

**OFFICE OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR**

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November 3, 2020

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Vice Chancellor's Executive Committee  
Agriculture and Life Sciences, Department Heads  
Texas A&M AgriLife Center Directors  
Texas A&M AgriLife Institute Directors

**SUBJECT:** AgriLife Federal Relations: Reporting Travel to Washington, DC, and Virtual Meetings with Congressional and Federal Officials

I encourage our administrators, faculty, and staff to engage with federal program managers and other federal officials to stay informed on federal activities and priorities and to inform them about partnership opportunities with AgriLife. Such contact helps ensure our knowledge and expertise is available to federal policy and program decision-makers, and can improve our ability to compete for federal funding.

AgriLife Federal Relations Associate Director Jennifer Yezak is available to assist those traveling to Washington, DC, or meeting remotely with Federal officials, by providing background on federal programs as well as AgriLife and The Texas A&M University System priorities. This information can be helpful in preparing for meetings with congressional or federal agency officials. In addition, the Washington, DC, Federal Relations Office can help ensure interactions with congressional and federal officials comply with legal and ethical requirements.

The Honest Leadership and Open Government Act of 2007 and other federal lobbying requirements require all organizations that engage in lobbying, including public universities and state agencies, to have a system to track and report all covered congressional and federal agency contact and activities, and the costs incurred in those activities. Covered activities can include formal or informal meetings and briefings with Members of Congress or congressional staff, whether in Washington, DC or elsewhere, and with all White House staff and "covered officials" in federal agencies. Among the "covered officials" are any Executive Schedule level I – V officer or employee and Schedule C appointees.

To comply with relevant statutes and regulations, The Texas A&M University System must file a federal report that includes all lobbying contacts and costs. Texas A&M AgriLife is required to report its federal lobbying activities as part of The Texas A&M University System reporting, including the lobbying activities of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Texas A&M AgriLife Research, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Texas A&M Forest Service, and Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory. Failure to report or misfiling could include federal criminal penalties.

For the near future, many of the typical activities such as Congressional or federal agency visits will be performed remotely via Microsoft Teams, WebEx, and Zoom, for example. To help ensure reporting compliance and ensure AgriLife leadership and the Federal Relations Office are aware of and can assist with all forms of meetings with "covered officials", I am asking that AgriLife employees report to the Federal Relations Office all

planned business travel to the Washington, DC, area, prior to travel, and to report virtual engagement, prior to the scheduled meeting. An updated electronic form to report such travel and virtual meetings was developed with the TAMUS Office of Federal Relations and the Texas A&M Government Relations staff.

The updated *Texas A&M - Washington, DC Travel & Virtual Meeting Form* and relevant information are available at the AgriLife Federal Relations webpage <https://agrilife.org/about/federalrelations/> . If you would like background or assistance in preparing for meetings with congressional or federal agency officials or have questions about federal lobbying disclosure requirements and related issues, please contact AgriLife Federal Relations at [AgriLifeFR@tamu.edu](mailto:AgriLifeFR@tamu.edu) or call Jennifer Yezak at 202-684-9932.

Thank you for your assistance on this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick J. Stover". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Patrick J. Stover  
Vice Chancellor and Dean  
Agriculture and Life Sciences  
Director, Texas A&M AgriLife Research

c: Dr. Susan Ballabina