

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 19, 2023

The Honorable Joe Biden  
President of the United States of America  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Shalanda Young  
Director, Office of Management and Budget  
725 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear President Biden and Director Young:

As Congress and the Administration assemble an emergency supplemental appropriations bill, we write to urge you to ensure that agricultural producers who have been impacted by extreme weather during peak months of the growing season are supported in this legislation. It is essential that the Administration support a request for emergency supplemental funds to agricultural producers so that they can continue to feed our country and our international trading partners, and to secure our domestic food supply for the future.

On May 18, 2023, sub-freezing temperatures and frost – with temperatures in the mid to low 20s – damaged strawberries, blueberries, grapes, peaches, cherries, pears, apples, Christmas trees, and other nursery crops in New England. Not even 60 days later, in July of 2023, widespread flooding caused serious damage to crops in the Northeast. Agricultural producers in New England sustained more than \$50 million of damage, impacting approximately 3,000 acres of farmland in Connecticut alone from the flooding, in addition to an additional 1,000 acres impacted by the frost. Vermont producers had estimated losses of over \$16 million from the summer floods, impacting over 27,000 acres.

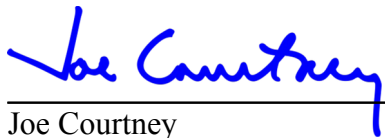
Many of these producers do not have coverage from the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) or through other forms of crop insurance offered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) or the Risk Management Agency (RMA) for a variety of reasons – including a lack of policy options, administrative barriers to applying, and high premium to payout ratios. Because of the damage sustained through these events, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has provided county disaster designations for counties throughout New England that were impacted by these extreme weather events. We were thankful to see that USDA provided these disaster designations, which demonstrates the severity of the weather experienced by our producers. Now that these designations are in place, though, our producers need additional support to sustain themselves through the winter months and stay in operation next growing season. The USDA disaster designation opens up credit and lending opportunities to these growers, but many producers operating on slim margins are in dire need of more flexible funding that can help their agricultural operation stay in business after losing, for many, an entire growing season's worth of revenue.

New England has lost significant numbers of small farms over the past decade, and we are concerned that the impacts from this drought could be the breaking point for these producers. We are also concerned that producers who have lost so much of their yield could sell their land to

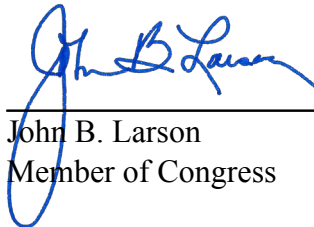
developers, permanently losing it for agricultural production. To this end, we request that Congress replenish funds from the Emergency Relief Program and expand Emergency Relief Program authorities to cover losses incurred in 2023, in addition to losses from 2022, 2021, and 2020. Moving forward, our delegations are working to include in the Farm Bill reforms that would remove barriers for our producers to purchase crop insurance and would support them in acquiring policies so that they are better protected against future disasters. We stand ready to work with you, and our colleagues in the House and Senate, to find a longer-term legislative solution to the extreme weather impacting small farms in New England.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

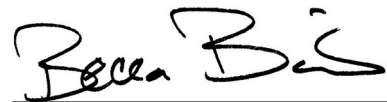
Sincerely,



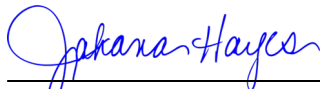
Joe Courtney  
Member of Congress



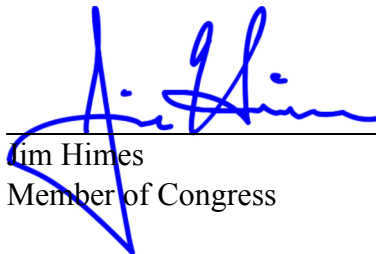
John B. Larson  
Member of Congress



Becca Balint  
Member of Congress



Jahana Hayes  
Member of Congress



Jim Himes  
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch  
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress



Richard E. Neal  
Member of Congress



Lori Trahan  
Member of Congress



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Chellie Pingree  
Member of Congress



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Ann McLane Kuster  
Member of Congress



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Chris Pappas  
Member of Congress



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Patrick Ryan  
Member of Congress