



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Office of the General Counsel
1400 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20250-1400

May 12, 2020

Delivered via Electronic Mail

Austin R. Evers
American Oversight
1030 15th Street NW
Washington, DC 20005
foia@americanoversight.org

**Re: Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request No. 2020-REE-03066-F
Final Response**

Dear Mr. Evers:

This is the Research, Education, and Economics (REE) mission area's final response to the March 4, 2020, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request submitted to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Departmental FOIA Office (DFO). As of October 1, 2019, the DFO was realigned under the Office of the General Counsel (OGC) and now operates the FOIA program for the REE mission area. See U.S. Department of Agriculture, Secretary's Memorandum 1076-033, September 24, 2019, available at:

https://www.ocio.usda.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2012/20190924_SM%201076-033_FOIA_Realignment_final.pdf.

Your request to the USDA's Departmental Administration (DA) regarding the agency's decisions to move the Economic Research Service (ERS) and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) to the Greater Kansas City Region generally, and 805 Penn specifically, sought the following records, for the time period from January 1, 2017 to October 25, 2019:

All email communications (including emails, complete email chains, and email attachments) that were sent by any of the agency officials listed below to any email address ending in .com / .org / .net / .edu / .mail (including any messages on which such email addresses were copied (CC) or blind copied (BCC)), and that contain any of the following terms anywhere in the email chain:

- "805 Penn"
- "Penn Seven"
- "DST Realty"
- "Broadway Square"
- "Kit Bond"
- "Roney"
- "Hulshof"
- "Project Leavitt"
- "115,425"
- "115425"

- “Merriman”
- “Dasta”

USDA Officials:

- i. Sonny Perdue, Secretary, and anyone communicating on his behalf, such as executive assistants, personal assistants, or schedulers;
- ii. Stephen Censky, Deputy Secretary;
- iii. Donald Bice, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration;
- iv. Scott Hutchins, Deputy Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics;
- v. Robert Johansson, Chief Economist;
- vi. Chris Hartley, Acting Administrator of the Economic Research Service;
- vii. Michelle Esch, Executive Director of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education & Economics Advisory Board;
- viii. J. Scott Angle, Director of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture;
- ix. Kristi Boswell, Senior Advisor;
- x. Brian Klippenstein, Senior Advisor;
- xi. Benny Young, Associate General Counsel;
- xii. Former White House Liaison Sam Clovis.

On March 17, 2020, pursuant to the USDA regulation 7 C.F.R. § 1.4(c), the DFO routed items iv, vi, vii, and viii, of your request to the REE mission area for processing and direct response to you. The corresponding DA case tracking number is 2020-DA-02844-F. The Final Response in that case was emailed to you on April 30, 2020.

Your request has been processed under the FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552.

A search for responsive records was conducted by the DFO’s telecommunications provider, the Client Experience Center (CEC). The CEC provides comprehensive, fee-for-service information technology (IT) associated operations, security, and technical support services to USDA end users, as well as implements and manages enterprise IT solutions for users Department-wide. The CEC searched the email accounts of the REE Deputy Under Secretary, Scott Hutchins, the Economic Research Service Acting Administrator, Chris Hartley, the Executive Director of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education & Economics Advisory Board, Michelle Esch, and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture Director, J. Scott Angle. The CEC searches located twenty-six (26) pages of e-mail records from Ms. Esch responsive to your request. Please note that no responsive records were found for Mr. Hutchins, Mr. Hartley, and Mr. Angle.

Following a review of the responsive records, the DFO has determined that certain information contained in the responsive e-mail records should be withheld pursuant to U.S.C. § 552(b)(5) and (b)(6) (FOIA Exemptions 5 and 6). Below is an explanation of the information that has been withheld.

FOIA Exemption 5 – Attorney-Client Privilege

The DFO is withholding information under the attorney-client privilege. This privilege protects confidential communication between an attorney and his/her client relating to a legal matter for which the client has sought professional advice. Although this privilege fundamentally applies to facts divulged by a client to his/her attorney, this privilege also encompasses any opinion given by an attorney to his/her client based upon those facts, as well as communications between attorneys that reflect client supplied information. In this instance, the DFO is withholding information shared internally with the Department's Office of the General Counsel regarding pending relocation of ERS and NIFA.

FOIA Exemption 5 – Pre-Decisional/Deliberative

FOIA Exemption 5 protects from disclosure those "inter-agency or intra-agency memorandums or letters which would not be available by law to a party other than an agency in litigation with the agency." One of the frequently invoked FOIA Exemption 5 privileges is the deliberative process privilege. To fall within FOIA's deliberative process privilege, the records must be both pre-decisional and deliberative; the records must precede the adoption of an agency policy and include the opinions, recommendations, or deliberations on a legal or policy matter. The deliberative process privilege also covers situations in which an agency receives documents or guidance from an outside party, as part of that outside party's attempt to offer advice to the agency that the agency has asked for. Such advice can play an integral function in the government's decision making and is meant to cover situations where outsiders are functioning as though they were agency employees.

