

April 27, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
H-307, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
1026 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Scott
Chair
Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Glenn Thompson
Ranking Member
Committee on Agriculture
400 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McCarthy, Chairwoman DeLauro, Ranking Member Granger, Chairman Scott, and Ranking Member Thompson:

We urge you to take immediate action to extend and fully fund the Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program Plus (WHIP+) for 2020 to provide much needed relief to agricultural producers who have experienced great economic losses as a result of wildfires, hurricanes, derecho and other natural disasters last year.

In 2020, California, Oregon, Washington and Colorado suffered devastating wildfires, while Iowa, Louisiana, Alabama and Texas faced severe hurricanes and extreme precipitation events. As thousands of Americans in these states continue the arduous process of rebuilding their lives, it is imperative that the federal government provide critical assistance to those affected, including the agricultural community. We must support the small family farmers who are at risk of losing everything because their crops were damaged or destroyed by natural disasters.

Tragically, losses to life and property in the wake of a disaster are readily apparent, but less obvious is the significant damage and widespread uncertainty due to the smoke, flooding, wind and other physical effects of wildfires and hurricanes.

For example, In California, Oregon and Washington, we have learned that when crops are heavily exposed to fresh smoke, they can absorb a matrix of compounds that drastically changes the product. Wildfire smoke taints the yet to be harvested product and renders the product useless. This damage can sometimes completely ruin entire crops and often put immense strain

on grower's livelihoods. Fruits including wine grapes are especially sensitive to this kind of damage.

Across the southern United States, hurricanes and tornadoes caused widespread damage to crops including cotton, citrus, sugarcane, sesame, corn, soybeans and many others. In Iowa, Texas, Louisiana and Alabama's agricultural producers are experiencing hundreds of millions of dollars in losses. Extreme winds stripped harvests of their fruits and seeds, overly saturated soil resulted in rotting crops before the ground was able to dry and heavy rain had devastating effects.

As natural disasters continue, an increasing number of buyers are rejecting agricultural products, leaving farmers and growers in our communities desperate to recover lost revenue. The COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated the need for assistance as agricultural producers have had to recover from disasters while also dealing with the effects of the pandemic. This support is more critical than ever. The federal government has the opportunity and responsibility to act now by immediately extending WHIP+ for losses incurred as a result of 2020 disasters. We can ensure that farmers, growers and agricultural workers receive the support that they desperately need.

We sincerely appreciate your support of this vital program over the last several years and look forward to your active leadership and continued interest in assisting agricultural producers in overcoming the devastation caused by last year's disasters. We look forward to working with you to ensure extension and funding of this critical support.

Sincerely,

MIKE THOMPSON
Member of Congress

CLAY HIGGINS
Member of Congress

DAN NEWHOUSE
Member of Congress

TERRI SEWELL
Member of Congress

CYNTHIA AXNE
Member of Congress

PETER DEFAZIO
Member of Congress

RANDY FEENSTRA
Member of Congress

JIMMY PANETTA
Member of Congress

ANNA ESHOO
Member of Congress

RO KHANNA
Member of Congress

JOHN GARAMENDI
Member of Congress

GRACE F. NAPOLITANO
Member of Congress

MARIANNETTE MILLER-MEEKS

Member of Congress

JARED HUFFMAN

Member of Congress

SUZANNE BONAMICI

Member of Congress

ERIC SWALWELL

Member of Congress

JIM COSTA

Member of Congress

MIKE ROGERS

Member of Congress

SALUD CARBAJAL

Member of Congress

ASHLEY HINSON

Member of Congress

BARBARA LEE

Member of Congress

JERRY L. CARL

Member of Congress

JERRY MCNERNEY

Member of Congress

JULIA BROWNLEY

Member of Congress

ZOE LOFGREN

Member of Congress

DORIS MATSUI

Member of Congress

DOUG LAMALFA

Member of Congress

BARRY MOORE

Member of Congress

ALAN LOWENTHAL

Member of Congress

CLIFF BENTZ

Member of Congress