

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-4606**

August 21, 2020

Secretary Sonny Perdue  
United States Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue:

I write to provide my support as you consider further assistance for our farmers and ranchers affected by the derecho storm that hit the state of Iowa on Monday, August 10. Over the last two years, our farmers have faced insurmountable challenges and I strongly believe that we must take every opportunity to provide them with meaningful assistance as they recover from this disaster.

Last week, the derecho ripped across Iowa, bringing hurricane force winds. This storm left 550,000 homes without power and more than one week later, thousands of Iowa families are still going without electricity or phone service. The damage to crops was especially severe. An estimated 13 million acres were flattened by the storm with losses totaling more than \$3.7 billion. Farm equipment and silos, which stored millions of bushels of grain, were also destroyed.

While glad that the President has moved with a major disaster declaration for public assistance, which would allow farmers in affected counties to access emergency disaster loans and a disaster set-aside, I believe that more help may be needed in the wake of this terrible storm. I stand ready to work with you to maximize the support available to Iowa farmers and ranchers, and request the following information:

- How soon can farmers contact their local Farm Service Agency Offices to register or sign up for the Emergency Conservation Program?
- Will Iowa have adequate funding through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program to help farmers in affected counties with debris clean-up? Is there consideration of an additional EQIP allocation and creation of an emergency EQIP signup?
- What legislative changes would be required to allow qualifying farmers impacted by the derecho to receive assistance under WHIP+?
- If the statute was amended to include natural disasters occurring in calendar year 2020, would the derecho be considered a qualifying natural disaster? Would the derecho be considered a tornado?

- If eligibility for WHIP+ were expanded to include farmers and ranchers impacted by the derecho, would additional appropriations be required to provide such assistance?
- What additional resources could be deployed to assist our farmers beyond the programs mentioned above?
- Is USDA considering any means to immediately increase grain storage capacity in affected areas?

While crop insurance will come into play here, this storm represents a shock to an agriculture industry that is already reeling from market forces and policy decisions beyond its control. We must begin considering all possible options to help them recover.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and I look forward to your reply. Please contact Steffanie Bezruki in my office with any questions at [steffanie.bezruki@mail.house.gov](mailto:steffanie.bezruki@mail.house.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Abby', followed by a stylized flourish.

Abby Finkenauer  
Member of Congress