In this instance, the DFO is withholding, under the deliberative process privilege, certain communications between the agency personnel and the accounting firm of Ernst & Young, which was hired to assist the agency in its relocation efforts, and whose advice played an integral function in the agency's decision-making process. Disclosure of such information would have a chilling effect on the ability of third parties retained by the agency to engage in free and frank discussions regarding policy but also may cause confusion on the agency's actual position on the policy at issue.

FOIA Exemption 6 – Personal Privacy

Exemption 6 generally is referred to as the "personal privacy" exemption. It provides that the disclosure requirements of the FOIA do not apply to "personnel and medical files and similar files the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy." Application of the exemption involves balancing the public's interest in disclosure against individuals' privacy interests.

The information withheld under Exemption 6 consists of a business email handle and a mobile phone number. This information qualifies as "similar files" because it is information in which individuals have a privacy interest. Releasing an individual's contact information could subject them to unwarranted or unsolicited communications, or even harassment. Since there is a viable privacy interest that would be threatened by disclosure, Exemption 6 authorizes this office to

withhold the information. Accordingly, we have determined that the public interest in the information's release does not outweigh the overriding privacy interests in keeping it confidential.

The FOIA provides you the right to appeal this decision to neither confirm nor deny the existence of records responsive to the request. You may appeal this response by email at USDAFOIA@usda.gov. Your appeal must be in writing, and it must be received electronically no later than 90 calendar days from the date of this letter. The OGC will not consider appeals received after the 90 calendar-day limit. Appeals received after 5:00 p.m. EST will be considered received the next business day. The appeal letter should include the FOIA tracking number listed above, a copy of the original request, the DFO's response to your original request, and a statement explaining the basis of your appeal. For quickest possible handling, the subject line of your email should be marked "Freedom of Information Act Appeal." You should also reference FOIA No. 2020-REE-03066-F.

You may seek dispute resolution services from the DFO's FOIA Public Liaison, Ms. Camille Aponte. Ms. Aponte may be contacted by telephone at 202-690-5260, or electronically at Camille.Aponte@usda.gov or USDAFOIA@usda.gov.

You also have the option to seek assistance from the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS). Please visit <https://ogis.archives.gov/mediation-program/request-assistance.htm> for information about how to request OGIS assistance in relation to a FOIA request.

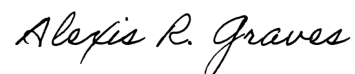
Provisions of the FOIA allow us to recover part of the cost of processing your request. In this instance, no fees are being charged.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Mr. Michael Snytkin at 202-205-9784 or electronically at Michael.Snytkin@usda.gov or USDAFOIA@usda.gov.

For additional information regarding USDA FOIA regulations and processes, please refer to the information available online at www.dm.usda.gov/foia.

The DFO appreciates the opportunity to assist you with this matter.

Sincerely,



Alexis R. Graves
Departmental FOIA Officer
Office of the General Counsel

Enclosures: Responsive Records (26 pages)

Attachments withheld in-full under Exemption 5, Attorney-Client Privilege

From: [Esch, Michele - ARS](#)
To: [Farzami, Azine - OGC, Washington, DC](#)
Subject: FW: (b)(5) Attorney Client
Date: Wednesday, July 17, 2019 1:18:52 PM
Attachments: (b)(5) Attorney Client .pdf
 (b)(5) Attorney Client .pptx

Azine,

(b)(5) Attorney Client
 (b)(5) Attorney Client. Let me know if
 this is helpful or if you need additional information.

Michele

Michele Esch

U.S. Department of Agriculture
 (o) 202.720.8408
 (c) (b) (6)
michele.esch@usda.gov

From: Francisco E Rodriguez <(b) (6)@ey.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 20, 2018 12:55 PM
To: Boswell, Kristi - OSEC, Washington, DC <Kristi.Boswell@osec.usda.gov>; Esch, Michele - ARS <Michele.Esch@ARS.USDA.GOV>
Subject: RE: (b)(5) Attorney Client

Thanks. (b)(5) Predecisional/Deliberative
 (b)(5) Predecisional/Deliberative. Please confirm.

Thanks again.

From: Boswell, Kristi - OSEC, Washington, DC <Kristi.Boswell@osec.usda.gov>
Date: December 20, 2018 at 12:39:04 EST
To: Francisco E Rodriguez <(b) (6)@ey.com>, Esch, Michele - ARS <Michele.Esch@ARS.USDA.GOV>
Subject: RE: (b)(5) Attorney Client

Thanks. Based on the established criteria, (b)(5) Predecisional/Deliberative.

Kristi J. Boswell

Senior Advisor to the Secretary
 United States Department of Agriculture
 Office: 202.720.9990
 Cell: (b) (6)

From: Francisco E Rodriguez <(b) (6)@ey.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 20, 2018 9:20 AM
To: Esch, Michele - ARS <Michele.Esch@ARS.USDA.GOV>; Boswell, Kristi - OSEC, Washington, DC <Kristi.Boswell@osec.usda.gov>
Subject: (b)(5) Attorney Client

****For Official Use Only (FOUO) | Pre-Decisional | Deliberative****

Michele, Kristi,

(b)(5) Predecisional/Deliberative

(b)(5) Predecisional/Deliberative

(b)(5) Predecisional/Deliberative.

