

**MONDAY MORNING GROUP OF WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY
ANNUAL ADVOCACY TRIP – WASHINGTON, DC
APRIL 20-23, 2026**

**SUPPORT FUNDING FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, RIVERSIDE
CENTER FOR PRECISION AGRICULTURE**

ISSUE: Agricultural producers, particularly in water-constrained regions like Southern California, face increasing challenges from drought, labor shortages, rising input costs, and stringent environmental regulations. While precision agriculture technologies offer proven solutions, adoption remains limited due to insufficient region-specific research infrastructure, field validation capacity, and workforce training. Without targeted federal investment, development and adoption of critical technologies (i.e., AI-driven irrigation, autonomous equipment, and real-time sensing systems) will lag, slowing progress in water conservation, productivity, and climate resilience.

ACTION: The Monday Morning Group urges Congress to provide \$2.4 million in federal funding through the NIST Scientific and Technical Research and Services (STRS) account for the University of California, Riverside (UCR) Center for Precision Agriculture, and the consideration of targeted investments to expand research capacity, accelerate technology deployment, and strengthen workforce development in precision agriculture.

The Monday Morning Group requests funding to:

- Expand research infrastructure to enable field-scale testing and validation of precision agriculture technologies.
- Deploy advanced tools including AI-driven irrigation, autonomous equipment, and real-time sensing systems.
- Advance water-efficient and climate-resilient agricultural practices through applied, data-driven technologies.
- Strengthen workforce training programs to meet rising demand in agricultural technology and data science.

BACKGROUND: UCR, the only R1 agricultural research university in Southern California, is uniquely positioned to lead this effort, but current infrastructure constraints limit its ability to scale innovation and deploy solutions nationally. The UCR Precision Agriculture Center will transform an existing research site into a fully integrated Precision and Digital Agriculture innovation platform, enabling field-scale testing, demonstration, and workforce training under real-world production conditions.

The Center will advance foundational research in sensing technologies, crop system modeling, and data integration, while deploying tools such as variable-rate irrigation and fertigation systems, autonomous tractors and robotics, UAV-based crop monitoring, and digital agriculture platforms. These technologies reduce water use and input costs while improving productivity and operational efficiency.

They reduce water use by 15–30% and fertilizer and pesticide inputs by 10–25%, while increasing yields and overall operational efficiency. The project addresses a critical workforce gap, with more than 25,000 annual job openings projected in agriculture and related sectors across the western U.S. through 2030. It will serve as a regional and national hub for grower demonstrations and extension programs, workforce training in agricultural robotics, data science, and precision farming, partnerships with United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), industry, and agricultural stakeholders, educational pathways for students, community colleges, and K–12 agricultural programs.