

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 24, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy,

As you continue to consider legislative action in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we urge you to ensure the inclusion of language that waives matching fund requirements for agriculture businesses who receive funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) through the Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program (FMPP and LFPP) and Value Added Producer Grants (VAPG). Bipartisan legislation to do this was introduced earlier this year, and we believe this temporary change is imperative to helping small farmers survive the current economic climate.

The COVID-19 crisis has reminded us that our food supply chains are fragile, and that farmers and producers cannot be taken for granted. Family-owned farms and small to mid-sized producers have been and continue to face gut-wrenching financial challenges as they work to adjust and reorient their business models and supply chains.

Congress must work to find creative solutions to help our farmers and producers adapt and find new ways to get their products to consumers. The good news is that the USDA already has a robust portfolio of programs that help strengthen local and regional food markets—shortening the time and distance required to get food from farm to table. FMPP, LFPP, and VAPG all have strong bipartisan support and a demonstrated track record of helping farmers diversify their operations and connect with local consumers — a win-win for both ends of the food supply chain.

The financial implications of COVID-19 make clear that farms need the support of programs like these now more than ever, but many applicants may be unable to compile the funds needed to participate. As such, we urge you to ensure the matching fund requirements for those participating in these programs be temporarily waived. We appreciate language to this effect was included in legislation passed by the House in both May and October and encourage you to again include it in any bipartisan economic stimulus package to come.

Thank you for your attention to this important request. Please do not hesitate to reach out to our offices if you have questions.

Sincerely,



Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress



Jeff Fortenberry
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress

Marcia L. Fudge
Member of Congress

Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress

Peter Welch
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