

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 18, 2025

The Honorable Glenn “GT” Thompson
Chair
House Agriculture Committee
1300 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Angie Craig
Ranking Member
House Agriculture Committee
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Boozman
Chair
Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
Committee
328-A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
Ranking Member
Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
Committee
328-A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

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

As Members of Congress who represent specialty crop growers in the United States, we urge you to ensure specialty crops equitably benefit from economic relief solutions provided to U.S. agriculture as soon as possible. During the previous Trump and Biden Administrations, programs were created and adjusted accordingly to ensure specialty crop growers had access to assistance as quickly as possible. During these challenging times for producers of all types of farming commodities, we ask for your leadership and assistance to elevate this priority once again.

Per the 2022 Census of Agriculture, 95% of U.S. farming counties had at least one farm growing primarily specialty crops - fresh fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, greenhouse, nursery, and floriculture products.¹ Specialty crop operations annually contribute over \$75 billion in cash receipts towards the U.S. economy.² With a variety of growing regions, seasons and markets at home and abroad, this diverse crop sector contributes not only to the health of our economy but also the health of our citizens - directly aligning with the goals of the Make America Healthy Again agenda. Additionally, our nation produces the safest and most environmentally responsible crops, which is why it is imperative our growers receive a lifeline quickly and equitably to continue producing for our nation and be a leading global example.

Like other crop sectors, specialty crop growers continue to face unfortunate and unprecedented challenges, including, but not limited to, rising input costs, limited access to a reliable workforce, unfair barriers to export markets, and frequent natural disasters. Between 2020 and 2025, growers paid 25% more for pesticides, 31% more for fuel, 37% more for fertilizer, and nearly 50% more for labor. However, commensurate price increases did not follow.³ We encourage you to work with the industry to understand the total impact losses specialty crops have experienced in the last year and needed resources.

¹ Law and Litkowski, “[2022 Census of Agriculture: Most U.S. counties with high concentration of specialty crop farms are located along coasts](#)”, USDA-ERS. April 30, 2024

² Ibid.

³ Munch, “[Specialty Crops: Mounting Cost Pressure, Limited Risk Protection](#)”, American Farm Bureau Federation Market Intel. October 8, 2025

Although the diversity of the specialty crop industry in the United States is part of its strength – allowing growers of all sizes and types to supply everything from local markets to national food service and retail outlets and other end users under private contract - it also requires due consideration of the diversity and complexity of the data that will show the industry's losses and inform relief payments. As the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) progresses with the rollout of the Farmer Bridge Assistance (FBA) Program, it is critically important we stress the need for USDA to consider the unique nature of U.S. specialty crop operations, pricing, and markets for our growers in the United States, as well as ensure the \$1 billion being held back for them is rolled out as soon as possible.

The first iteration of the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) under the first Trump Administration was built on limited or nonexistent data and ill-suited payment models that ultimately hindered relief from reaching specialty crop producers quickly. Likewise, the 2018 Market Facilitation Program included fewer than a dozen specialty crop commodities with only 1.5% of total payments going to specialty crop growers.⁴⁵ However, the second round of CFAP (CFAP-2) incorporated important adjustments which better accounted for the complexities of the growers' businesses, as well as tailored the application process to be more accessible. CFAP-2 was considerably more successful, reaching more growers in need – so much so that it served as the model for the Marketing Assistance for Specialty Crops (MASC) program. The payment rate, as part of the formula, is critical to the success of the program.

Lastly, a streamlined process to avoid unnecessary administrative delays is another key reason for structuring a program that is familiar and proven to specialty crop growers across the United States. This familiar process will ensure the USDA-Farm Service Agency (FSA) state and local offices have the personnel and resources in place to fully execute any program designed to assist specialty crop growers.

These programs demonstrate how USDA has worked to understand and address the unique characteristics of the U.S. specialty crop industry, just as it does with other crop and livestock sectors. We respectfully request that you support the creation of a comparable program.

Sincerely,



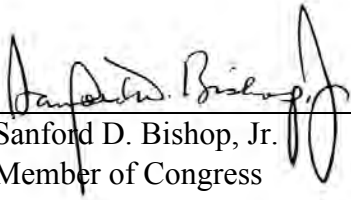
Jim Costa
Member of Congress



David Rouzer
Member of Congress

⁴ Congressional Research Service, *Farm Policy: Comparison of 2018 and 2019 MFP Programs*. August 12, 2019

⁵ GAO-22-468, <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-22-468.pdf> *USDA MARKET FACILITATION PROGRAM: Stronger Adherence to Quality Guidelines Would Improve Future Economic Analyses*, Government Accountability Office, November 2021



