



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-3605**

January 26, 2022

The Honorable Tom Vilsack  
Secretary of Agriculture  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

Thank you for your continued leadership at the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). In September 2021, Congress authorized supplemental disaster relief for agricultural producers who suffered weather-related, catastrophic losses in 2020 and 2021. These reauthorized programs, such as the Wildfire Hurricane Indemnity Program Plus (WHIP+), are critical for producers struggling with historic and widespread losses and vital in their ability to feed and clothe the world.

For example, Winter Storm Uri was a significant disaster for Texas farmers and ranchers in 2021, causing over \$600 million in agricultural losses. Citrus crops were destroyed, livestock herds and replacement animals were lost, and dairy plants were forced to shut down processing plants and throw out millions of gallons of marketable product. This storm impacted agribusiness's cash flow and the lack of liquidity will be felt by producers for several years.

Congress worked expeditiously to authorize disaster relief related to the winter storm and other weather-related disasters, and USDA must reflect Congress's intent by swiftly accepting applications and administering these programs. While a potential timeline was briefly discussed during the House Agriculture Committee's January 19<sup>th</sup> hearing, our producers have received minimal information from USDA regarding the agency's plan or timeline for distributing the \$10 billion in disaster assistance. Over the last year, producers have endured labor shortages, skyrocketing input costs, barriers to global markets due to supply chain congestion, and severe weather. Now, agribusinesses face uncertainty regarding when to expect aid that is crucial in covering losses due to natural disasters and preparing for next year's planting season.

We respectfully ask for USDA's assistance to address delays in access to assistance immediately. To provide transparency to our farmers and ranchers, we request answers to the following questions:

1. When can our producers expect information from USDA regarding deadlines and eligibility for the reauthorized 2020 and 2021 programs?
2. Can USDA provide a definite date on when producers can expect these payments issued?
3. What can Congress and USDA do regarding long term "fixes" to the WHIP+ application process and payment system?

Given the volatile nature of the agriculture industry, it is critical that we consistently provide our producers access to the resources and assistance they need. If greater flexibilities or resources are necessary, we stand ready to address any barriers. Thank you for your attention and timely consideration of this critical matter.

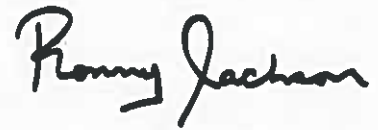
Sincerely,



Jodey C. Arrington  
Member of Congress



August Pfluger  
Member of Congress



Ronny Jackson  
Member of Congress



Dan Crenshaw  
Member of Congress



Colin Allred  
Member of Congress



Kay Granger  
Member of Congress



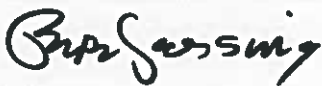
Tony Gonzales  
Member of Congress



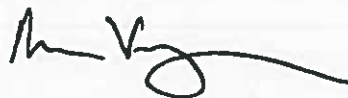
Beth Van Duyne  
Member of Congress



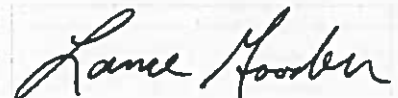
Vicente Gonzalez  
Member of Congress



Pete Sessions  
Member of Congress



Marc Veasey  
Member of Congress



Lance Gooden  
Member of Congress



Brian Babin, D.D.S.  
Member of Congress



Troy E. Nehls  
Member of Congress



Michael Cloud  
Member of Congress



Jake Ellzey  
Member of Congress