

**177 Tribal Governments, Tribal & Partner Organizations, and Individuals  
In Support of Janie Simms Hipp Nomination for USDA General Counsel**

May 24, 2021

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
*Majority Leader*  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
*Minority Leader*  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
*Chairwoman*  
U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture,  
Nutrition, and Forestry  
328A Russell Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Boozman  
*Ranking Member*  
U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture,  
Nutrition, and Forestry  
328A Russell Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

**Re: Support for the Nomination and Confirmation of Janie Simms Hipp to serve as  
USDA General Counsel**

Dear Leader Schumer, Leader McConnell, Chairwoman Stabenow, and Ranking Member Boozman:

On behalf of the Intertribal Agriculture Council and over 170 Tribal governments, Tribal organizations, Partner Organizations, and Individuals, we write in support of President Biden's nomination of Janie Simms Hipp to serve as General Counsel of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). As a strong Indigenous woman with an incredible depth of knowledge and experience that comes from working across this country and the world with all different types of producers, Janie is uniquely qualified to provide sound legal advice to Secretary Vilsack and all of USDA's agencies. We urge the U.S. Senate to swiftly confirm Ms. Hipp as the next General Counsel of USDA as her expertise is critically important to the agency's ongoing pandemic response and the support USDA provides to all of our country's food and agriculture producers.

The nomination of Janie Simms Hipp to serve as USDA General Counsel is historic for several key reasons. As a citizen of the Chickasaw Nation, Janie represents America's first farmers. As a world-renowned food and agriculture legal mind with more than 35 years of experience, Janie's legal experience and expertise in food and agriculture law is unparalleled. As an agricultural lawyer during the devastating farm financial crisis of the 1980s, Janie also has experience assisting ag and food producers through incredibly tough times, an essential need for public servants today as our country's ag and food producers weather the economic and health crises brought on by the pandemic. Janie's nomination is a strong statement that agriculture and Rural America must have people in the building at USDA who know what they are going through, and most importantly how to help during these very difficult times. Janie Hipp is exactly the right person at the right time, because difficult times call for extraordinary leadership.

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Janie Hipp's career and reputation are extraordinary. She has dedicated her entire legal career to working on behalf of Rural America and our food producers. It's not only her passion, but it's in her heart. Being from a small, rural southeastern Oklahoma town that was agriculture-dependent and infrastructure-poor, she planted her professional and home roots firmly in Arkansas while traveling the country and world to help farmers and ranchers. Whether speaking one-on-one with a producer, or speaking on a stage in front of thousands, she always brings the same passion and brilliance and speaks truth to power on behalf of agriculture and Rural America. Janie grew up there, lives there, and serves the people there.

In working alongside producers to solve the complex legal changes they face, Janie's expertise spans the entirety of USDA's programs and authority. She has extensive experience in food law and policy, trade, credit and finance, conservation, sustainable and regenerative ag, ag business, risk management, federal nutrition programs, research and education, and rural development to name a few. Janie is an encyclopedia of agricultural legal knowledge and directly connects the law to the histories and challenges our producers face with a specific eye on how it can be applied to make it better for the producer. Not only does Janie know the law, she knows its applications within USDA inside and out – just like a farmer knows their tractor – which is essential for General Counsel who has to look at the legal and program authorities across the entire agency.

Janie also has over seven years of experience working at USDA in various capacities, including serving as a national program leader for Farm Financial Management, Trade Adjustment Assistance, Risk Management Education, and the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development programs at the United States Department of Agriculture National Institute for Food and Agriculture. She was then tapped by Secretary Vilsack to work closely with him as Senior Advisor for Tribal Relations and Director of the Office of Tribal Relations during the Obama Administration. In a majority of these roles, Janie worked across programs and USDA agencies to create new connections to help farmers and ranchers. With her legal mind back at USDA as General Counsel, we believe that she will help Secretary Vilsack get the Department running better than ever during a time when we need USDA the most.

While Janie's legal expertise is unmatched, so is her experience working on behalf of Rural America. Janie sat at kitchen tables to help producers during the farm financial crisis of the 1980s. Janie sat at conference tables across the country listening to Tribal leaders and state and local government officials looking to build strong agricultural economies. Janie sat at tables at USDA, the White House, the U.S. Congress, and the United Nations to guide lawmakers in tackling the most difficult issues facing America's food producers at the national and international levels. In all of these spaces, Janie brings her unparalleled passion, heart, experience, and intelligence to make sure that agriculture and Rural America are represented, and that everyone has a seat at the table and voice in the effort.

We urge the U.S. Senate to swiftly confirm Janie Simms Hipp to serve as the next General Counsel of USDA. There is much work to do to address the systemic, historic, and current

barriers facing our country's food producers, and we believe there is no one better than Janie Simms Hipp to lead USDA's Office of General Counsel.