Please review and let us know (b)(5) Predecisional/Deliberative.

Feel free to contact me with questions.

Thanks.

R/Francisco

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Any tax advice in this e-mail should be considered in the context of the tax services we are providing to you. Preliminary tax advice should not be relied upon and may be insufficient for penalty protection.

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Notice required by law: This e-mail may constitute an advertisement or solicitation under U.S. law, if its primary purpose is to advertise or promote a commercial product or service. You may choose not

to receive advertising and promotional messages from Ernst & Young LLP (except for EY Client Portal and the ey.com website, which track e-mail preferences through a separate process) at this e-mail address by forwarding this message to no-more-mail@ey.com. If you do so, the sender of this message will be notified promptly. Our principal postal address is 5 Times Square, New York, NY 10036. Thank you. Ernst & Young LLP

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From: [Esch, Michele - ARS](#)
To: [Francisco E Rodriguez](#)
Subject: RE: Copy of Final Messages
Date: Tuesday, March 12, 2019 3:37:52 PM
Attachments: [USDA ERSNIFA Status Update - Middle List Announcement.msg.msg](#)
[USDA ERSNIFA Status Update - Middle List Announcement.msg.msg](#)
[ERS NIFA Relocation Update - Middle List Announcement.msg.msg](#)

Francisco,

Attached are the final messages sent to the submitters (yes and no lists) and employees. The press release is attached to the emails but you can also find it at this link:

<https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2019/03/12/secretary-perdue-announces-middle-list-ers-and-nifa-relocation>.

Thanks for looking into the EOI question.

Michele

Michele Esch

Special Projects Coordinator

Executive Director, NAREEE Advisory Board

U.S. Department of Agriculture

(o) 202.720.8408

(c) (b) (6)

michele.esch@ars.usda.gov

From: Francisco E Rodriguez <(b) (6)@ey.com>

Sent: Tuesday, March 12, 2019 3:13 PM

To: Esch, Michele - ARS <Michele.Esch@ARS.USDA.GOV>

Subject: Copy of Final Messages

Hi Michele,

Any chance you could share with us the final messages and press release for our records?

Also getting an example/suggested response to those EOIs not selected.

Thanks!

~Francisco

Any tax advice in this e-mail should be considered in the context of the tax services we are providing to you. Preliminary tax advice should not be relied upon and may be insufficient for penalty

protection.

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From: [Relocation](#)
To: [Relocation](#)
Subject: USDA ERS/NIFA Status Update - Middle List Announcement
Date: Tuesday, March 12, 2019 9:01:19 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[oledata.mso](#)
[Middle List A.pdf](#)
[ERS-NIFA EOI Medium List Press Release FINAL Embargoed until 915 AM 03122019.pdf](#)

Please find a letter attached from Don Bice, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration at USDA, to parties that submitted an Expression of Interest (EOI) in response to USDA's Notice of Request for Expression of Interest for Potential Sites for Headquarters Office Locations.

Due to the varying scope of the EOIs and in some cases, multiple EOIs submitted with the same point of contact, you may receive more than one email today. For your reference, attached is an embargoed press release with additional details that USDA will [issue](#) at 9:15 AM EDT. Please review the press release carefully.

Please direct any additional questions to relocation@usda.gov.



March 12, 2019

Office of the
Assistant Secretary
for Administration

1400 Independence
Avenue SW

Washington, D.C.
20250

Thank you for your response to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) *Notice of Request for Expression of Interest for Potential Sites for Headquarters Office Locations* dated August 15, 2018 and extended through October 15, 2018. We appreciate your patience as we continue to move through our site selection process.

With the help of Ernst & Young, we conducted an initial down-select of the Expressions of Interest (EOI) using a set of guiding principles identified through our rigorous site selection process. The guiding principles prioritized locations which met USDA travel requirements, locations with specific labor force statistics, and locations with work hours most compatible with all USDA office schedules.

We are pleased to inform you that your location is still under consideration as a future site for the Economic Research Service (ERS) and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). During April 2019, we will conduct a further refinement of the remaining EOIs to derive a Short List. At that point we will provide an additional update. We expect to conduct site visits to a select number of locations shortly thereafter and hope to name a final location in May 2019.

A press release will be publicly released at 9:15 am EDT on March 12, 2019 (<https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases>).

We sincerely thank you for your interest and efforts throughout this process. Please direct all questions to relocation@usda.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Don K. Bice", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Don Bice
Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Administration

EMBARGOED UNTIL 9:15 AM EDT ON MARCH 12, 2019

Secretary Perdue Announces Middle List For ERS and NIFA Relocation

(Washington, D.C., March 12, 2019) – U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue today announced the initial down-select list of 136 Expressions of Interest received from parties in 35 states vying to become the new homes of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Economic Research Service (ERS) and National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). USDA is following a [rigorous site selection process](#) to identify the new locations with involvement from USDA, ERS, and NIFA leadership.

