

April 16, 2020

To: Chairman Richard Shelby and Vice Chair Patrick Leahy
Senate Committee on Appropriations

Chairman John Hoeven and Ranking Member Tom Udall
Senate Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee, Senate Committee on Appropriations

Chairman Pat Roberts and Ranking Member Debbie Stabenow
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry

Chairman Marco Rubio and Ranking Member Ben Cardin
Senate Committee on Small Business & Entrepreneurship

VIA EMAIL

Dear Honorable Senators,

We the undersigned are writing to urgently request that you use all available influence to ensure the Small Business Administration revises its policies in line with Congressional intent and include farms in its Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program. Independent farms are small businesses too, and to fail to revise this harmful policy threatens to discriminate against rural areas and the independent farmers that are the backbone of rural economies.

The CARES Act (PL 116-136) was signed into law to provide a broad range of assistance to help tide over small businesses that might otherwise not be able to survive the impact of COVID-19. Among those provisions, Section 1110 of the CARES Act creates an emergency economic injury grant program. In recognition that the coronavirus is affecting many types of entities that may not traditionally be considered small businesses, this provision expands the eligibility criteria in the underlying economic injury disaster loan program.

As a result, we were shocked and disappointed that, *contrary to Congressional intent*, the Small Business Administration **singles out farmers and agricultural businesses as ineligible for this program**. Independent farmers who sell products at the local and regional level are suffering significant market losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic and have no end in sight to the disruption of their markets. As organizations engaged with thousands of independent farmers across the country, we urge you to ensure that the will of Congress is followed and the Small Business Administration revises its initial position to declare that small agricultural businesses and farmers are eligible to access the EIDL program, and the provisions in the CARES act.

Now more than ever, farmers need your help to make it through this pandemic so that they can continue to feed American families, fuel our economy, and sustain other resources which are essential to our survival. As each day passes, more and more farmers are going to be faced with decisions about

whether to feed their families or feed their animals. The devastation on farms is unbearable, and it also threatens our food supply. Other sources of financial support such as FSA loans and the pending support for local food systems and direct marketers are slow, inaccessible, and simply unavailable at this critical time.

You have an opportunity to make a simple solution to an easily fixable problem. All we are asking is for you to ensure the revision of the original administrative decision and mitigate immense financial hardship for the nation's agricultural community.

Thank you for your urgent attention to this matter,

A Greener World
Buffalo River Watershed Alliance
Community Alliance with Family Farmers
Farm Aid
Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance
Food & Water Watch
Food Animal Concerns Trust
Friends of Family Farmers
Friends of the Earth
Health Care Without Harm
Idaho Organization of Resource Councils
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
Powder River Basin Resource Council (Wyoming)
Public Justice
Sierra Club
Socially Responsible Agricultural Project
Sustainable Food Trade Association
Western Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (WODPA)
Western Organization of Resource Councils (Billings, MT)

CC: The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Senate Majority Leader
The Honorable Chuck Schumer, Senate Minority Leader