

**Representative John Rose (TN-06)**

**Member Day Testimony**

**House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug  
Administration, and Related Agencies**

**May 18, 2021**

Chairman Bishop, Ranking Member Fortenberry, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to speak on matters of great importance to the agricultural community. It is an honor to be here.

I come before you today to request level funding for the Non-Land Grant Colleges of Agriculture Program through the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, or NIFA (pronounced NEE-FA), so that our non-land grant institutions of higher learning may continue to educate and train future leaders of the agricultural industry.

Since the 2008 Farm Bill authorized its creation, NIFA has collaborated with leading scientists, policymakers, experts, and educators in organizations throughout the world to find innovative solutions to the most pressing local and global problems. I can think of no better way that NIFA accomplishes this mission than through their support of their Capacity Building Grants for Non-Land-Grant Colleges of Agriculture. These grants focus on improving research, outreach, and postsecondary-level educational activities related to food, agriculture, natural and renewable resources, human sciences, and other similar disciplines.

The NLGCA program has been a critical asset to preparing 32,000 graduates annually for a successful career in the agricultural industry. This program offers a hands-on approach to learning for undergraduate research, balanced by a curriculum focused on business principles, critical thinking, problem solving, decision-making, creativity, communication, and teamwork. By graduation, students are well prepared to return to their family's farm, begin a career in public service, pursue further learning, or find other ways to contribute to our nation's agricultural community.

Of the 58 NLGCAs across the United States, awarding 25% of all baccalaureate degrees in agriculture, food and natural resources related majors, the need is stronger than ever to support this vital learning program.

Additionally, I urge the committee to support my community funding request for \$5,000,000 to be directed to Tennessee Technological University for the development of a 10-acre greenhouse complex to enhance the availability of hands-on educational opportunities for students in the TTU School of Agriculture.

Part of what makes STEM education so unique is the necessity for students to not only have access to outstanding teachers, textbooks, and classrooms, but equally as important are the opportunities for experiential learning. For students in STEM majors, it is critical that as part of their education, they have the chance to experiment with the lessons, methods, and theories they learn in their lectures. This greenhouse complex would make that possible.

If built, this greenhouse will provide TTU students and farmers from across the Upper Cumberland region the opportunity to grow produce using state of the art technology that is affordable on a small scale and is also scalable to larger operations.

The complex would also provide employment opportunities for students to assist with educational expenses, while also providing local food banks with fresh strawberries, lettuce, tomatoes, and other produce.

Finally, it's worth noting that the students who would make the greatest use of these facilities are predominantly women. Therefore, this project would bolster diversity in the agricultural industry and provide greater opportunities for young women who choose to pursue careers in agriculture.

The benefits of this request would be felt throughout the community, both for students and farmers alike. Chairman Bishop and Ranking Member Fortenberry, thank you again for allowing me to appear before this subcommittee today, and I look forward to working with you and the rest of the subcommittee as we pursue ways to better American agriculture.