

The Honorable French Hill
Chairman
House Committee on Financial Services
2129 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC, 20515

The Honorable Maxine Waters
Ranking Member
House Committee on Financial Services
2129 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC, 20515

April 20, 2025

Re: More than 200 groups oppose H.R. 941, the Small Lenders Exempt from New Data and Excessive Reporting (Small LENDER) Act.

Dear Chairman Hill and Ranking Member Waters:

The undersigned 215 civil rights, community, family farm, small business, women's, consumer, civic, and other organizations urge you to reject any and all efforts to repeal or weaken Section 1071 of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act. Section 1071 amended the Equal Credit Opportunity Act (ECOA) requiring lenders to compile and maintain data about their small business and farm lending. This commonsense measure provides much needed information and transparency for lenders, communities, and local governments to identify small business and farm credit needs, gaps in access to credit, and patterns of lending discrimination.

Small businesses and farms generate local economic growth, provide jobs, and build household wealth. But historically inequitable access to credit and financing makes it harder for people of color and women to start sustain, reinvest, and expand small businesses and farms. There is no comprehensive dataset of small business and farm lending data, which makes it impossible for all stakeholders — entrepreneurs, community groups, elected officials, and regulators — to assess demand for credit, access to credit, and to enforce civil rights laws. Section 1071 is based on the successful Home Mortgage Disclosure Act, which has provided similar market transparency in the mortgage sector for forty years.

Section 1071 serves two vital purposes as set forth in the statute: to facilitate enforcement of fair lending laws and to help identify areas where small businesses and farms lack access to credit. It was built upon ECOA to make it easier to root out and address patterns of discrimination, and to ensure better civil rights enforcement for small business and small farm lending. Furthermore, applicants are often unaware that their loan rejection, higher loan prices, or worse loan terms may be rooted in discrimination or patterns of discrimination. As stated in the law, the purpose of Section 1071 was “to facilitate enforcement of fair lending laws,” and it is needed because it is impossible to eradicate lending discrimination if we cannot quantify it.

Identifying lending deserts provides new business opportunities for financial companies. This data can also provide valuable insight to financial institutions on how to structure new lending products to meet the different needs of small businesses and farms.

Congress must reject the raft of legislative proposals to fully repeal Section 1071 or to weaken it through measures such as exempting some lenders, reducing the amount of data collected, or extending the compliance period. While we are sensitive to concerns about possible regulatory burdens faced by smaller lending institutions, it is equally important to be sensitive to the historic and persistent patterns of discrimination faced by business and farm loan applicants. Congress

enacted this statutory provision fifteen years ago, and the government has yet to collect and publish any data because of the fierce resistance to transparency by the lending industry. Congress must not repeal or weaken this key addition to the Equal Credit Opportunity Act, one of our country's landmark civil rights laws.

Sincerely,

National Groups

Americans for Financial Reform
Center for Responsible Lending
HEAL (Health, Environment, Agriculture, Labor)
Food Alliance
Main Street Alliance
National Community Reinvestment Coalition (NCRC)
National Family Farm Coalition
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
Action Center on Race and the Economy
Affordable Homeownership Foundation Inc
Agricultural Justice Project
American Association of People with Disabilities
American Grassfed Association
Appleseed Foundation
Beneficial State Foundation
Campaign for Family Farms and the Environment
Center for Community Self-Help
Center for LGBTQ Economic Advancement & Research (CLEAR)
Climate Justice Alliance
Coalition on Human Needs
Consumer Action
Consumer Federation of America
Data You Can Use
Fair Finance Watch
Farm Action Fund
Farm Aid
Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance
Food & Water Watch
Food Animal Concerns Trust (FACT)
Health Care Without Harm
Henderson and Company
Hip Hop Caucus
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Institute for Local Self-Reliance
Japanese American Citizens League
Just Solutions
Latino Farmers & Ranchers International, Inc.
Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)
Midwest Farmers of Color Collective
NAACP
National Association of Consumer Advocates
National Consumers League
National Disability Institute
National Fair Housing Alliance
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
National Young Farmers Coalition

NBJC
Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust
Northeast Organic Farming Association-Interstate Council
People Power United
Pesticide Action & Agroecology Network
Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK)
Public Citizen
RAFI
Real Food Media
Responsible Business Lending Coalition
Roots of Change
Rural Coalition
Rural Democracy Initiative
Rural Progress
Small Business Majority
Socially Responsible Agriculture Project
The Enterprise Center at PathStone
The Food Trust
The National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development (National CAPACD)
Western Organization of Resource Councils
Women, Food, and Agriculture Network (WFAN)
Woodstock Institute

Alabama

Alabama Arise
Alabama State Association of Cooperatives
Center for Fair Housing, Inc
NAACP Alabama

Arizona

Community Investment Corporation
Local First Arizona
Progress Arizona
Slow Food Phoenix

