul (R-KY), Lamar Alexander (R-TN), Marsha Blackburn (R-TN), Kevin Cramer (R-ND), and John Hoeven (R-ND).

Please join your colleagues in signing on to the PRIME Act and prioritizing its passage. We can provide quality food for Americans, support local economies, and save struggling farmers if you act quickly.

For more information, please contact the Judith McGeary, Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance, Judith@FarmAndRanchFreedom.org, 512-484-8821, or one of the organizations listed below.

Signed,

National and International Nonprofits

Cattlemen's Texas Longhorn Registry
Family Farm Action
Family Farm Defenders
Farm Aid
Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance
Farm-to-Consumer Legal Defense Fund
Food Democracy Now!
Good Meat Project
Healthy Biomes
Holistic Management International
International Rescue Committee
Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future
Kiss The Ground
National Family Farm Coalition
National Health Federation
National Latino Farmers & Ranchers Trade Association
Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance
Organic Consumers Association
OrganicEye
The Permaculture Research Institute USA
R-CALF USA
Real Food Consumer Coalition
Rural Coalition
Socially Responsible Agricultural Project
Soil4Climate
Weston A. Price Foundation
Women Involved in Farm Economics (WIFE)
World Farmers

Regional and Statewide Nonprofits

Alabama Sustainable Agriculture Network (AL)
Alaska's Big Village Network (AK)
California Farmers Union (CA)
Carolina Farm Stewardship Association (NC & SC)
Cattle Producers of Louisiana (LA)
Community Farm Alliance (KY)
Dakota Rural Action (SD)
Environmental Stewardship (TX)

Fair Farms (MD)
Food for Maine's Future (ME)
Idaho Organization of Resource Councils (ID)
Independent Cattlemen of Wyoming (WY)
Indiana Farmers Union (IN)
Kerry Cattle Association (MA)
Land For Good (NH)
Lettuce Eat Well Farmers' Market (OH)
Missouri Rural Crisis Center (MO)
Nebraska Women Involved in Farm Economics
Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (VT)
Northern Plains Resource Council (MT)
Northwest Farmers Union (OR)
Powder River Basin Resource Council (WY)
Rural Vermont (VT)
Southwest Grassfed Livestock Alliance (NM)
Texas Landowners Council (TX)
The 98th Meridian Foundation (TX)
Virginia Independent Consumers and Farmers Association (VA)
Western Organization of Resource Councils (MT and multi-state)

Local Nonprofits

Bee Girl (OR)
CRST Buffalo Authority (SD)
Double Arrow Ranch & Rescue (CA)
Dragon Soil Health (MA)
Duluth Young Farmers Coalition (MN)
Fall River Resource Conservation District (CA)
Food Policy Council of San Antonio (TX)
Growing Hope (MI)
GROW North Texas (TX)
Henrietta Growth Corp. (TX)
Holloway Productions (CO)
HOPE For Small Farm Sustainability (TX)
Nature's Farm Camp (IL)
Nourishing Food For Thought (FL)
Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project, Inc. (OK)
Project H3LP (SD)
Rondout Valley Growers Association (NY)
Rutherford County Cattleman's Association (NC)
SCOR Cardiac Cyclists Club, Inc. (CA)
Slow Food Austin (TX)
Sonoma Family Meal (CA)
Spokane Farmland Preservation Working Group (WA)
Texas Farmers' Market (TX)

Trout Lake Area Business Association (WA)
Urban Harvest, Inc (TX)
Veterans Farming Initiative (MN)
Waco Downtown Farmers Market (TX)
WAPF - Cincinnati Chapter (OH)
WAPF - Washington/Ozaukee Counties chapter (WI)

Farms and Ranches (listed by state)