“The announcement of this middle list shows that we are committed to the important missions of these agencies and transparency in our selection process. USDA will make the best choice for our employees and customers,” Perdue said. “Relocation will help ensure that USDA is the most effective, most efficient, and most customer-focused agency in the federal government, allowing us to be closer to our stakeholders and move our resources closer to our customers.”

For this initial down-select, USDA applied a set of guiding principles against the Expressions of Interest locations including USDA travel requirements, labor force statistics, work hours most compatible with all USDA office schedules. Sixty-seven Expressions of Interest remain under consideration.

The complete list of Expressions of Interest still under consideration is below.

State	Location	Applicant(s)
AL	Birmingham	City of Birmingham; University of Alabama at Birmingham; Auburn University; Tuskegee University; Alabama A&M University; Economic Development Association of Alabama
AL	Shelby County	City of Hoover, Shelby County, 58 INC. – The Nonprofit Economic Coalition of Shelby County, the Birmingham Business Alliance, Alabama Power Company, Harbert Realty Services, and Select Income REIT / RMR Group
AR	Arkansas	Arkansas Economic Development Commission
AZ	Tempe	Arizona Commerce Authority; Arizona State University and the Arizona Department of Agriculture
CO	Aurora	Aurora Economic Development Council
CO	Denver	Cottonwood Management Company
CO	Denver	Forest City Trust
CO	Denver	Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation
DE	Newark	University of Delaware
FL	Tallahassee	Tallahassee-Leon County

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GA	Athens-Clarke County	Athens-Clarke County Development Authority and Nichols Land & Investment Company and Georgia Department of Economic Development
GA	Griffin Spalding County	Griffin-Spalding Development Authority, Rooker, UGA and Georgia Department of Economic Development
IA	Ames	City of Ames and Iowa State University
IA	Ankeny	City of Ankeny/ Greater Des Moines Partnership, Cultivation Corridor, and the Iowa Economic Development Authority
IA	Ankeny	DRA Properties
IA	Des Moines	City of Des Moines; Greater Des Moines Partnership
IA	Council Bluffs	Advance Southwest Iowa Corporation; City of Council Bluffs, Pottawattamie County
IL	Algonquin	Village of Algonquin
IL	Barrington	Village of Barrington; Bourns Inc
IL	Des Plaines	City of Des Plaines
IL	DuPage County	Economic Development Agency for DuPage County, Illinois
IL	Huntley	Village of Huntley
IL	Kane County	Kane County
IL	Orland Park	Orland Park, State of Illinois, Will County, Illinois Intersect and the Will County Center for Economic Development
IL	Schaumburg	Village of Schaumburg
IL	Warrenville	NAI Hiffman
IN	Multiple	Indiana Economic Development Corporation; AgriNovus Indiana, the Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) and Purdue University
KS and MO	Kansas City	HPI Group
KS and MO	Kansas City	805 Penn
KS and MO	Greater Kansas City Region	The Kansas City Area Development Council
LA	Baton Rouge	The Baton Rouge Area Chamber (BRAC), along with partners Louisiana Economic Development (LED), Baton Rouge Area Foundation (BRAAF), Louisiana Department of Agriculture & Forestry (LDAF), Louisiana State University (LSU), and Southern University and & Mechanical College (SUAM) Agricultural
MD	Montgomery County	Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation
MD	College Park	University of Maryland College Park

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MI	East Lansing	Michigan State University, State of Michigan, Capital Region International Airport (LAN), Greater Lansing Convention and Visitors Bureau, Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP), Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, Michigan Economic Development Corporation and Michigan Farm Bureau
MN	Falcon Heights	Buhl Investors
MN	Minneapolis	University of Minnesota, Minneapolis Saint Paul Regional Economic Development Partnership (GREATER MSP), and the Minnesota Food and Agriculture Initiative
MN	Shakopee	The Opus Group
MO	St. Louis	A consortium of regional leaders across six counties in Missouri and Illinois; State of Missouri and Missouri's Departments of Agriculture, Economic Development, and Workforce Development, as well as the Missouri Partnership
NC	Kannapolis	The North Carolina Research Campus; the city of Kannapolis, Cabarrus and Rowan Counties, and the state of North Carolina
NC	Chapel Hill	State Employee Credit Union
NC	Research Triangle Region	Wake County, Durham County and Research Triangle Park
NE	Lincoln	The Nebraska consortium, led by Governor Pete Ricketts and former USDA Secretary Mike Johanns and including the State of Nebraska, University of Nebraska system, City of Lincoln, Nebraska Innovation Campus Development Corporation, Nebraska Department of Economic Development, Nebraska Department of Agriculture, Nebraska Chamber of Commerce, Lincoln Chamber of Commerce, Omaha Chamber of Commerce, and public and private business
NE	Omaha	SPW Partners G and S and CBRE MEGA
NY	Greater Rochester	FLX Food and Beverage Consortium is led by Greater Rochester Enterprise, a not-for-profit economic development organization. Members of the Consortium include Cornell University and the Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences; the Cornell Agriculture and Technology Farm; Empire State Development; the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets; the New York State Governor's Office; Rochester Institute of Technology; Tompkins County Area Development; the University of Rochester; and Wegmans Food Markets Inc.
OH	Akron	County of Summit
OH	Geauga County	Geauga County Department of Development