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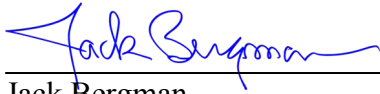
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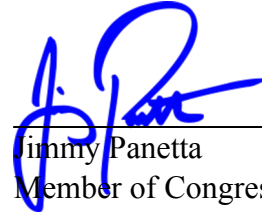
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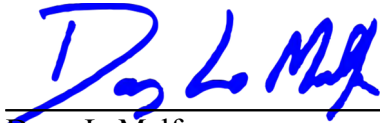
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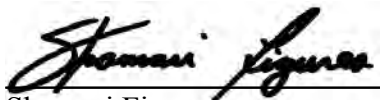
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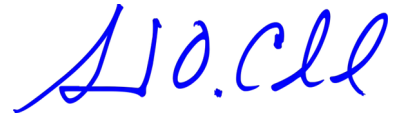
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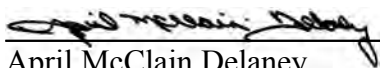
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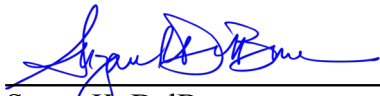
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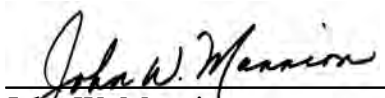
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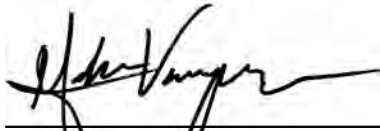
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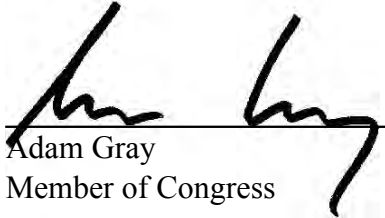
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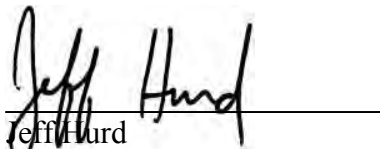
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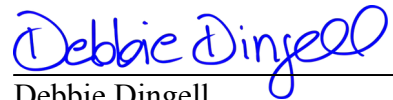
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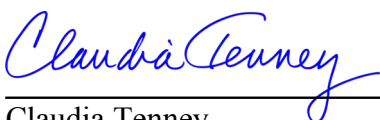
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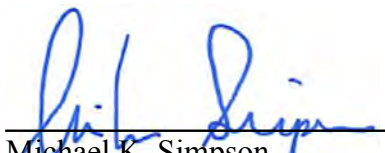
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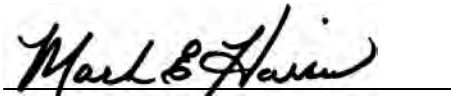
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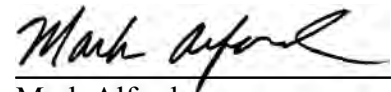
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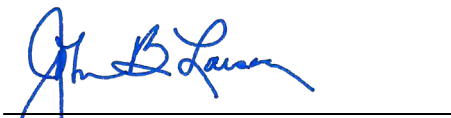
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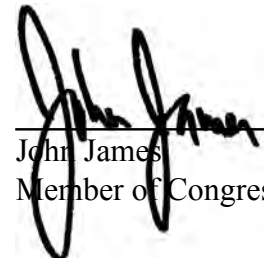
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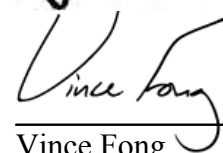
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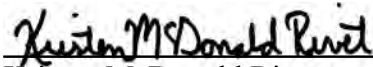
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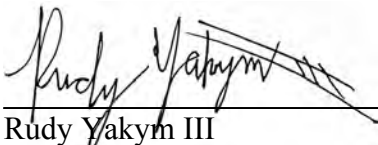
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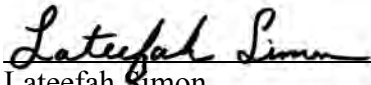
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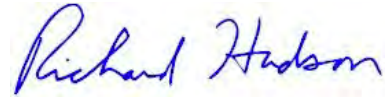
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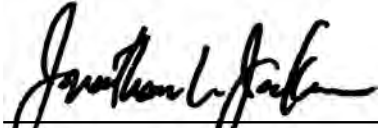
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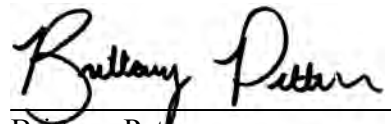
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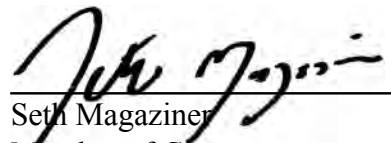
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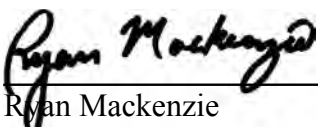
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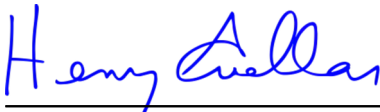
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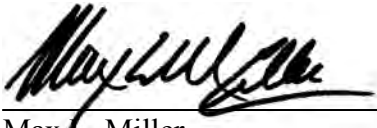
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Val Hoyle
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Deborah K. Ross
Member of Congress

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Max L. Miller
Member of Congress

A blue ink signature of Diana Harshbarger, written in a cursive style, positioned above a horizontal line.

Diana Harshbarger
Member of Congress

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Maxine Dexter
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A blue ink signature of Teresa Leger Fernandez, written in a cursive style, positioned above a horizontal line.

Teresa Leger Fernandez
Member of Congress

CC: House Speaker Mike Johnson
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