Sincerely,

A Well-Fed World  
Acoma Pueblo  
Airfresh Seafoods  
Akiptan, Inc  
Alabama State Association of Cooperatives  
Alianza Nacional de Campesinas, Oxnard, Ca  
American Federation of Government Employees, Local 3354 (AFL-CIO)  
American Indian Mothers Inc  
Amy Huie, Individual  
Animo Partnership in Natural Resources  
Ashley Babcock, Individual  
Atrisco  
Blackfeet Agriculture Resource Management Plan (ARMP)  
Blackfeet Nation Stockgrowers Association  
Blackfeet Natural Resource Conservation District  
Border Agricultural Workers Project  
Bridget Sweet, Individual  
Brynlee Rolland, Individual  
California Association of Food Banks  
Campaign for Family Farms and the Environment  
CHANGE Philanthropy  
Cheyenne Stone, Individual  
Church Women United in New York State  
Climate Change Leadership Institute and the New Mexico Healthy Soil Working Group  
College of Menominee Nation  
Community Hunger Solutions  
Compañeras Campesinas  
Cottage House Inc.  
Dakota Rural Action  
Dream of Wild Health  
DX Beef, LLC  
Elizabeth Hoover, Individual  
Ella Robertson, Individual  
Ellen Vandevise, Individual  
Endangered Habitats League  
Eskehyll Farm  
Family Farm Action  
Farm Aid  
Farm Credit Council  
Farm Journal Foundation  
Feeding America  
First American Capital Corp.

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First Nations Development Institute  
Flowering Tree Permaculture Institute  
Food Animal Concerns Trust  
Food Research & Action Center  
Fort Belknap Indian Community  
Fort Independence Tribe of Paiute Indians  
Fort Lewis College  
Four Bands Community Fund  
Foxhead Regenerative Agriculture Project  
Friends of the Earth  
Good Earth Garden School  
Guidiville Rancheria of California  
HEAL (Health, Environment, Agriculture, Labor) Food Alliance  
Heartwood  
Hempstead Project Heart  
Heroda Bikax<sup>e</sup> Consulting LLC  
Hope's Harvest RI  
Hopland Band of Pomo Indians  
Ilima Ho-Lastimosa, Individual  
Indian Land Tenure Foundation  
Indigikitchen  
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy  
Inter Tribal Association of Arizona  
Intertribal Agriculture Council  
InterTribal Buffalo Council  
Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement  
Jason George, Individual  
Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future  
Joseph Gazing Wolf, Individual  
Joseph Seller, Individual, Lead Counsel of Keepseagle Class Action Litigation  
Julie Sevier Miller, Individual  
Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe College  
Lakota Funds  
Land Stewardship Project  
LaSalle Cattle  
Latino Farmers of the Southeast  
LEAD for Pollinators, Inc.  
Makoce Agriculture Development, Inc  
Maryland Hunger Solutions  
MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger  
Melissa Leilani DeMello, Individual  
Menominee Nation of Wisconsin  
Michael Fields Agricultural Institute  
Michelle Schulz, Individual  
Midwest Organic & Sustainable Agriculture  
Mississippi Association of Cooperatives  
Modoc Nation

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National Association of Conservation Districts  
National Association of Food Distribution Programs on Indian Reservations  
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture  
National Congress of American Indians  
National Cooperative Business Association CLUSA International  
National Farm to School Network  
National FFA Organization  
National Latino Farmers & Ranchers Trade Association  
National Wildlife Federation  
Native American Fish and Wildlife Society  
Native American Natural Foods  
Native American Rights Fund  
Native Americans in Philanthropy  
Native CDFI Network  
Native Food and Nutrition Resource Alliance  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
Natwani Coalition  
Navajo Nation Ganado Farm Board  
North American Climate, Conservation and Environment (NACCE)  
North American Traditional Indigenous Food Systems (NATIFS)  
North Carolina Association of Black Lawyers Land Loss Prevention Project  
North South Institute  
Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group  
Northern California Tribal Court Coalition  
Now You Know New Mexico  
Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College  
Ohe.laku Cooperative  
Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association  
Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts  
Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project, Inc.  
Opus Consulting  
Organization en California de Lideres Campesinas  
Osage Nation Ranch LLC  
Oweesta Corporation  
Passamaquoddy Wild Blueberry Company  
People's Action  
Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma  
Pesticide Action Network  
Pocasset Wampanoag Tribe of the Pokanoket Nation  
Pueblo of San Felipe  
Quality Equipment, LLC  
Quentin Means  
Quivira Coalition  
Red Feathers Native American Cuisine  
Red Willow Center, Taos Pueblo  
Reinvestment Fund  
Rhode Island Food Policy Council

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Rosalie Z. Fanshel, Individual  
Rosebud Economic Development Corporation  
Rural Advancement Fund of the National Sharecroppers Fund,  
Rural Coalition  
Rural Development Leadership Network  
San Diego Hunger Coalition  
Santa Clara Pueblo  
Share Our Strength  
Shiprock Traditional Farmers Cooperative  
Sicangu Community Development Corporation  
Sierra Club  
Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Nation  
South Dakota Indian Business Alliance  
Spirit Lake Tribe  
Sustainable Agriculture and Food System Funders  
Sweet Grass Consulting, LLC  
Tanka Fund  
Tanka Resilient Agriculture  
The Akana Group Inc  
The California Indian Museum and Cultural Center  
The Common Market  
The DX Ranch  
The Sioux Chef  
Thunderbird Strategic LLC  
Tortugas Pueblo and Zia Queenbee Farm & Field Institute  
Travois  
Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians  
Tyler Ranch  
Uncas Consulting LLC  
United South and Eastern Tribes Sovereignty Protection Fund  
United States Cattlemen's Association  
University of Minnesota Extension  
University of Wisconsin - Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems  
Victory Hemp Foods  
Wallace Center at Winrock International  
Washington State University Western Center  
WATCH, INC  
White Earth Land Recovery Project (WELRP)  
Wisconsin Farmers Union  
Wisdom of the Elderberry Farm (Deg Hit'an Dine, Inupiaq)  
World Farmers