

February 13, 2013

The Honorable Harry Reid, Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
522 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid, Minority Leader McConnell and Members of the U.S. Senate;

As representatives of US farmers and ranchers, we ask for your support of the comprehensive legislation that was introduced by Senators Max Baucus (D-MT), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) and Roy Blunt (R-MO) on January 25, 2013. S.141 will extend agriculture disaster assistance programs for 2012, 2013.

As the nation awaits passage of a comprehensive Farm Bill, agriculture producers across the country are left without the reassurance and support they need in times of extreme weather events. 2012 saw the nation struck with one of the worst droughts in 50 years; many regions across the country have yet to recover and are still undergoing unseasonably dry weather and thus without any relief in sight for their herds and crops.

Following the passage of the American Taxpayer Relief Act and subsequent extension of 2008 Farm Bill policies and programs, these necessary disaster relief programs were left without any mandatory funding. We urge for passage of necessary legislation that backfills programs for 2012 and extends through the remainder of 2013.

We ask that the following programs be supported through mandatory funding, thus allowing America's farmers and ranchers to overcome the harsh weather conditions: the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP), Livestock Forage Program (LFP), Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, & Farm-raised Fish Program (ELAP), Tree Assistance Program (TAP) and the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). These programs cover the immediate and long-lasting effects from extreme weather events and provide necessary assurance to ranchers and farmers across the nation.

Sincerely,

American Sheep Industry Association  
National Association of Conservation Districts  
National Farmers Union

United States Cattlemen's Association

cc: Members of the U.S. Senate