Mesticeria Farm/Circle of Life Farm (AK)
JR Livestock (AL)
Carlton Family Farm (AR)
Four Creeks Ranch (AR)
Phifer Farms LLC Farm Raised Meats (AR)
Russell Ranch (AR)
V5 Farms, LLC (AZ)
Angeles Crest Creamery (CA)
Anthony Teresi Farms (CA)
Bees Rock Ranch (CA)
Black Butte Ranch (CA)
Buckrun Biodynamic Garden Healdsburg (CA)
Chrisman Farms Inc. (CA)
Encina Farms (CA)
Fischer Farms (CA)
Grabishfarm (CA)
Independent Producer (CA)
Lazy 9 (CA)
Luchetti Ranch Partnership (CA)
Monkeyflower Ranch (CA)
Out of the whey farm (CA)
Sanglier Home Ranch (CA)
Spring Gulch Farm (CA)
Swain Family Farm (CA)
Triple 3 Family Ranch/Modoc Resource Conservation District (CA)
Wilson Livestock (CA)
Antelope Mess Inc (CO)
Brost Ranch (CO)
Buhr Ranch (CO)
Caraveo Cattle LTD (CO)
Clark Anvil Ranch (CO)
Corner Post Meats (CO)
Larry Trahern (CO)
Lazy K Livestock (CO)
Six Pack Farm and Cattle LKC (CO)
Sosoni Farm LLC (CO)
The Golden Hoof (CO)
Trahern Ranch (CO)
Unwin Family Ranch LLP (CO)
Vision Farms (CO)
Farm (CT)
Blue Dot Farm (FL)
Flatwoods Farm & Micro-Dairy (FL)
James E Boree Jr (FL)
Lotus Hill (FL)
Pineshine Farms (FL)
Redhills Grazers (FL)
Ric McConnell (FL)
The Lazy Acres Family Farm (FL)
Golden Pear Farm (GA)
Puu O Kumau Ranch (HI)
A & D Grassfed Beef (ID)
Reditus Natural Farming, LLC (ID)
Wellspring Ranch (ID)
Hollewell Angus Farm (IL)
Honeysuckle Farm (IL)
Keith Jeffries (IL)
1850 Farm (KS)
AJ Schmitz Dairy Farm (KS)
Anchor D L & C (KS)
Anchor D L & C (KS)
Bar C Land and Cattle (KS)
Brown Family Farms (KS)
Castle Argghhh LLC (KS)
Conway's Produce (KS)
Crooked Creek Angus (KS)
E & K Heritage Farm (KS)
E & K Heritage Farm (KS)
Gnad Farm (KS)
Gnad Farm (KS)
Janzen Farms (KS)
Jhawk Farm LLC (KS)
Joy O'Nature Farm (KS)

Mike Schultz (KS)
Oakley Livestock Commission Co (KS)
Prairie Turnip Farm (KS)
Rockn-H-Ranch (KS)
S3 MEATS (KS)
Sawyers Farm (KS)
Sommers and Sons Cattle Co (KS)
Sun Ranch (KS)
Unruh Brothers Cattle Co. (KS)
Bentley farms (KY)
Cane Valley Farm, LLC (KY)
Knight Family Farm (KY)
Sunnyhill Farm (KY)
Brookshire Farm (LA)
Kovac Cattle (LA)
Marsh Mellow Meadows (LA)
American Stonecraft, Inc (MA)
Bear Run Farm (MA)
Crowover Farm (MA)
Goat Nook Farm (MA)
Hames & Axle Farm (MA)
Hidden Acres Farm (MA)
Kings Little Acres (MA)
Loland Oaks Farm (MA)
Meadowhead on Cedar (MA)
Misty River View (MA)
Oxford Farms (MA)
Revival Farm (MA)
Rockland Farm (MA)
Tregellys Farm (MA)
Wildwood Farm (MA)
Shimar farms (MD)
Where Pigs Fly Farm (MD)
Whistle Pig Hollow,MD (MD)
Argyle Acres (ME)
Capri Cairn Farm (ME)
Carroll Family Farm (ME)
East Forty Farm (ME)
Goat Spirit Farm (ME)
Hayman Farm (ME)
Meadowsweet Farm (ME)
Nomad Slaughtering, LLC (ME)
North Star Sheep Farm (ME)
Sebago Lake Ranch (ME)
B&B farms (MI)
Baseline Farm Grassfed (MI)
Bonz Beach Farms (MI)
Cattle Trail Ranch (MI)
D & V Fleis Ranch (MI)
Golden Fleece Farms LLC (MI)
Logan Heritage Farm (MI)
Mezsick Family Farm (MI)
Presque Isle Farm (MI)
Pullmack heritage hog farm (MI)
Red Timber Ranch (MI)
Resonance Center Farm (MI)
Resonance Center Farm (MI)
Second Wind Farm (MI)
Serendipity Farms (MI)
Standen acres (MI)
Traynor Family Farm (MI)
Whispering Wild Market Farm (MI)
Wild Dandelion Acres LLC (MI)
Dancing the Land Farm (MN)
Dry Creek Farms LLC (MN)
Highwater Organics (MN)
Medicine Creek Farm (MN)
Midwest Elderberry Cooperative (MN)
New Story Farm (MN)
Roots Return Heritage Farm LLC (MN)
Ahbleza Ranch (MO)
Burnt Fork Farm (MO)
Conley Angus (MO)
Cub Creek Ranch (MO)
Double K Adventures (MO)
Earth Friendly Farm (MO)
Ladd's Family Farm (MO)
Lazy Broken B Ranch, LLC (MO)
Maxwell Acres (MO)
Motning Star Farms (MO)
Novelty Farm (MO)
On the Hook Acres (MO)
Robinson Farms (MO)
Rogers Ranch (MO)
Windfair Farm (MO)
Antelope Springs Ranch (MT)
Cooper Creek Ranch (MT)
Delpine Farms (MT)
Delpine Farms (MT)
Double AA Ranch (MT)
Irish Household (MT)
MT Cross Farms, Inc. (MT)

