

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 17, 2018

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue:

We have heard substantial stakeholder concern with the lack of adequate time to comment on USDA's proposal to withdraw the Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices (OLPP) final rule. Given the significant impacts of this proposal and the very limited time stakeholders have had to comment, we request a 60-day addition to the current 30-day public comment period on this action.

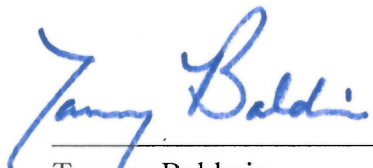
The publication of the OLPP rule in January of 2017 represented the culmination of over a decade of intensive study and stakeholder input. Proposing an OLPP rule was intended to provide certainty for producers of organic livestock and uphold the high standards for livestock care that many consumers associate with certified organic products. Based on the submission of over 47,000 comments during the public comment period after the USDA's earlier decision to delay implementing the OLPP rule, there is clearly strong interest and desire to provide feedback on any changes to the implementation of standards for organic livestock production.

The recent announcement of the withdrawal of the OLPP rule during the holiday season has created a substantial barrier for stakeholders to participate and have a meaningful voice in the rulemaking process. This contradicts the spirit and intention of the public comment period—an action we find especially concerning given a record of intense interest in providing feedback on the rule.

Given the substantial impacts proposed through the withdrawal of the OLPP rule and the fact that much of the comment period fell over the winter holidays, we ask that the USDA extend the comment period on the proposed rule for an additional 60 days. We hope that the agency will

act responsibly to ensure that all parties with an interest in these significant regulatory changes have ample time to provide feedback on them.

Sincerely,



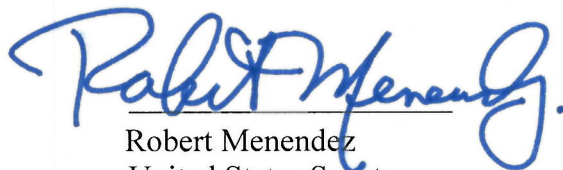
Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



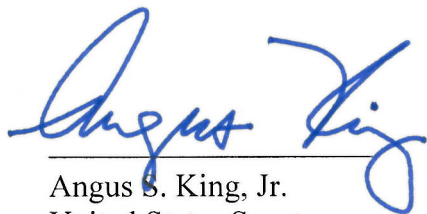
Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



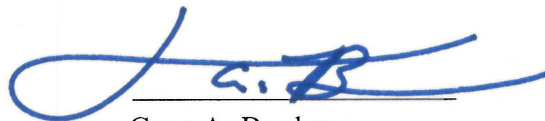
Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



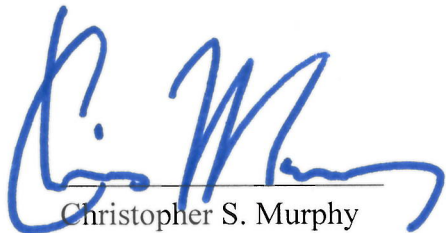
Robert Menendez
United States Senator



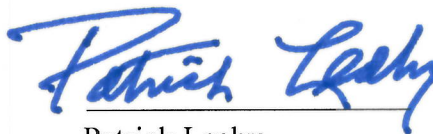
Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



Patrick Leahy
United States Senator