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OH	Middlefield Village	Village of Middlefield
OH	Twinsburg	City of Twinsburg
OH	Streetsboro	City of Streetsboro
OH	Portage County	Brimfield Township
PA	Hanover Township	Private Citizen
SC	Columbia	State of South Carolina (including; South Carolina Department of Commerce, Clemson University, South Carolina Department of Agriculture, and Richland County's Economic Development Office)
TN	Knoxville	University of Tennessee, Knoxville/University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture (UTK/UTIA); University of Tennessee, Martin (UTM); Tennessee State University (TSU); and Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL)
TN	Memphis	Agricenter International
TX	San Marcos	Greater San Marcos Partnership; San Marcos, Hays County and Texas State University
TX	College Station	Texas A&M AgriLife Research
TX	Dallas	HPI Group
UT	Tooele County	Governor's Office of Economic Development, Tooele County, Tooele City, Utah State University, and the Economic Development Corporation of Utah
VA	Charlottesville	University of Virginia Foundation
VA	Greene County	County of Greene; Central Virginia Partnership in Economic Development; Virginia Economic Development Partnership; Fried Companies, Inc; Jones Lang LaSalle
VA	Madison County	Madison County; The Lester Group
VA	Caroline County	Thompson (Richmond)
VA	Caroline County	Caroline County Department of Economic Development
VA	Petersburg	Virginia State University and the Petersburg metropolitan region
VA	Richmond	The Riverstone Group, LLC
VA	Roanoke	Roanoke Regional Partnership
WI	Madison	City of Madison, the University of Wisconsin–Madison College of Agricultural & Life Sciences (CALS), University of Wisconsin–Madison Office of University Relations, University Research Park,

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		State of Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, and 910 Mayer, LLC
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Questions regarding the USDA site selection process should be directed to relocation@usda.gov.



March 12, 2019

Office of the
Assistant Secretary
for Administration

1400 Independence
Avenue SW

Washington, D.C.
20250

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With the help of Ernst & Young, we conducted an initial down-select of the Expressions of Interest (EOI) using a set of guiding principles identified through our rigorous site selection process. The guiding principles prioritized locations which met USDA travel requirements, locations with specific labor force statistics, and locations with work hours most compatible with all USDA office schedules.

We regret to inform you that your location has not been selected because your location does not meet one or more of the identified guiding principles. A press release will be publicly released at 9:15 am EDT on March 12, 2019 (<https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases>).

We sincerely thank you for your interest and efforts throughout this process. Additional questions can be directed to relocation@usda.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Don K. Bice".

Don Bice
Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Administration

EMBARGOED UNTIL 9:15 AM EDT ON MARCH 12, 2019

Secretary Perdue Announces Middle List For ERS and NIFA Relocation

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“The announcement of this middle list shows that we are committed to the important missions of these agencies and transparency in our selection process. USDA will make the best choice for our employees and customers,” Perdue said. “Relocation will help ensure that USDA is the most effective, most efficient, and most customer-focused agency in the federal government, allowing us to be closer to our stakeholders and move our resources closer to our customers.”

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The complete list of Expressions of Interest still under consideration is below.

State	Location	Applicant(s)
AL	Birmingham	City of Birmingham; University of Alabama at Birmingham; Auburn University; Tuskegee University; Alabama A&M University; Economic Development Association of Alabama
AL	Shelby County	City of Hoover, Shelby County, 58 INC. – The Nonprofit Economic Coalition of Shelby County, the Birmingham Business Alliance, Alabama Power Company, Harbert Realty Services, and Select Income REIT / RMR Group
AR	Arkansas	Arkansas Economic Development Commission
AZ	Tempe	Arizona Commerce Authority; Arizona State University and the Arizona Department of Agriculture
CO	Aurora	Aurora Economic Development Council
CO	Denver	Cottonwood Management Company
CO	Denver	Forest City Trust
CO	Denver	Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation
DE	Newark	University of Delaware
FL	Tallahassee	Tallahassee-Leon County

