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October 25, 2024

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Johnson,

I write today to urge the importance of including much-needed emergency assistance for farmers and ranchers across Rural America in any broader disaster relief package.

In addition to the devastation caused to our fellow Americans during this recent hurricane season, farming and ranching families in Rural America have experienced consecutive years of record droughts, soaring inflation, and unsustainable commodity prices that threaten the food security of our nation despite the best efforts of many of our farmers and ranchers. As a result, U.S. net farm income is projected to fall 23% this year compared to 2022, and the production agriculture infrastructure is in serious jeopardy without emergency assistance to mitigate consecutive years of bad weather and unreliable farm policy. For example, cotton producers across America are projected to average a loss of over \$300 per acre this year.

Reliance on an obsolete Farm Bill has only exacerbated this dire situation, as producers face a lack of certainty and outdated support. The programs designed to mitigate price volatility and weather risks have not been updated since 2018. As a result, there is effectively no safety net to stabilize the agricultural economy, provide critical support to producers, and prevent large-scale adverse economic impacts to Rural America.

Food security is national security, and the people who supply and produce it are struggling under circumstances largely outside of their control. Therefore, as we consider comprehensive disaster assistance for our fellow Americans in hurricane ravaged regions, it is critical to consider appropriate disaster relief for farm communities in Rural America. Such emergency relief should be equitably and responsibly distributed to farmers and ranchers who have incurred significant losses throughout the year. Additionally, the disbursement of these payments must be expedited, so farmers and ranchers can get the support they need as soon as possible to plan for higher yields in 2025.

As we provide disaster assistance to our farmers and fellow Americans, we must do so responsibly considering the financial burden to current and future taxpayers as well as the fragile

and unsustainable fiscal condition of our nation. As Chairman of the House Budget Committee, I am committed to continuing to work with you to provide this much-needed support while stewarding America's resources in the most cost-effective manner.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Arrington', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jodey Arrington
Member of Congress