

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:

Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks, Vice-Chairman
Agriculture
Appropriations
Business & Financial Institutions
Constitution
Enrolled Bills
Judiciary, Division B
Municipalities



Post Office Box 8
Bruce, MS 38915
bsuber@senate.ms.gov

Mississippi State Senate

SENATOR BENJAMIN A. SUBER

District 8

**Calhoun, Chickasaw, Lee
Pontotoc and Yalobusha Counties**

March 15, 2023

Dear Honorable Members and Staff,

I write today in support of the proposed project "Enhancing Sweet Potato Value through Post Harvest Technology." This project would add significant value to research efforts in North Mississippi where most of the sweet potato production in our state resides.

Sweet potatoes represent \$112 million in value to Mississippi with 172 farms and almost 30,000 acres harvested (CY 2022 data). Mississippi ranks 3rd in the Nation in production and continues to increase as this specialty crop commodity gains in popularity and value.

The proposed project will allow our Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station facility in North Mississippi to add additional capacity to conduct research asked for, and needed, by our stakeholders. It will also help connect producers with technologies for considerations through public-private partnerships that will address the technological needs of our sweet potato producers in harvesting and post-harvest equipment needs and modifications, and value-added research to maximize sweet potato uses and marketability.

Therefore, I support this project and am confident it will have a direct impact on a segment of our agricultural industry in Mississippi. Please let me know if I can provide any other information on this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "B. Suber".

Benjamin Suber

cc: Appropriations Committee, U.S. Congress

Dr. Keith Coble, Vice President, Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine,
Mississippi State University

Dr. Scott Willard, Director, Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Experiment Station, and
Dean, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Mississippi State University

New Capitol • Post Office Box 1018 • Jackson, MS 39215-1018



MISSISSIPPI STATE
UNIVERSITY

NORTH MISSISSIPPI RESEARCH
AND EXTENSION CENTER
Box 1690 | 5421 Hwy. 145
Verona, MS 38879
P. 662.566.2201
F. 662.566.4969

March 13, 2022

Committee on Appropriations
Room S-128, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Committee Members,

I am pleased to provide this letter of support for the proposed congressionally directed spending request community project, **"Enhancing Sweet Potato Value through Post Harvest Technology"**. The faculty and staff of the North Mississippi Research and Extension Center have nationally recognized expertise in sweet potato research and outreach and have assembled an extremely productive and capable group of co-investigators with the needed expertise to ensure that the resulting facility is a prolific innovation hub for the sweet potato industry. As direct supervisor and facilities manager for the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station site in Pontotoc, MS, where the proposed facility is to be housed, I offer my full support to the proposed project. It is exciting to see this proposal that fits wholly within the major strategic goal for the North Mississippi Research and Extension Center to "Enhance research infrastructure and capabilities" as a prioritized investment in "facilities, equipment, and technology improvements".

For more than a decade, the North Mississippi Producer Advisory Council has annually requested the development of sweet potato post-harvest storage and processing research capabilities as a top-three need of the Mississippi sweet potato industry. The proposed research facility is the "missing link" in research capabilities that address the entire sweet potato production process. The proposed project is critical to achieve modern research capabilities amongst this collaborating group of Mississippi State University's leading scientists in support of the sweet potato industry. The discoveries of this research group will have local and national impacts. As a Carnegie R1 (Very High Research Activity) institution, Mississippi State University is robustly committed to excelling in research productivity that addresses national and global priorities including sustainably increasing the global food supply and made possible by prioritized research infrastructure investments to include the present proposal.

In summary, I offer the full support of the North Mississippi Research and Extension Center to achieve the stated goal of the proposed project. Investment in the requested facility under the leadership of the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station is a worthwhile outlay that will ultimately result in developing and extending new knowledge of sweet potato harvest, curing, processing, and storage to include automation advancements and tangible community impacts. If additional information would be helpful in reviewing the proposed project, please feel free to contact me at 662.566.2201 or j.parish@msstate.edu.

Sincerely,

Jane A. Parish
Professor and Head

MAYOR
BOB PEEPLES

CITY CLERK
JESSICA MCLEVIN

CHIEF OF POLICE
RANDY TUTOR

FIRE CHIEF
LANCE MARTIN

Pontotoc

MISSISSIPPI

Where Family Comes First & We Love Every Second

JEFF STAFFORD
ALDERMAN AT LARGE

LENA CHEWE
WARD ONE

JIMMA SMITH
WARD TWO

JOL DIDONNA
WARD THREE

DAVID ANDERSON
WARD FOUR

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Sweet potato farming has become a major agriculture crop in our area. Demand for local sweet potatoes continue to rise. One issue that we have is that more research is needed on how we can streamline the ways to sort and grade the sweet potatoes. We have a local branch of the Mississippi State University Extension Service that can help develop new and innovative ways to help with this problem. The City of Pontotoc enthusiastically supports their effort to receive grant funding to help not only our local farmers, but help other sweet potato farmers across the nation. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely



Bob Peeples
Mayor of Pontotoc

Ph: 662-682-7733



Fax: 662-682-7736

WORLD CLASS QUALITY
Topashaw Farms Packing
826 HWY 341 S, Vardaman, MS 38878

Appropriation Committee,

On behalf of Topashaw Farms, we wish to demonstrate our support for the congressional funding of: "Enhancing Sweet Potato Value Through Post Harvest Technology" that is being submitted by Mississippi State.