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GA	Athens-Clarke County	Athens-Clarke County Development Authority and Nichols Land & Investment Company and Georgia Department of Economic Development
GA	Griffin Spalding County	Griffin-Spalding Development Authority, Rooker, UGA and Georgia Department of Economic Development
IA	Ames	City of Ames and Iowa State University
IA	Ankeny	City of Ankeny/ Greater Des Moines Partnership, Cultivation Corridor, and the Iowa Economic Development Authority
IA	Ankeny	DRA Properties
IA	Des Moines	City of Des Moines; Greater Des Moines Partnership
IA	Council Bluffs	Advance Southwest Iowa Corporation; City of Council Bluffs, Pottawattamie County
IL	Algonquin	Village of Algonquin
IL	Barrington	Village of Barrington; Bourns Inc
IL	Des Plaines	City of Des Plaines
IL	DuPage County	Economic Development Agency for DuPage County, Illinois
IL	Huntley	Village of Huntley
IL	Kane County	Kane County
IL	Orland Park	Orland Park, State of Illinois, Will County, Illinois Intersect and the Will County Center for Economic Development
IL	Schaumburg	Village of Schaumburg
IL	Warrenville	NAI Hiffman
IN	Multiple	Indiana Economic Development Corporation; AgriNovus Indiana, the Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) and Purdue University
KS and MO	Kansas City	HPI Group
KS and MO	Kansas City	805 Penn
KS and MO	Greater Kansas City Region	The Kansas City Area Development Council
LA	Baton Rouge	The Baton Rouge Area Chamber (BRAC), along with partners Louisiana Economic Development (LED), Baton Rouge Area Foundation (BRAAF), Louisiana Department of Agriculture & Forestry (LDAF), Louisiana State University (LSU), and Southern University and & Mechanical College (SUAM) Agricultural
MD	Montgomery County	Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation
MD	College Park	University of Maryland College Park

*****EMBARGOED UNTIL 9:15 AM EDT ON MARCH 12, 2019*****

MI	East Lansing	Michigan State University, State of Michigan, Capital Region International Airport (LAN), Greater Lansing Convention and Visitors Bureau, Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP), Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, Michigan Economic Development Corporation and Michigan Farm Bureau
MN	Falcon Heights	Buhl Investors
MN	Minneapolis	University of Minnesota, Minneapolis Saint Paul Regional Economic Development Partnership (GREATER MSP), and the Minnesota Food and Agriculture Initiative
MN	Shakopee	The Opus Group
MO	St. Louis	A consortium of regional leaders across six counties in Missouri and Illinois; State of Missouri and Missouri's Departments of Agriculture, Economic Development, and Workforce Development, as well as the Missouri Partnership
NC	Kannapolis	The North Carolina Research Campus; the city of Kannapolis, Cabarrus and Rowan Counties, and the state of North Carolina
NC	Chapel Hill	State Employee Credit Union
NC	Research Triangle Region	Wake County, Durham County and Research Triangle Park
NE	Lincoln	The Nebraska consortium, led by Governor Pete Ricketts and former USDA Secretary Mike Johanns and including the State of Nebraska, University of Nebraska system, City of Lincoln, Nebraska Innovation Campus Development Corporation, Nebraska Department of Economic Development, Nebraska Department of Agriculture, Nebraska Chamber of Commerce, Lincoln Chamber of Commerce, Omaha Chamber of Commerce, and public and private business
NE	Omaha	SPW Partners G and S and CBRE MEGA
NY	Greater Rochester	FLX Food and Beverage Consortium is led by Greater Rochester Enterprise, a not-for-profit economic development organization. Members of the Consortium include Cornell University and the Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences; the Cornell Agriculture and Technology Farm; Empire State Development; the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets; the New York State Governor's Office; Rochester Institute of Technology; Tompkins County Area Development; the University of Rochester; and Wegmans Food Markets Inc.
OH	Akron	County of Summit
OH	Geauga County	Geauga County Department of Development

*****EMBARGOED UNTIL 9:15 AM EDT ON MARCH 12, 2019*****

OH	Middlefield Village	Village of Middlefield
OH	Twinsburg	City of Twinsburg
OH	Streetsboro	City of Streetsboro
OH	Portage County	Brimfield Township
PA	Hanover Township	Private Citizen
SC	Columbia	State of South Carolina (including; South Carolina Department of Commerce, Clemson University, South Carolina Department of Agriculture, and Richland County's Economic Development Office)
TN	Knoxville	University of Tennessee, Knoxville/University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture (UTK/UTIA); University of Tennessee, Martin (UTM); Tennessee State University (TSU); and Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL)
TN	Memphis	Agricenter International
TX	San Marcos	Greater San Marcos Partnership; San Marcos, Hays County and Texas State University
TX	College Station	Texas A&M AgriLife Research
TX	Dallas	HPI Group
UT	Tooele County	Governor's Office of Economic Development, Tooele County, Tooele City, Utah State University, and the Economic Development Corporation of Utah
VA	Charlottesville	University of Virginia Foundation
VA	Greene County	County of Greene; Central Virginia Partnership in Economic Development; Virginia Economic Development Partnership; Fried Companies, Inc; Jones Lang LaSalle
VA	Madison County	Madison County; The Lester Group
VA	Caroline County	Thompson (Richmond)
VA	Caroline County	Caroline County Department of Economic Development
VA	Petersburg	Virginia State University and the Petersburg metropolitan region
VA	Richmond	The Riverstone Group, LLC
VA	Roanoke	Roanoke Regional Partnership
WI	Madison	City of Madison, the University of Wisconsin–Madison College of Agricultural & Life Sciences (CALS), University of Wisconsin–Madison Office of University Relations, University Research Park,

*****EMBARGOED UNTIL 9:15 AM EDT ON MARCH 12, 2019*****

		State of Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, and 910 Mayer, LLC
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Questions regarding the USDA site selection process should be directed to relocation@usda.gov.