California

ASIAN, Inc.
Avila Fund
California Capital Financial Development Corporation
California Climate and Agriculture Network
CAMEO Network
Consumers for Auto Reliability and Safety
Contra Costa Senior Legal Services
Endangered Habitats League
Farms to Grow, Inc.
Faith and Community Empowerment

Food and Agriculture Action Coalition Toward
Sovereignty
Housing and Economic Rights Advocates
ICON CDC
Los Angeles LDC
Minnow
Mission Economic Development Agency
People's Self-Help Housing
Public Counsel
Rise Economy
San Diego Food System Alliance
The Academy of Financial Education
TURN-The Utility Reform Network
Urban Tilth
Vermont Slauson Economic Development
Corporation

Colorado

Colorado Latino Leadership, Advocacy, and Research
Organization (CLLARO)
Food Justice NW Aurora
Nourish Colorado

Connecticut

Urban League of Greater Hartford

Washington, DC

The Coalition

Delaware

Delaware Community Reinvestment Action Council,
Inc.

Florida

Latino Leadership, Inc.

Georgia

Alliance 85
Georgia Advancing Communities Together, Inc.
Georgia Watch
Hand, Heart + Soul Project

Iowa

Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement

Illinois

Citizen Action/Illinois
Farmworker and Landscaper Advocacy Project—
FLAP
Illinois People's Action
Illinois Stewardship Alliance
Southside Food Co-op, Inc.

Indiana

Fair Housing Center of Central Indiana
Prosperity Indiana

Kansas

CHWC, Inc.
Kansas Rural Center

Kentucky

Food in Neighborhoods Community Coalition (FIN)

Louisiana

Sprout

Massachusetts

CommonWealth Kitchen
Massachusetts Association of Community
Development Corps (MACDC)
Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance
Northeast Organic Farming Association of
Massachusetts (NOFA-MA)
South Boston NDC

Maryland

CASH Campaign of Maryland
Economic Action Maryland Fund

Maine

Coastal Enterprises, Inc.
Maine Equal Justice
Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition
Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association
Maine People's Alliance

Michigan

Michigan Organic Food and Farm Alliance
Michigan United Action
U SNAP BAC
Detroit Food Policy Council

Minnesota

Appetite For Change
Climate Land Leaders
LEDC
Renewing the Countryside
Roots Return Heritage Farm LLC

Missouri

Missouri Faith Voices
St. Louis Equal Housing and Community Reinvestment
Alliance (SLEHCRA)

Mississippi

Covenant Community Development—Covenant Faith
Reuben V. Anderson Center for Justice

Montana

Northern Plains Resource Council

Nebraska

Center for Rural Affairs

Economic Empowerment Center DBA Lending Link

New Hampshire

Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Hampshire (NOFA-NH)

New Jersey

CWA Local 1081
Faith in New Jersey
New Jersey Applesseed Public Interest Law Center
New Jersey Citizen Action
New Jersey Institute for Social Justice

New Mexico

Agri-Cultura Cooperative Network
Southwest Neighborhood Housing Services
Tribal Homeownership Coalition of the Southwest
United South Broadway Corporation

New York

Amplify Equity
Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development
Brooklyn Cooperative Federal Credit Union
Church Women United in New York State
Good Food Buffalo Coalition
Housing and Family Services of Greater New York
LifeSource Systems, Inc.
Long Island Housing Services, Inc.
Long Island Progressive Coalition
Lower East Side People's FCU
Metro Justice
New Economy Project
New Yorkers for Responsible Lending
Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York (NOFA-NY)
Rock Steady Farm
Rockland Housing Action Coalition
Soul Fire Farm

North Carolina

Centre for Homeownership & Economic Development
North Carolina Council of Churches
North Carolina Justice Center
Piedmont Business Capital
Carolina Farm Stewardship Association

North Dakota

Dakota Resource Council

Ohio

ECDI
Housing Opportunities Made Equal of Greater Cincinnati

Oregon

CASA of Oregon

Oregon Consumer League
Provender Alliance

Pennsylvania

Buy Fresh Buy Local — Greater Lehigh Valley
Ceiba
HIP
Just Harvest
Neighborhood Housing Services of Greater Berks, INC
NWCS, Inc.
Pasa Sustainable Agriculture
Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporations
Philadelphia Solar Energy Association
Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group (PCRG)
The Restaurant Opportunities Center of Pennsylvania (ROC PA)

Rhode Island

Northeast Organic Farming Association of Rhode Island

South Dakota

Dakota Rural Action

Tennessee

You Can Make It Home Ownership Center Inc

Texas

Harlingen CDC
Southern Dallas Progress Community Development Corporation
Texas Association of Community Development Corporations
United Way of Central Texas

Utah

Utah Housing Coalition

Vermont

Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT)

Virginia

Cultivate Charlottesville
Virginia Citizens Consumer Council
Virginia Organizing
Virginia Poverty Law Center

Washington

Community Food Co-op
Tacoma/Pierce County Habitat for Humanity

West Virginia

Mountain State Justice