

December 18, 2024

Dear Member of Congress:

I wrote to you earlier today urging a yes vote on the negotiated end-of-year funding package because of the dire conditions of the rural economy. The negotiated package released Tuesday evening included a farm bill extension, natural disaster funding, much-needed economic assistance and year-round E-15 sales. Farm Bureau still supports the negotiated package.

However, we recently learned that a new proposal may be in the works.

Any alternative Continuing Resolution (CR) must include: a farm bill extension, aid to rebuild after natural disasters, economic assistance to bridge the gap until we can get to a new farm bill, and year-round E-15 sales.

Weather-related natural disasters in 2023 and 2024 have crippled communities across the country. The weather events may have passed, but unthinkable wreckage remains. Entire communities must be rebuilt.

Economically, America's farmers and ranchers are suffering. Inflation is killing farm families' checkbooks. Stubbornly high supply costs have made seed, fertilizer, feed, repairs and H-2A labor costs more expensive. Extremely high interest rates make it even more expensive because most farmers need operating loans to buy inputs each year. Unfortunately, the price farmers receive for the products they grow is decreasing.

Farmers in America are experiencing their third year in a row of losing money. Right now, lenders are telling farm families that operating loans will not happen or be significantly smaller unless the federal government provides some relief. We've lost 141,000 farms in a five-year period and that number will grow if Congress fails to act.

Planting decisions and seed and fertilizer purchases are being made now, and farmers cannot wait another month for assistance. Farmers in some regions will begin planting in 45 or 60 days. The dire conditions on the farm must not be ignored.

We know that time is running short for action, but we call on our elected leaders to make sure those who grow America's food supply are not left behind in the next CR.

Sincerely,



Zippy Duvall
President