

# 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

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Roger F. Wicker  
United States Senator

/s/ Christopher A. Coons

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Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator

/s/ Thomas R. Carper

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Thomas R. Carper  
United States Senator

/s/ Tom Cotton

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Tom Cotton  
United States Senator

/s/ Mark R. Warner

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Mark R. Warner  
United States Senator

/s/ John Boozman

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John Boozman  
United States Senator

/s/ Doug Jones

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Doug Jones  
United States Senator

/s/ Thom Tillis

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Thom Tillis  
United States Senator

/s/ Chris Van Hollen

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Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator

/s/ Kelly Loeffler

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Kelly Loeffler  
United States Senator

/s/ Benjamin L. Cardin

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Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator

/s/ Cindy Hyde-Smith

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Cindy Hyde-Smith  
United States Senator

/s/ Bill Cassidy, M.D.

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Bill Cassidy, M.D.  
United States Senator

/s/ Tim Kaine

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Tim Kaine  
United States Senator

/s/ Robert P. Casey, Jr.

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Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator

/s/ Richard Burr

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Richard Burr  
United States Senator

/s/ John Cornyn

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John Cornyn  
United States Senator

/s/ Lindsey O. Graham

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Lindsey O. Graham  
United States Senator

/s/ Tim Scott

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Tim Scott  
United States Senator