

April 13, 2015

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Robert W. Goodlatte
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John Conyers, Jr.
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Grassley and Goodlatte and Ranking Members Leahy and Conyers,

We write as leading agricultural companies and producer organizations to urge caution as the Congress considers changes to the U.S. patent system. There is a concern that the *Innovation Act*, as currently drafted, will discourage investment in modern agricultural tools important to rural America by making patent rights more difficult to enforce and more challenging for companies and universities to cross-license agricultural technologies.

Agricultural innovation depends upon clear, predictable, and enforceable patent rights. Without these patent rights, new products used to produce healthful food, protect crops, preserve the environment, and improve human & animal health will be more costly to develop. Companies and universities expend tremendous resources to research and develop economically and environmentally beneficial technologies to help feed, fuel, clothe, and heal people and animals. But developing new products is a slow, uncertain, and expensive process. It can easily take a decade or longer and more than \$100 million to commercialize a single product. Strong patents are critical to ensure a return on investments of time and money, which in turn supports future investments in the industry that directly benefit American agricultural producers.

Given the critical role that innovation plays in modern farming, we urge Congress to carefully consider the impact of any changes to the patent system on the agricultural community. We look forward to working with you and your colleagues to ensure that any changes to the U.S. patent system are narrow, targeted, and drafted to avoid damaging agricultural innovation.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Retailers Association
Agrivida, Inc.
American Farm Bureau Federation
America Seed Trade Association
American Society of Sugar Beet Technicians
American Sugarbeet Growers Association
AquaBounty Technologies
BASF
Bayer CropScience, LP
Beet Sugar Development Foundation
Biotechnology Industry Organization
Chromatin, Inc.
Dow AgroSciences
DuPont
Eli Lilly and Company
HM.CLAUSE, Inc.
JoMar Seeds
Monsanto
National Corn Growers Association
National Cotton Council
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Milk Producers Federation
National Sorghum Producers
Novozymes
Syngenta US
U.S. Beet Sugar Association

CC: Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
House Committee on Agriculture