



## EXPERIMENT STATION COMMITTEE ON ORGANIZATION AND POLICY

Experiment Station Section  
The Board on Agriculture Assembly  
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities

Paul Patterson, Chair, Budget and Advocacy Committee  
Tom Coon, Chair, Policy Board of Directors

March 17, 2022

Dear Drs. Patterson and Coon,

I am writing this letter as Chair of the Experiment Station Section of APLU. The Experiment Station Section (ESS) has had serious concerns over the effectiveness of various Board on Agriculture Assembly (BAA) committees representing the interests of ESS. Concerns vary in magnitude but are most pronounced over the budgetary recommendations put forth by the Budget and Advocacy Committee (BAC) and approved by the Policy Board of Directors (PBD). For many years, while ESS has advocated for increases in research capacity funding, BAC and PBD have consistently supported significant increases to AFRI. Many of us believe that ESS lacks support because of the unwillingness to make research capacity funding a priority. This, in turn, has contributed to stagnant research capacity funding and jeopardizes the ESS' abilities to compete on a global level. Research capacity funding supports the infrastructure necessary for ESS to conduct over 73% of publicly funded agricultural research that generates the cutting-edge research to maintain the U.S. preeminent position in agricultural research and productivity.

I tried to relay some of the concerns and frustrations that the ESS was experiencing at the October fly-in meeting in Kansas City. I was hopeful that the new procedures being implemented for developing the FY23 ask would move us in a positive direction. ESS worked with our BAC representative to develop a budget request for our funding that we felt was reasonable, met our needs, and was justifiable. These were the basic criteria laid out in Kansas City regarding the process for developing a budget request. Subsequently, the request that was approved by the Experiment Station Section Committee on Organization and Policy (ESCOP) Executive Committee at their November 12, 2021 meeting was \$329.38M for FY22 and \$399.38M for FY23. You can imagine my great disappointment and that of my colleagues when we learned at our February 17, 2022 ESCOP Chair's Advisory Committee (CAC) that BAC was recommending to the PBD \$300M for Hatch. While every other request was increased, the Hatch funding request was reduced by nearly 10% from the FY22 Unified Ask. This is something that is very difficult for ESS to understand.

Even more perplexing is the disregard to advocate for agricultural research infrastructure. Let's not forget that ESS funded the Gordion study and PBD supported the ESCOP proposal to seek \$11.5B for agricultural infrastructure. Once again, many ESS members were caught completely off guard when we learned that PBD approved a BAC's \$365M advocacy request for agricultural research infrastructure. The \$365M number has never been discussed among ESS.

I would like to emphasize that ESS leadership does not support the FY23 advocacy requests for Hatch nor agricultural infrastructure. Thus, the FY23 advocacy efforts are not a "Unified Ask." This also puts into question the value of ESS continuing to support an organization, as currently structured, that does not appear to value ESS' contribution to the BAA. ESS will, over the course of the next few months,

engage in discussions with its membership as to the best way to proceed. I am open to discussions with you (and Doug Steele, who is copied on this letter) about ways to improve the functional relationships between ESS with BAC and PBD.

Sincere Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Chris A. Pritsos".

Chris A. Pritsos  
2022 ESS/ESCOP Chair

Cc: Doug Steele, APLU Vice President, Food, Agriculture & Natural Resources  
Glenda Humiston, BAC representative for ESS  
Mark McGuire, PBD representative for ESS  
Matt Wilson, ESS Chair-elect  
Michael Boehm, BAC Chair-elect  
Ernie Minton, PBD Chair-elect