Quirk Cattle Co. (MT)
Beam Farms (NC)
Dan-Vir Ltd (NC)
Dominion Heritage Farm (NC)
Ivey's Spring Creek Farm (NC)
Patience Farm and Brewery, LLC (NC)
Reverence Farms (NC)
Shelter mountain farm (NC)
Becker Ranch (ND)
Cudworth Ranch (ND)
Larson Farms (ND)
Maher JM Angus (ND)
Makelky Ranch (ND)
Mertz ranch (ND)
Shawn steffes (ND)
Wald Family Growers (ND)
Barry Pospichal (NE)
Bloomfield Beef Cattle Club (NE)
Eschty Farms Inc (NE)
Gallino Ranch (NE)
H(Ranch (NE)
Jones Ranch (NE)
Lechtenberg farms (NE)
NLazyH Ranch (NE)
Paitz Farm Service (NE)
Seven Mill Iron Ranch (NE)
The Shiloh Fam (NE)
The Shiloh Fam (NE)
TSK Farms LLC (NE)
U7 Ranch (NE)
Wellas Cattle Co. (NE)
Granite State Poultry & Processing (NH)
CS Cattle COmpany (NM)
Mesteño Draw Ranch (NM)
Rafter 2S Cattle Company (NM)
WATE Ranches LLC (NM)
Whetten Livestock (NM)
Ruby Home Ranch (NV)
RUBY MOUNTAIN BEEF (NV)
9 Partners (NY)
A & E Glenden Farms (NY)
Blue Line Farm (NY)
Christian Custom Cutting & Our Farmstead (NY)
Diamond Hills Farm (NY)
Grass + Grit Farm (NY)
Otero Family Farm (NY)
Ramble Creek Farm (NY)
Stratton's Custom Meats & Smokehouse,LLC (NY)
Valley View Devons (NY)
Hyde Farms (OH)
Windswept Grass Farm (OH)
Windswept Grass Farm (OH)
ZOE Farms LLC (OH)
Anichini-Moore Ranch & Farm (OK)
Bar JK Land & Cattle (OK)
Bar S Ranch (OK)
Bar T Beef (OK)
Buckeye Ranch (OK)
Butcher Barn of Garvin (OK)
Day Herefords (OK)
Flying V Ranch (OK)
Four Oaks Farm (OK)
Gray and Brunk (OK)
HL Kincaid Logging (OK)
Hutchison cattle co (OK)
Marchel Ranch (OK)
Northfork Ranch (OK)
Single Loop Ranch (OK)
Spurgeon Ranch (OK)
Ballymena (OR)
Bayside Gardens (OR)
Fat Hen Farm (OR)
Healing Ponds (OR)
Juniper Mtn. Land/Livestock (OR)
Lowry Awesome Beef (OR)
WanderBee Farm (OR)
Wheat/Barley farm-Sherman County (OR)
Withywindle Farm (OR)
Withywindle Farm (OR)
Clodhopper Farm (PA)
Good Work Farm LLC (PA)
Highland Meadows LLC (PA)
The Family Cow, LLC (PA)
Thousand Hills Grazing (PA)
Yellow Creek Farm (PA)
Bud Ducheneaux Ranch (SD)
Dostal Ranch (SD)
Double D Feedyard Inc. (SD)
DX Beef (SD)
Eliason Trucking LLC (SD)

