



ARIA continues on our radar screen as the effort now has a high-level home; you'll see that in the first action item bullet. In the meantime, our hope is that you've had the opportunity to be vaccinated and can see the edges of "normal" approaching in the upcoming months. Here in the NERA office, we anxiously anticipate a time when we can meet face-to-face.

"We live in a small space. Though the earth can seem vast, as can the endless skies above, in fact we exist in a wafer-thin layer of atmosphere averaging about 7 mi. (11 km) above sea level." – Michael Hoffmann, Carrie Koplinka-Loehr and Danielle Eiseman, 2021 *in* Our Changing Menu: Climate Change and the Foods We Love and Need. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY.

Action items:

- As we reported on April 5 and shared late last week, President Biden has issued the [American Jobs Plan](#) and is calling on Congress to invest \$40 billion in upgrading research infrastructure in laboratories across the country. **The ARIA effort (\$11.5 billion to address deferred maintenance) now has a high-level home.** The APLU agriculture research infrastructure campaign is now circulating a stakeholder [sign-on letter](#) to send to the House and Senate Agriculture Committees after recess. The letter supports the APLU request for an agricultural research infrastructure investment of \$11.5 billion at U.S. colleges of agriculture. You are encouraged to share the letter with your agricultural stakeholder groups in-state as well as any regional/national stakeholder groups. The purpose of the letter is to ensure strong stakeholder support for the request. As a heads up, the sign-on letter is not for higher ed institutions to sign, only stakeholders. NERA is willing to solicit stakeholders in your state or our region on your behalf. Please send [me](#) the name of the group, the point of contact and an email address and we'll solicit the support.
- Over the past year, the National Impact Database ([Land-grant Impacts](#)) has undergone a dramatic transformation. As you know, impact statements now undergo peer review prior to the time that the impact statement is posted on the public-facing website. Likewise, a team of professional communicators (supported by funding from ESCOP and ECOP) has combed the impact statements and created a series of infographics based on submissions. Last, the director of communications has shared that the impact database is a "go-to" source of information for NIFA. Hence, we think it's worthwhile submitting statements to the database. (This might also be part of our regional communications strategy, a topic of continuing interest.)
- The other regional executive directors have received anecdotal reports on two topics for which we seek your input. The first revolves around Hatch project initiation and rejection or deferral of Hatch projects. Have any of you had difficulty with rejections or deferral of Hatch proposals? The second topic is on FBI investigations of foreign researchers working on US campuses. Has this been an issue on your

campus? As you might recollect, the FBI released a report in 2019 titled [China: The Risk to Academia](#). If either of these has popped up on your campus, we'd be interested in hearing about it.

Reminders/Updates:

- Kansas State Dean and Director, Ernie Minton, penned an op-ed piece for the Topeka Capital journal titled "[Expecting modern-day agriculture advancements out of crumbling 1950s infrastructure is setting up U.S. for failure.](#)"
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Informational items:

- Long-time NERA contributor and Cornell University Agricultural Experiment Station Director Emeritus, Mike Hoffmann, along with Carrie Koplinka-Loehr and Danielle Eiseman recently published a book that might interest you. It's titled *Our Changing Menu: Climate Change and the Foods We Love and Need*(Cornell University Press and available through Amazon.)
 - Debby Sheely is retiring, the University of Rhode Island is now seeking an [Associate Dean for Extension and Agricultural Programs](#).
 - The University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources is searching for a [Director](#) to lead two Research and Extension Centers (KREC in Parlier, CA and WSREC in Five Points, CA).
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