



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

June 1, 2020

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20250

Secretary Perdue,

Thank you for your continued efforts on behalf of the agricultural industry during this unprecedented crisis. The US Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP), which will provide up to \$16 billion in direct payments to deliver relief to America's farmers and ranchers, is a critical step toward our nation's recovery.

As a Representative of Louisiana, I strongly support funding for the crawfish industry under the CFAP budget set aside for aquaculture in additional funding rounds. The US crawfish industry is seasonal and relies heavily on direct-to-consumer markets such as restaurants, large social gatherings, caterers, festivals, and farmers markets. Government orders to close restaurants to dine-in customers and US Centers for Disease Control limitations on social gatherings have significantly impacted the industry. Producers have seen prices plummet by more than \$1.00 per pound and expect average losses of more than \$400 per acre by season's end. Taken together, this amounts to a roughly 60% loss in market value during the peak of crawfish season.

The crawfish industry provides more than \$305 million to Louisiana's economy with farmers supplying crawfish to restaurants and events nationwide. Without immediate assistance, the short-term losses directly caused by COVID-10 could result in permanent market loss and the destruction of this industry would allow for further encroachment by Chinese competitors. The Louisiana Farm Bureau, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, and the Louisiana State University AgCenter are currently collaborating to quantify the impact of these devastating losses, provide payment rate data and losses, and request consideration of CFAP funding.

Thank you for your serious consideration of the US crawfish industry's application for assistance under the CARES Act. This matter is of great importance to my constituents in Louisiana and I look forward to working with you further to support our farmers and producers.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Clay Higgins".

Clay Higgins
Member of Congress