

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

July 24, 2023

The Honorable Tom Vilsack  
United States Secretary of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

We write to strongly support your ongoing attention to the widespread flood damage across the State of Connecticut and the Northeast. We encourage the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to finalize the request from Governor Ned Lamont for a USDA Secretarial Disaster Designation in Connecticut as quickly as possible. Expedient action is necessary to support our agricultural industry, and we thank the Connecticut Department of Agriculture and Commissioner Hurlburt for efficiently assessing the damage and making this request. We have heard from growers across our districts who have incurred significant financial losses and urgently require assistance.

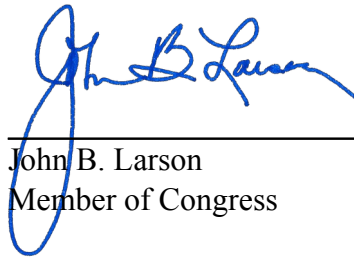
In addition, there is an urgent need for further collaboration with the Department and the Biden Administration to create new avenues for emergency relief funding for New England farmers. Typical assistance from the disaster declaration will not work for all farmers in our state—Connecticut producers face unique market challenges that leave them vulnerable after a disaster. Congress and the Department must work together to ensure any risk management concerns from small and mid-size farms are addressed in your policy decisions.

We urge the Department to look at what actions can be taken to expand access to financial assistance on an administrative level. In the meantime, we stand ready in Congress to support whatever funding or authorities are necessary to address the crisis.

In the last five years alone, Connecticut has experienced the effects of drought, frost, flooding and more. If we do not take decisive action to support our farmers, the industry will not survive the impacts of increasingly prevalent extreme weather events due to climate change. As you have said, our farm policy cannot be “go big or go out” and if we do not act now to support our producers, many of these farms are at risk of going out. We stand ready to work with you and the Department to make sure that does not happen. Additionally, we would welcome the opportunity to host you or members of the Department in the state to hear firsthand from impacted farmers.


Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



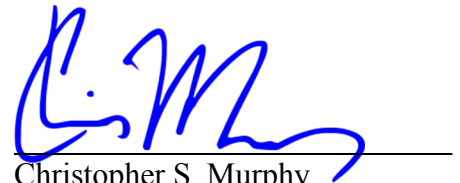
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John B. Larson  
Member of Congress



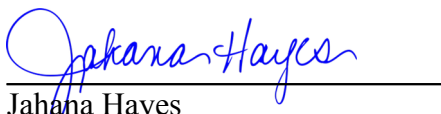
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Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator




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Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senator




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Jahana Hayes  
Member of Congress




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Joe Courtney  
Member of Congress



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Jim Himes  
Member of Congress



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Rosa L. DeLauro  
Member of Congress