

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 17, 2019

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chairwoman
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Appropriations

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Chairwoman Lowey:

As members of the Senate Appropriations Committee, we are deeply concerned about the efforts of Democratic members of the U.S. House of Representatives to intentionally omit provisions in a Continuing Resolution (CR) in an attempt to prevent or delay Market Facilitation Program (MFP) payments to our nation's struggling farmers and ranchers.

As you know, Congress has routinely replenished the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) as a simple matter of course – up until now. It has done so recognizing that replenishing the account is absolutely necessary to fund critical programs the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) administers to support America's farmers and ranchers. Commodity, conservation, and trade programs authorized by the Farm Bill all rely on CCC funding. USDA mission areas extend across the country and across commodities, from row crop farmers to specialty crop producers and livestock raisers to lobstermen and seafood producers. Providing the Secretary of Agriculture the resources to carry out the Farm Bill and other laws passed by Congress to aid these producers, especially in hard times, has always been a shared goal of both Democrats and Republicans.

Respectfully, we submit that by denying desperately needed support to help offset the effects of unjustified retaliatory tariffs by China, you are hurting our farmers and ranchers who are depending on MFP payments and all Americans who have been harmed by China's predatory trade practices.

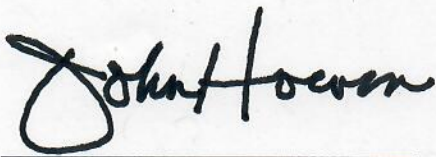
America's farmers and ranchers are in their sixth straight year of recession. Farm debt is at its highest level since 1982, ominously a year that led up to the 1980s farm financial crisis. The debt-to-asset ratio of our farms has also been steadily rising for the last seven years. Chapter 12 bankruptcies have reached levels not seen since much of America's heartland was in the grips of record drought. Compounding the problem, working capital is down by a full 25%. These and other conditions led the Agriculture and Food Policy Center to conclude that two-thirds of our farms are in precarious financial condition.

Our nation's farmers and ranchers badly need the MFP committed to them by the President, using the legal authority that we in Congress provided. For many of our producers, MFP will be the difference between continuing the family tradition or being denied the credit necessary to farm and ranch for another year.

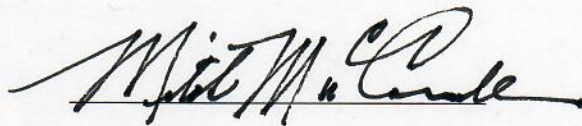
The upcoming CR must include the anomaly requested by USDA that would allow them to access the \$30 billion in spending of the CCC prior to October 1st to ensure that MFP payments and farm bill programs continue uninterrupted.

We urge you to follow sound bipartisan counsel – stand by our farmers and ranchers and keep government running.

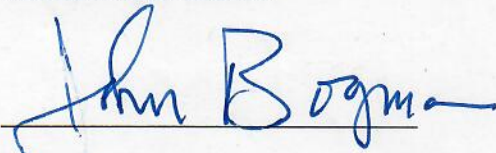
Sincerely,



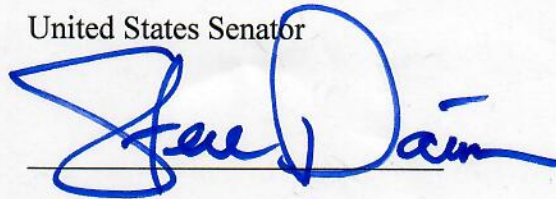
United States Senator



United States Senator



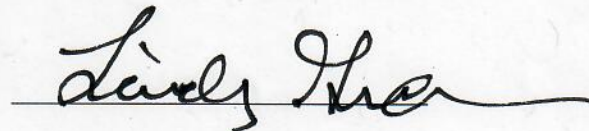
United States Senator



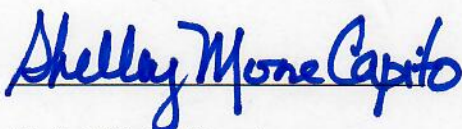
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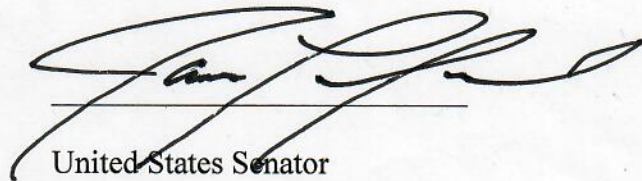
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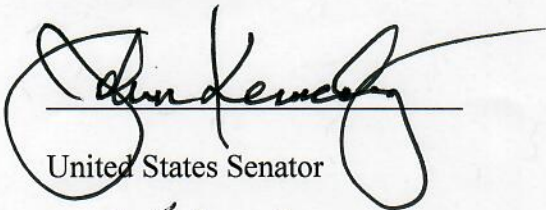
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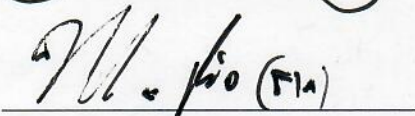
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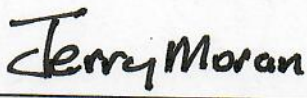


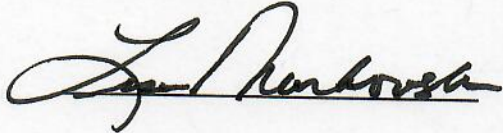
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