Storage loss remains one of the largest sources of lost revenue in sweet potato production, and is experienced by every operation, regardless of differences in production practices. Mississippi State University consistently supports the industry and obtaining a harvest/storage research facility will only improve their capabilities. We look forward to seeing the research that they are able to generate with the proposed facility and implementing their findings in our own production system.

Topashaw Farms fully supports these efforts and pledge to participate in any way possible towards the endeavors of this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melissa Edmondson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joe/Melissa Edmondson

CEO/Owner Topashaw farms



Ricky Ferguson
Pontotoc County Chancery Clerk

Board of Supervisors

Wayne Stokes
District One

Mike McGregor
District Two

Brad Ward
District Three

Board of Supervisors

Ernie Wright
District Four

David Parker
District Five

March 15, 2023

Congressional Appropriations Committee

**RE: Enhancing Sweet Potato Value
Through Post Harvest Technology**

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The Pontotoc County Board of Supervisors supports assistance that would allow any allotment of grant funds to aid in new construction and existing renovations for expansion of sweet potato research facilities at the NMREC facility located in Pontotoc County, Mississippi. The NMREC facility has become a regional leader in sweet potato research. Therefore, expansion of the research facilities at that location would allow researchers to engage in partnerships with the public and private sectors that are currently not available. The Pontotoc County Board of Supervisors desire for the NMREC facility to be the most efficient facility possible.

Best regards,

PONTOTOC COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

Ricky Ferguson, County Administrator

RF:abs



www.msfb.org

MISSISSIPPI FARM BUREAU[®] FEDERATION

Our mission is to create an environment in which Mississippi farmers, ranchers, and Farm Bureau members can have a better life and make a better living.

Mike McCormick
President

March 21, 2023

Re: Letter of Support for the Enhancing Sweet Potato Value through Post Harvest Technology

On behalf of the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation, I am writing to support Mississippi State University's Congressionally Directed Spending Request for Enhancing Sweet Potato Value Through Post Harvest Technology.

As the largest and strongest general farm organization in Mississippi, with more than 180,000 member families in 82 county Farm Bureaus, we are extremely excited about this unique opportunity. Mississippi ranks second in the nation in sweet potato production, with the industry generating an estimated \$112 million in value for the state's economy each year. The proposed funding request has the potential to vastly impact Mississippi's sweet potato industry by providing critical research to help growers improve sweet potato product quality and expand value-added opportunities for producers.

The allocated funds would allow the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station (MAFES) at Mississippi State University build a sweet potato storage and processing research facility located at the North Mississippi Research and Extension Center in Pontotoc, Mississippi – a center that has become a regional leader in sweet potato research. These improvements will provide increased opportunities for researchers to engage in public-private partnerships with producers through post-harvest research, which will result in drastic improvements for farmers, farm workers, agricultural consultants, and others involved in the agricultural industry. In a state that boasts nearly 30% of our workforce employed in agriculture-related fields, the addition of these facilities will open the door for innovative research possibilities that are critical to the future success of our industry.

We urge you to consider fully funding this request. If you need any additional information, please feel free to reach out.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mike McCormick".

Mike McCormick
President

MM/tm/sl

601-957-3200 or 1-800-227-8244

Post Office Box 1972 • Jackson, MS 39215-1972 • 6311 Ridgewood Road • Jackson, MS 39211

<u>Officers:</u>	<u>Directors 2022:</u>	<u>3yrs</u>	<u>2yrs</u>	<u>1yr</u>
Caleb Englert President Houston, MS	Jamie Earp Vice President Houlka, MS	Sylvia Clark Vardaman, MS	Clay Wilson Vardaman, MS	Randall Wright Vardaman, MS
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	Casey Moss Treasurer	Trey Boyette Vardaman, MS	Rob Easley Calhoun City, MS	Anna Murphree Rhinewalt Senatobia, MS



Mississippi Sweet Potato Council

P.O. Box 100, Vardaman, MS 38878 / Ph: (662) 414-6878

March 13, 2023

Dear Appropriation Committee Members,

Speaking on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Mississippi Sweet Potato Council and with the full support of each of the Board members listed above, I wish to convey our support for the proposed congressionally directed funding request "Enhancing Sweet Potato Value Through Post Harvest Technology" that is being submitted by Mississippi State University.

The sweet potato industry receives very little support from the private sector and relies heavily on the work done at public institutions such as Mississippi State University. As such, the research and Extension efforts of the North Mississippi Research and Extension Center are critical to the success of Mississippi's sweet potato industry. The faculty at the center are nationally recognized experts in sweet potato production and work diligently to meet the industry's needs. Post-harvest research has been a top request for several years now, and the center has the expertise, but currently lacks the facilities necessary to conduct this meaningful research. Whether you are farming or conducting research it is vital to have the correct tools to get the job done - the proposed research facility being one of those tools.

If funded, we foresee the facility contributing to innovation and knowledge related to sweet potato harvest, curing, and storage, ultimately increasing industry productivity. Therefore, The Mississippi Sweet Potato Council offers our full support to Mississippi State University and the North Mississippi Research and Extension Center as they pursue this project and the proposed facility.

Sincerely,

Caleb Englert,
President MS Sweet Potato Council