

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 4, 2018

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue:

Last month, Congress passed the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 that contained, among other things, more than \$2.3 billion in disaster assistance funding for farmers impacted by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria and last year's devastating wildfires. We are concerned that to date there has been no implementation guidance for producers in our states.

Producers in a wide range of industries across our states were affected by severe weather disasters in 2017. The citrus industry in Florida was especially devastated by Hurricane Irma because the storm struck just a few weeks before harvest, destroying most of the fruit and many trees as well. For an industry already weakened by citrus greening, this storm has pushed many growers to the brink of financial ruin.

Responding to the concerns of small and large growers alike, Congress saw fit to include ad-hoc disaster assistance funding separate from established disaster programs. This legislation provides you with wide authority and maximum flexibility to avoid imposing restrictions in disbursing disaster assistance so that disaster payments could be designed to help all impacted farmers rebound from crop losses in time for the 2018 planting season. It is important that you utilize this authority as granted by Congress and remove any unnecessary restrictions when so many of our rural communities are dependent on the quick recovery of domestic food and fiber crop production.

To that end, we respectfully request an opportunity to directly discuss the implementation of the disaster assistance funding for our states with you. In the meantime, we ask that you provide an update on any implementation decisions you have made so far.

We look forward to your response.

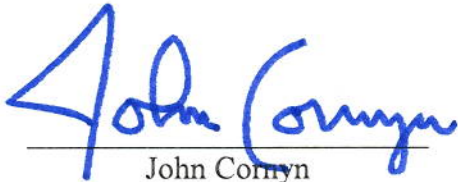
Sincerely,



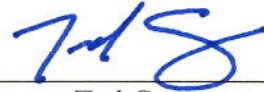
Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator



Bill Nelson
U.S. Senator



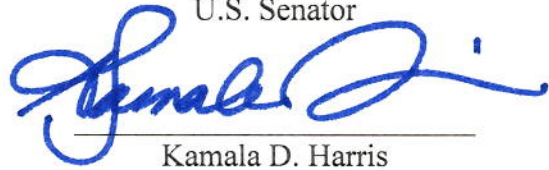
John Cornyn
U.S. Senator



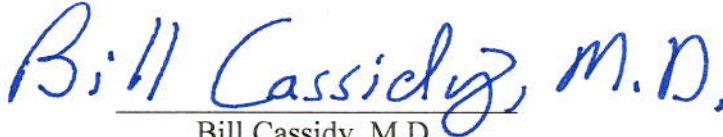
Ted Cruz
U.S. Senator



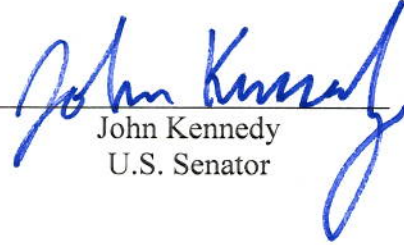
Dianne Feinstein
U.S. Senator



Kamala D. Harris
U.S. Senator



Bill Cassidy, M.D.
U.S. Senator



John Kennedy
U.S. Senator