From: [Censky, Stephen - OSEC, Washington, DC](#)
To: [Everyone - NIFA Everyone Distribution List](#); [ERS Employees](#)
Subject: ERS NIFA Relocation Update - Middle List Announcement
Date: Tuesday, March 12, 2019 9:02:32 AM
Attachments: [Medium List Press Release.pdf](#)

Dear ERS and NIFA Colleagues:

We have resumed our efforts to identify a future site for ERS and NIFA. Thank you for your patience as we have restarted this initiative post-shutdown. This effort continues to be a priority for the Secretary, and we are committed to providing you with transparency throughout this process. Prior to public release today, I wanted to share the press release announcing the first down-select of the list of Expressions of Interest received by USDA. Using criteria developed by our relocation consultant along with input on key criteria to be considered provided by the agencies, we have scaled down the initial list of 136 to 67 Expressions of Interest.

We have updated our site selection process timeline and anticipate a final determination on a future site for ERS and NIFA by the end of May. A short list is expected to be developed within the next month followed by site visits beginning at the end of April.

Our next All-Hands meeting will be scheduled for next week where we will walk through the Middle List process. We recognize that these changes are challenging and continue to ask you for your patience and engagement. We are extremely grateful for your service. Thank you for all that you are continuing to do to help meet the mission of both ERS and NIFA.

We welcome your questions and look forward to engaging with you. Please continue to direct your questions to ersnifa@usda.gov.

Thanks and best regards,

Steve Censky

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Secretary Perdue Announces Middle List For ERS and NIFA Relocation

(Washington, D.C., March 12, 2019) – U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue today announced the initial down-select list of 136 Expressions of Interest received from parties in 35 states vying to become the new homes of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Economic Research Service (ERS) and National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). USDA is following a [rigorous site selection process](#) to identify the new locations with involvement from USDA, ERS, and NIFA leadership.

“The announcement of this middle list shows that we are committed to the important missions of these agencies and transparency in our selection process. USDA will make the best choice for our employees and customers,” Perdue said. “Relocation will help ensure that USDA is the most effective, most efficient, and most customer-focused agency in the federal government, allowing us to be closer to our stakeholders and move our resources closer to our customers.”

For this initial down-select, USDA applied a set of guiding principles against the Expressions of Interest locations including USDA travel requirements, labor force statistics, work hours most compatible with all USDA office schedules. Sixty-seven Expressions of Interest remain under consideration.

The complete list of Expressions of Interest still under consideration is below.

State	Location	Applicant(s)
AL	Birmingham	City of Birmingham; University of Alabama at Birmingham; Auburn University; Tuskegee University; Alabama A&M University; Economic Development Association of Alabama
AL	Shelby County	City of Hoover, Shelby County, 58 INC. – The Nonprofit Economic Coalition of Shelby County, the Birmingham Business Alliance, Alabama Power Company, Harbert Realty Services, and Select Income REIT / RMR Group
AR	Arkansas	Arkansas Economic Development Commission
AZ	Tempe	Arizona Commerce Authority; Arizona State University and the Arizona Department of Agriculture
CO	Aurora	Aurora Economic Development Council
CO	Denver	Cottonwood Management Company
CO	Denver	Forest City Trust
CO	Denver	Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation
DE	Newark	University of Delaware
FL	Tallahassee	Tallahassee-Leon County

GA	Athens-Clarke County	Athens-Clarke County Development Authority and Nichols Land & Investment Company and Georgia Department of Economic Development
GA	Griffin Spalding County	Griffin-Spalding Development Authority, Rooker, UGA and Georgia Department of Economic Development
IA	Ames	City of Ames and Iowa State University
IA	Ankeny	City of Ankeny/ Greater Des Moines Partnership, Cultivation Corridor, and the Iowa Economic Development Authority
IA	Ankeny	DRA Properties
IA	Des Moines	City of Des Moines; Greater Des Moines Partnership
IA	Council Bluffs	Advance Southwest Iowa Corporation; City of Council Bluffs, Pottawattamie County
IL	Algonquin	Village of Algonquin
IL	Barrington	Village of Barrington; Bourns Inc
IL	Des Plaines	City of Des Plaines
IL	DuPage County	Economic Development Agency for DuPage County, Illinois
IL	Huntley	Village of Huntley
IL	Kane County	Kane County
IL	Orland Park	Orland Park, State of Illinois, Will County, Illinois Intersect and the Will County Center for Economic Development
IL	Schaumburg	Village of Schaumburg
IL	Warrenville	NAI Hiffman
IN	Multiple	Indiana Economic Development Corporation; AgriNovus Indiana, the Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) and Purdue University
KS and MO	Kansas City	HPI Group
KS and MO	Kansas City	805 Penn
KS and MO	Greater Kansas City Region	The Kansas City Area Development Council
LA	Baton Rouge	The Baton Rouge Area Chamber (BRAC), along with partners Louisiana Economic Development (LED), Baton Rouge Area Foundation (BRAAF), Louisiana Department of Agriculture & Forestry (LDAF), Louisiana State University (LSU), and Southern University and & Mechanical College (SUAM) Agricultural
MD	Montgomery County	Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation
MD	College Park	University of Maryland College Park

