

June 21, 2019

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

Dear Secretary Perdue,

We are writing in support of Governor Gretchen Whitmer's request on June 19, 2019 for a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretarial Disaster Designation for the entire state of Michigan.

As you may know, Michigan farmers are facing incredible challenges and record production loss due to historic weather conditions. As conveyed by the governor, Michigan is experiencing record rainfall, with the state in the midst of the third wettest year in our history. This rainfall comes on top of other severe weather conditions the state has experienced, including heavy snowfall, extreme temperatures, flash flooding, and tornadoes.

These damaging weather conditions are substantially affecting farm production across the state. Wet conditions have significantly delayed or prevented planting as well as endangered conditions of planted crops. According to USDA, only 63 percent of Michigan's corn was planted as of June 9 and only 43% of soybeans had been planted. Furthermore, with disruptions in harvesting and planting, livestock and dairy farmers are facing higher feed costs and shortages later in the year. As a result, 64 of Michigan's 83 counties spread across all fourteen congressional districts have requested disaster designations from USDA.

On behalf of Michigan farmers, their families, and our state economy, we ask that you give all due consideration to the governor's request for a Disaster Designation for all Michigan counties. We greatly appreciate that the department has announced that it will provide additional flexibility within the Federal Crop Insurance program. A USDA Secretarial Disaster Designation would be the next critical step in providing relief to Michigan farmers. A designation would immediately trigger emergency assistance programs and provide a lifeline to struggling producers. Additionally, we reiterate the governor's request for flexibility as the department finalizes details related to the \$3 billion for agricultural disaster assistance recently approved by Congress to ensure disaster relief reaches farmers across our state.

Michigan's agricultural community is integral to our state. With the industry experiencing one of the toughest periods in our farming history, we ask for your prompt attention to this matter and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

FRED UPTON
Member of Congress

DEBBIE DINGELL
Member of Congress

JOHN R. MOOLENAAR
Member of Congress

ELISSA SLOTKIN
Member of Congress

TIM WALBERG
Member of Congress

RASHIDA TLAIB
Member of Congress

PAUL MITCHELL
Member of Congress

BILL HUIZENGA
Member of Congress

JACK BERGMAN
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DANIEL T. KILDEE
Member of Congress

BRENDA L. LAWRENCE
Member of Congress

HALEY STEVENS
Member of Congress

ANDY LEVIN
Member of Congress