

Senator Chris Coons  
218 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Roger Wicker  
555 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

June 1, 2020

Dear Senators Coons and Wicker,

Our organizations would like to reiterate our thanks to you for your leadership in assisting our farmers as they partner with chicken processors to provide protein during the COVID-19 crisis. Feeding Americans is a non-partisan issue, and we are proud to work with our nation's leaders to ensure our food supply is safe, affordable and on the plates of millions of Americans.

America's chicken producers and processors have a long history of adapting to difficult situations and meeting changing demand to provide a safe, secure food supply and we are confident this time will be no different. However, despite current efforts, the chicken supply chain is suffering greatly from the unexpected and devastating effects of the COVID-19 outbreak that has seriously impacted livelihoods and food consumption patterns.

As you know, many chicken processing facilities across the country have been forced to reduce operations due to the lack of foodservice demand and workforce shortages caused by COVID-19. These challenges faced by chicken processing facilities impact the entire supply chain, including the family farmers in our states who raise chickens. This is beginning to have serious effects on bird placements to family farms, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) data on eggs set and chicks placed. These farmers are faced with overhead costs and any downtime will bring great financial pressure upon them. As these farmers cope with raising fewer chickens among changing and uncertain demand, we believe it is essential that they be provided with direct financial assistance, just as other farmers and livestock producers have been supported during the pandemic.

American industries that have been deemed essential and critical have exhibited extreme resilience – working to care for, feed, and protect Americans – and are selflessly serving the nation by showing up to work during this time of crisis. While the value of the work by our public health professionals, first responders, and public safety employees is unquestioned, we are grateful for your leadership in supporting our farmers who wake up every day to protect our food security.

Sincerely,

Alabama Poultry & Egg Association  
California Poultry Federation  
Delmarva Poultry Industry, Inc.  
Georgia Poultry Federation  
Kentucky Poultry Federation  
Mississippi Poultry Association  
North Carolina Poultry Federation  
Ohio Poultry Association  
South Carolina Poultry Federation  
Tennessee Poultry Federation  
Texas Poultry Federation

The Poultry Federation  
Virginia Poultry Federation