MI	East Lansing	Michigan State University, State of Michigan, Capital Region International Airport (LAN), Greater Lansing Convention and Visitors Bureau, Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP), Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, Michigan Economic Development Corporation and Michigan Farm Bureau
MN	Falcon Heights	Buhl Investors
MN	Minneapolis	University of Minnesota, Minneapolis Saint Paul Regional Economic Development Partnership (GREATER MSP), and the Minnesota Food and Agriculture Initiative
MN	Shakopee	The Opus Group
MO	St. Louis	A consortium of regional leaders across six counties in Missouri and Illinois; State of Missouri and Missouri's Departments of Agriculture, Economic Development, and Workforce Development, as well as the Missouri Partnership
NC	Kannapolis	The North Carolina Research Campus; the city of Kannapolis, Cabarrus and Rowan Counties, and the state of North Carolina
NC	Chapel Hill	State Employee Credit Union
NC	Research Triangle Region	Wake County, Durham County and Research Triangle Park
NE	Lincoln	The Nebraska consortium, led by Governor Pete Ricketts and former USDA Secretary Mike Johanns and including the State of Nebraska, University of Nebraska system, City of Lincoln, Nebraska Innovation Campus Development Corporation, Nebraska Department of Economic Development, Nebraska Department of Agriculture, Nebraska Chamber of Commerce, Lincoln Chamber of Commerce, Omaha Chamber of Commerce, and public and private business
NE	Omaha	SPW Partners G and S and CBRE MEGA
NY	Greater Rochester	FLX Food and Beverage Consortium is led by Greater Rochester Enterprise, a not-for-profit economic development organization. Members of the Consortium include Cornell University and the Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences; the Cornell Agriculture and Technology Farm; Empire State Development; the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets; the New York State Governor's Office; Rochester Institute of Technology; Tompkins County Area Development; the University of Rochester; and Wegmans Food Markets Inc.
OH	Akron	County of Summit
OH	Geauga County	Geauga County Department of Development

OH	Middlefield Village	Village of Middlefield
OH	Twinsburg	City of Twinsburg
OH	Streetsboro	City of Streetsboro
OH	Portage County	Brimfield Township
PA	Hanover Township	Private Citizen
SC	Columbia	State of South Carolina (including; South Carolina Department of Commerce, Clemson University, South Carolina Department of Agriculture, and Richland County's Economic Development Office)
TN	Knoxville	University of Tennessee, Knoxville/University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture (UTK/UTIA); University of Tennessee, Martin (UTM); Tennessee State University (TSU); and Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL)
TN	Memphis	Agricenter International
TX	San Marcos	Greater San Marcos Partnership; San Marcos, Hays County and Texas State University
TX	College Station	Texas A&M AgriLife Research
TX	Dallas	HPI Group
UT	Tooele County	Governor's Office of Economic Development, Tooele County, Tooele City, Utah State University, and the Economic Development Corporation of Utah
VA	Charlottesville	University of Virginia Foundation
VA	Greene County	County of Greene; Central Virginia Partnership in Economic Development; Virginia Economic Development Partnership; Fried Companies, Inc; Jones Lang LaSalle
VA	Madison County	Madison County; The Lester Group
VA	Caroline County	Thompson (Richmond)
VA	Caroline County	Caroline County Department of Economic Development
VA	Petersburg	Virginia State University and the Petersburg metropolitan region
VA	Richmond	The Riverstone Group, LLC
VA	Roanoke	Roanoke Regional Partnership
WI	Madison	City of Madison, the University of Wisconsin–Madison College of Agricultural & Life Sciences (CALS), University of Wisconsin–Madison Office of University Relations, University Research Park,

		State of Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, and 910 Mayer, LLC
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Questions regarding the USDA site selection process should be directed to relocation@usda.gov.

Attachments withheld in full as drafts under Exemption 5, Pre-Decisional/Deliberative Privilege

From: [Esch, Michele - ARS](#)
To: [Francisco E Rodriguez](#)
Cc: [Bice, Don - OSEC, Washington, DC](#)
Subject: Working Session Action Items - USDA response part 1
Date: Monday, December 3, 2018 5:25:59 PM
Attachments: [EOItrack10.19.xlsx](#)
[ERS NIFA POS TITLES SERIES AND GRADES NOV 2018.xlsx](#)
[18-05-03 NIFA MicroPOR \(1\).pdf](#)

Francisco,

Below and attached are several responses to the Working Session Action Items. (b)(5) DPP

(b)(5) Predecisional/Deliberative

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 - ii. (b)(5) Predecisional/Deliberative

Thanks!
Michele

Michele Esch
Special Projects Coordinator

Executive Director, NAREEE Advisory Board

U.S. Department of Agriculture

(o) 202.720.8408

(c) (b) (6)

michele.esch@ars.usda.gov