

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 02, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Pat Roberts
Chairman
Senate Agriculture Committee
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Ranking Member
Senate Agriculture Committee
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, Chairman Roberts, and Ranking Member Stabenow:

Thank you for your commitment to supporting American families and the agricultural economy throughout the COVID-19 crisis. As you are aware, COVID-19 has had devastating impacts on agricultural producers across the country, including chicken farmers in our home states. While we appreciate that the recently passed *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) Act* provides direct payments for agricultural producers through the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP), this program does not provide assistance for chicken farmers. We strongly request that any future stimulus legislation provide direct payments for chicken farmers who experienced revenue losses of at least five percent as a result of COVID-19.

The U.S. chicken industry provides an essential service in feeding Americans, who on average consume about 100 pounds of chicken meat each year. As you know, many chicken processing facilities across the country were forced to reduce or suspend production due to COVID-19. We encourage federal efforts to help processing facilities and local health officials protect employees and continue to support measures to ensure the safest working conditions possible at these facilities. As a result of reductions in chicken processing capacity, chicken farmers across the country have experienced longer waiting periods between flocks, received fewer birds to raise, and in some cases have been forced to depopulate millions of healthy birds. As a result of these circumstances, chicken farmers have suffered substantial losses in revenues and continue to face changing and uncertain demand.

The CFAP provides direct aid to producers of agricultural commodities that suffered a five percent or greater price decline between specified dates due to COVID-19. Chicken was not determined to be eligible for CFAP, in part because USDA concluded that it did not experience a five percent or greater price decline. However, it is important to note that losses suffered by contract chicken farmers, which comprise approximately 95 percent of all chicken farmers in the U.S., were not considered in this price loss assessment. For many chicken farmers, these losses represent a loss of revenues that meets or exceeds five percent.

As additional COVID-19 stimulus legislation is considered by Congress, we strongly request that any future bill provide direct payments for chicken farmers who experienced a five percent or

greater loss in revenues as a result of COVID-19. We believe that the inclusion of such a provision would provide parity for chicken farmers who have suffered losses equal to or greater than those of producers who were provided assistance through the CFAP.

Thank you for your attention to this request. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like more information or have any questions.

Sincerely,

/s/ Roger F. Wicker

Roger F. Wicker
United States Senator

/s/ Christopher A. Coons

Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator

/s/ Thomas R. Carper

Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator

/s/ Tom Cotton

Tom Cotton
United States Senator

/s/ Mark R. Warner

Mark R. Warner
United States Senator

/s/ John Boozman

John Boozman
United States Senator

/s/ Doug Jones

Doug Jones
United States Senator

/s/ Thom Tillis

Thom Tillis
United States Senator

/s/ Chris Van Hollen

Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

/s/ Kelly Loeffler

Kelly Loeffler
United States Senator

/s/ Benjamin L. Cardin

Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator

/s/ Cindy Hyde-Smith

Cindy Hyde-Smith
United States Senator

/s/ Bill Cassidy, M.D.

Bill Cassidy, M.D.
United States Senator

/s/ Tim Kaine

Tim Kaine
United States Senator

/s/ Robert P. Casey, Jr.

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator

/s/ Richard Burr

Richard Burr
United States Senator

/s/ John Cornyn

John Cornyn
United States Senator

/s/ Lindsey O. Graham

Lindsey O. Graham
United States Senator

/s/ Tim Scott

Tim Scott
United States Senator