Fox Ranch (SD)
Fox Ranch (SD)
Guthrie Ducheneaux Ranch (SD)
Jobgen Ranch (SD)
Mill Iron S Ranch (SD)
MST Baysinger Ranch (SD)
Naber Ranch (SD)
Sodak Angus Ranch (SD)
Traverse Farms (SD)
Austin Farms (TN)
Hurricane Creek Farms (TN)
Liberty Trace Farm (TN)
Menagerie Meadow Farms (TN)
Pipe Dream Farms (TN)
Solace Farm (TN)
Southern Rhythm Cattle Company (TN)
Uncle Tim's Farm (TN)
4-MAX Ranch (TX)
Amelia Farm and Market, LLC (TX)
B&C Farm (TX)
Badger Hole Farm (TX)
Bee Country Honey Farm (TX)
Birch Farm (TX)
Broussard Farms (TX)
Brown Cattle (TX)
CD&J Mini Ranch (TX)
Circle J Ranch (TX)
Clark Family Farm LP (TX)
Cosby Farm (TX)
Covadonga Farms (TX)
Covenant Farm Foods (TX)
Deerkreek cattle company (TX)
Diamond Rafter Ranch (TX)
Dickens Land and Cattle (TX)
Doctors Clinic of Rio Grande City (TX)
Dodge Ranch (TX)
Dodge Ranch (TX)
Double H Ranch (TX)
Double H Ranch (TX)
Driftwood Meadows (TX)
Driftwood Meadows (TX)
DWD Longhorns (TX)
Eclipse Farm (TX)
Elmore Farms (TX)
Falster Farm (TX)
Finca Tres Roblest (TX)
Floyd Agricultural Research (TX)
French Family Ranch (TX)
Frying Pan Ranch (TX)
Glen Haven Farm (TX)
Graciela Abbott (TX)
Henneke Farms (TX)
HHH Farm (TX)
Hillbilly Heaven Homestead (TX)
Hines Ranch (TX)
Honey Hog Farm (TX)
Hundred Acre Farms, LLC (TX)
Hydraulic Supply & Service Co (TX)
Jim Loos Independent Cattle Rancher (TX)
L7 Ranch (TX)
LaidBack Farms (TX)
Lee Farm (TX)
LeeFarmTX (TX)
LG Farms (TX)
Lloyd Brangus (TX)
Massey Farm (TX)
McGeary Family Farm (TX)
Mini Moo Cows Farm (TX)
Munkebo Farm (TX)
Neighborfood (TX)
North Fork Cattle Company (TX)
Nowell's Naturals (TX)
Oatmeal Oaks Ranch (TX)
Padilla Farm LLC dba Yahweh's Farm (TX)
Parkinson Farms (TX)
Phillips Family Farm (TX)
Quarter Moon Farm (TX)
R&F Farms (TX)
Rambling Rose Farms (TX)
Rascoe Pecans (TX)
Rockin' E Ranch (TX)
RockinBarB Ranch (TX)
Saga Farms (TX)
Serenity Farm (TX)
Serenity Holistic Farm (TX)
Shady Grove Ranch (TX)
Shawnee Creek Farm (TX)
Sister Grove Farm (TX)
SM Brown Ranch (TX)
Soil Regen (TX)
Solar Acres (TX)
South Austin Micro Farm (TX)

Southern Sunny Acres (TX)
Southern Sunny Acres LLC (TX)
Spanial Ranch (TX)
Sweet Eats Fruit Farm (TX)
TexSyS Properties (TX)
The Double Portion Ranch (TX)
The Pauper's Cottage Family Farmstead (TX)
Tir Bluen (TX)
T-Squared Farm (TX)
Utility Research Garden llc (TX)
Wild Creek Farm LLC (TX)
Yahweh's All Natural Farm and Garden (TX)
Chicken Warehouse (UT)
Mesa Farm (UT)
Blue Hills Farm (VA)
Dandelion Fields (VA)
Fireside Farm, LLC (VA)
Fireside Farm, LLC (VA)
Goldhill Blueberry Farm (VA)
Highland Homestead LLC (VA)
Martin's Ponderosa Farm (VA)
Rainbow Acres Farm (VA)

Savage Acres (VA)
Seven Springs Farm (VA)
Verdant Acres Farm (VA)
Via-Tality Farms (VA)
Whaleyville Farms (VA)
High Goose Farm (VT)
Waterman Orchards (VT)
Beaver Bend Farm, LLC (WA)
Coulee Creek Farms, Inc. (WA)
Flying Fortress Farm (WA)
Hollyhock Farm (WA)
Laura's Garden (WA)
Lazy R Ranch (WA)
Living Heritage Farms (WA)
Simple Joy Farm (WA)
Duck Creek Pastures, LLC (WI)
Fieldstone Farm (WI)
Holm Girls Dairy (WI)
Sanctuary Hollow Farm (WV)
307 Ranch (WY)
Blacksmith Ranch (WY)
Gantz Ranch (WY)
Johnson Ranch (WY)

ⁱ Heffernan, W. & Hendrickson, M. (2007). Concentration of agricultural markets. University of Missouri, Department of Rural Sociology. Posted online at <http://www.foodcircles.missouri.edu/07contable.pdf>

ⁱⁱ GRACE Communications Foundation. Food Processing & Slaughterhouses. 2015. Quoting Schlosser, E.

(2002). Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Company. Posted online at <http://www.sustainabletable.org/279/food-processing-slaughterhouses>

ⁱⁱⁱ 9 C.F.R. 303.1(a)(2)(i) & (b).

^{iv} 9 C.F.R. 303.1(a)(2)(i) & (b)