



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

August 16, 2022

Secretary Tom Vilsack
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1300 Independence Ave SW
Washington, D.C 20250

Secretary Vilsack,

As the elected Representative for hundreds of farmers in Southwest Louisiana, I write to you today regarding the ongoing crisis on America's farms. If We, the People, want to feed, fuel, and clothe the world, We, the elected and appointed officials, must support our farmers. I understand that many proposals are being discussed in Congress and at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (the Department) in preparation for the next Farm Bill. Rural America needs support now, and I want to offer solutions.

We must support our domestic fertilizer market. Significant increases in the cost of fertilizer this past year have caused financial crisis on family farms. Farmers in some areas are suffering from prices more than 300% higher than last winter. That is why I was pleased to see the Department's March announcement to spur investment in this sector.¹ Existing USDA funding should be made available to currently operating fertilizer manufacturing facilities to enhance production of fertilizer products and address supply chain issues.

To address the crisis in front of our nation, I am concerned that using the \$500 million to invest in new facilities will take longer than expected and miss the need to help our farmers now. In Louisiana alone, the fertilizer industry supports over eleven thousand jobs, including manufacturing, terminal, and retail jobs. Additionally, the industry pays over \$200 million in federal taxes and over \$160 million in state taxes. If the Department's goal is to increase domestic capacity to supply American farmers grant funding would be most impactful by prioritizing commercially viable projects. Investing in our current footprint would only increase high-quality jobs in rural areas and enhance our domestic production capacity.

My office also stands in full support of the On-Farm Storage Loss Program (OFSLP). This program provides payments for uncompensated losses of harvested commodities, including grains, oilseeds, and hay stored in on-farm structures due to natural disasters. Louisiana farmers are being forced into bankruptcy by inflation. The American government must stand with farm families during this time of

unprecedented supply chain disruptions and severe inflation brought about by government policies. What's right is right. I will not sit idly by as our farmers are crushed by inflation. As part of the Extending Government Funding and Delivering Emergency Assistance Act, passed by Congress last year (P.L. 117-43), the OFSLP was reauthorized for those qualifying losses incurred in 2020 and 2021. Prompt action to finalize and roll out the program would be a win for farmers across the country.² As a representative of a state prone to natural disasters, this program would benefit and provide critical assistance to farmers who experienced losses due to hurricanes and other natural disasters in 2020 and 2021.

Regards,



Clay Higgins,
Member of Congress

1. <https://www.ams.usda.gov/press-release/usda-extends-deadline-comments-its-%E2%80%9Caccess-fertilizer-competition-and-supply-chain>
2. <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-VII/subchapter-D/part-760/subpart-P>