

agInnovation Northeast Criteria for Signing on to Advocacy Letters

To ensure alignment with our mission and strategic priorities, agInnovation Northeast will evaluate requests to sign advocacy letters using the following criteria:

1. Alignment with Mission and Priorities
 - a. Does the letter align with the value proposition (i.e., mission, goals, and priorities) of agInnovation Northeast, state experiment stations, and Land-grant universities we represent?
 - b. Does it directly support agricultural research, extension, and education efforts relevant to our member institutions?
2. Impact and Benefit
 - a. Would the requested federal resources provide tangible benefits to our institutions, agricultural experiment stations, or stakeholders?
 - b. Is there a clear and measurable impact on research funding, capacity building, infrastructure, or innovation in the agricultural sciences?
3. Scientific Integrity and Evidence-Based Justification
 - a. Is the letter advocating for policies or funding grounded in sound science and evidence-based research?
 - b. Does it maintain the scientific integrity and credibility of agInnovation Northeast?
4. Member and Colleague Support
 - a. Would a majority of our member institutions support this advocacy effort?
 - b. Have key colleagues (e.g., other regional associations of agInnovation and/or Cooperative Extension) provided input or endorsement?
5. Political and Strategic Considerations
 - a. Does the letter maintain a nonpartisan position that aligns with agInnovation Northeast's role as a research and education provider? (We are not lobbyists.)
 - b. Could signing the letter enhance or protect our relationships with federal agencies (e.g., NIFA), legislators, and other key stakeholders?
 - c. Does signing the letter pose any reputational or political risks to our organization or member institutions?
6. Coalition and Partnerships
 - a. Are other reputable and mission-aligned organizations also signing this letter (e.g., other land-grant institutions, scientific societies [e.g., Tri-Societies], agricultural advocacy organizations [e.g., NCFAR, SOAR], commodity groups [e.g., ASTA], or other non-profit organizations [e.g., NASDA])?

- b. Is the lead organization managing the letter a credible and effective advocate for agricultural research and education?
7. Resource Commitment
 - a. Does signing the letter require any additional commitment of time, financial resources, or other obligations beyond endorsement?
 - b. If so, do we have the capacity to meet those commitments?

Decision-making Process

- The Executive Director will forward requests to sign letters to the Executive Committee.
- If a letter meets all or most of the criteria above, the Executive Director will inform the Executive Committee of intent to sign the letter. (This is especially important when requests are time-sensitive.)
- If a letter fails to meet one or more of the key criteria (especially regarding mission alignment, impact, and scientific integrity), the Executive Director will inform the Executive Committee and seek counsel. The Executive Committee could elect to sign the letter, seek input from the membership of agInnovation Northeast, request modifications from the lead organization, or reject signing the letter.
- If there is uncertainty on whether to sign, the Executive Committee will make the final decision.