

Congress of the United States

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 28, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, and Minority Leader McCarthy,


We are writing to request that Congress act to support farmers, food processors and retailers, and hunger response organizations as they work to keep our food supply chain moving and meeting the needs of families across our country. We urge you to pass and fund the bipartisan, bicameral Farming Support to States Act (S. 3785/H.R. 6956) as part of the fourth COVID-19 aid package and before Congress adjourns to return home for the August recess in just a few short weeks. This bill would help keep food moving this fall, ensure the harvest season is successful, and address emerging disruptions before they create severe impacts.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a variety of unusual market conditions and temporary disruptions in parts of the food supply chain, and our farm and food businesses have worked together to minimize the impacts on consumers. Now they are predicting new challenges in the late summer and fall, with harvests modified to keep workers safe, uncertainty in school food service contracting, and additional unpredictable disruptions on the horizon.


The Farming Support to States Act would allow for nimble responses to emerging issues so that our food supply remains as stable as possible in these challenging times. Using this approach, resources would be designated for the needs of each state, and then stakeholders from that state could request a portion of their state's designated funds directly from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Funding would be used for response actions to address the issues stakeholders face in their area. It is clear that the pandemic has strained resources in both the private and public sectors, from the local to national level. To get ahead of potentially catastrophic impacts to the food supply and keep food moving, we must get resources into the hands of the people best situated to develop smart, tactical responses: the people who work in this industry. This approach would get resources to the on-the-ground experts in our communities and across the agriculture industry; it would leverage local solutions to local problems as they emerge this fall.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and for your swift work to ensure our agricultural and hunger assistance leaders have the tools to respond to challenges that emerge in the coming months.

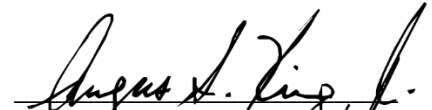
Sincerely,




Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator




Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator




Xochitl Torres Small
United States Representative




Dusty Johnson
United States Representative




Chellie Pingree
United States Representative



Brian K. Fitzpatrick
United States Representative




Mark Pocan
United States Representative

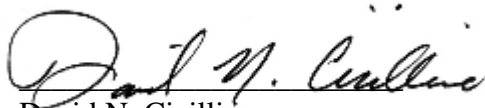


Ed Case
United States Representative

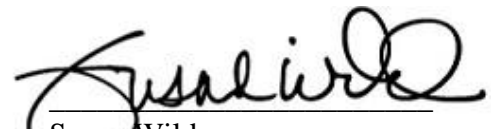
_____/s/
Angie Craig
United States Representative



Roger Marshall, M.D.
United States Representative



David N. Cicilline
United States Representative



Susan Wild
United States Representative

CC: The Honorable Richard Shelby, Chairman, U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Vice-Chairman, U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Pat Roberts, Chairman, U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow, Ranking Member, U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey, Chairwoman, House Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Kay Granger, Ranking Member, House Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Collin Peterson, Chairman, U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture

The Honorable Michael Conaway, Ranking Member, U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture