July 23, 2026

Chairman Glenn 'GT' Thompson
House Agriculture Committee
400 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Angie Craig
House Agriculture Committee
2052 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman John Boozman
Senate Agriculture Committee
555 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Ranking Member Amy Klobuchar
Senate Agriculture Committee
425 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member Craig, Chairman Boozman, and Ranking Member Klobuchar,

We are writing as a follow-up to the February 3 letter that many of us signed. At this time of year, most farmers have completed planting and are well into the growing season. In most years, this could be a time for farmers to catch their breath and look expectantly toward harvest. This year, however, actions of the current administration and inaction by Congress have created and worsened unparalleled pressures on producers and rural communities across America.

In the five months since many of us wrote to share our concerns, the pressures facing farmers and ranchers have intensified dramatically in ways that jeopardize the entire U.S. ag economy—now and in the future. The limited response by Congress does not match the extent and severity of the difficulties farmers are encountering every day.

The February 3 letter asked that you hold hearings on the farm crisis. This has not happened. More than ever before, Congress needs to seek out and listen to the hardships American farmers are facing, seriously engage with farmers on the causes and solutions, and exercise bipartisan oversight and legislative authority to reverse the decline and restore our nation's agricultural economy.

We ask that you consider the following:

- The increases in fuel and fertilizer costs have further diminished prospects for farmers who have seen their margins steadily shrink over the past four years. Diesel prices alone doubled over last year's prices in farm country, increasing the cost for every acre in production. These increases have added to the continuing rise in input costs as a consequence of tariffs.
- Agricultural exports continue to languish. Among the impacts is the loss of $15 billion of exports to China, as that country has substantially shifted its reliance away from U.S. commodities.
- As widely reported, farm bankruptcies increased by 46% in 2025 as farmers have struggled to break even. In 2026 the increase in farm bankruptcies has intensified with a doubling of filings in the first quarter of 2026.
- According to the Purdue University-CME Group Ag Economy Barometer Index, farmer sentiment on the direction of our country has declined to the lowest level since the survey began asking this question in July of 2025. Input costs are the most widely shared concern with fully 66% of those farmers surveyed noting the Iran War would have a negative to very negative effect on farm income in 2026.

These pressures on the agriculture community have been caused and exacerbated by actions taken by the current administration and the lack of substantial oversight by Congress.

- The administration's ill-conceived war in Iran with its shifting objectives has cost American lives, depleted our military arsenal, and raised the cost of critical fuel and fertilizer inputs for farmers. The increased costs are being felt not only by farmers but by all Americans as higher prices spread to consumers throughout our economy. Even as the administration has promised a swift end to the war, costs have piled up at a billion dollars or more each day, and Congress has failed to exercise its constitutional responsibility for oversight. It is clear prices for fuel and fertilizer are not going to "drop like a rock" as has been promised – we must brace for elevated costs for farmers and consumers well into 2027.
- The widespread use of tariffs as a trade policy by the administration has been and continues to be a disaster for American agriculture, resulting in export value losses, significant loss of market share, increased input costs and creation of new, competing global trading alliances by other countries. After the U.S. Supreme Court struck down as unconstitutional the administration's imposition of tariffs under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, the administration has sought to impose tariffs through Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974. The outcome of these new tariffs will damage U.S. ag exports and our competitiveness in the world and increase costs to Americans. The various handshake deals secured by this Administration do not come close to offsetting the instability and loss of markets caused by this haphazard trade policy. As farmers have suffered from this debacle, Congress has failed to exercise its authority over tariffs set forth in Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution.
- Not so long ago, our nation's public research capability was preeminent in the world, but it has now been surpassed in spending by major competitors including China and Brazil. The current version of the farm bill does little to address that trend and leaves research funding stagnant. Without effective Congressional oversight, USDA has canceled research projects, delayed funding, forced unwarranted, capricious layoffs and needless relocations of USDA employees, thereby decimating the research capacity and technical support upon which the viability and competitiveness of American farmers depends.

The lack of substantive oversight by Congress and the failure to pass legislation supporting agriculture have added to the stresses on the farm economy.

- In spite of the increase in gas prices caused by the Iran war, Congress still has not passed legislation authorizing year-round use of E-15. Studies have shown that E-15 could save consumers as much as 25 cents per gallon. By not passing the E-15 bill, Congress has missed the opportunity to give consumers much-needed relief at the pump and farmers a much-needed boost in demand for the single most important value-added market in a generation.
- While trade policy has been focused on a shifting set of tariff maneuvers, the position of American agriculture has deteriorated as competing countries have forged multi-lateral deals such as the 15-member Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership and the 12-member Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership. Meanwhile the Administration has demurred over review and dismissed renewal of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), an agreement which the first Trump Administration initiated and concluded in 2020 and which accounts for close to $60 billion of U.S. ag exports. Lack of congressional action to exercise oversight and legislative action on trade policy leaves U.S. farmers at a growing disadvantage in the global markets that are so critical to farmers' livelihoods.
- While Congress has begun action to pass a long overdue farm bill, those efforts do not begin to address the crippling input costs created by federal actions, the reductions in SNAP and other programs that affect rural communities, the ability to detect and respond to new and emerging livestock and crop pests, the need for increased research as global competition intensifies, or the

rise in farm bankruptcies, even as conservation programs that provide direct assistance to farmers have been reduced by $1 billion. Adding insult to injury for American agriculture, even such a *pro forma* farm bill that fails to address the serious short- and long-term problems, may still not pass Congress.

Notably missing in the last five months has been anything from Congress that resembles a systematic, thorough, bipartisan engagement with farmers about what is really happening to their livelihoods and the farm economy and an extensive, candid assessment about policies that can reverse this crisis. While the Administration and Congress are fixated on ballrooms, taxpayer-funded monuments and bailouts for insurrectionists, the agricultural crisis in our country continues to affect real people – farmers and ranchers, their families and their communities.

Short-term, inadequate (less than the Administration paid to support Argentina's beef industry) and poorly distributed handouts won't fix the problems that we now face. The bailouts are simply an acknowledgement of the damaging impacts from lack of effective policies. American farmers want and need the long-term stable markets that they worked hard to create – not after-the-fact bailouts that fail to fully address the real problems and create their own damaging consequences.

It doesn't have to be this way; Congress can still engage with farmers to understand the depth of this crisis and begin to work toward meaningful, bipartisan solutions. Until recently farm policy was debated and developed through extensive subcommittee and committee hearings, listening sessions and field hearings where open, candid discussion informed and shaped federal policy.

The obvious and time-honored starting place for any meaningful policy or legislation needs to be an effort by members of Congress to actively and deliberately listen to what is really happening to farmers and ranchers all across the country; to see the direct and indirect outcomes of federal actions, listen to young farmers as they try to establish and continue family farm operations, and hear firsthand about the impacts being felt in farm communities.

Given the challenges facing American agriculture and its future, a serious and fearless bipartisan initiative is needed. Such an effort will take courage and determination, a bipartisan willingness to hear directly about the actual consequences of federal action – and inaction. Fortunately, the successes of our nation's agriculture have been built on the openness and seriousness of purpose by members of Congress from both parties over decades and the extraordinary work of farmers to feed our country and the world. We urge you and your colleagues to continue that success by taking the situation that farmers face as the opportunity to actively solicit and listen to their views about the intense challenges they face every day and to advance bipartisan farm policies that will help reverse the farm crisis and grow American agriculture for decades to come.

Sincerely,

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Retired Minnesota Farmer; Past President, National Corn Growers Association

Buzz Mattelin
Retired Montana Farmer; Past President, National Barley Growers Association

Bart Ruth
Nebraska Farmer; Past President, American Soybean Association

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