United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 29, 2007

The President
The White House
Washington, DC

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to request a meeting with you to discuss the urgent need for agricultural disaster assistance in rural America.

Farmers and ranchers around the United States have faced serious challenges over the last two years from weather-related natural disasters including drought, flood, wildfires, frost, and disease. Excessive rainfall and flooding in 2005 caused millions of acres of farmland to go unplanted and washed away millions of additional acres. A severe drought last summer plagued the United States, leaving fields of crops and forage as dry and barren as a moonscape. And serious snowstorms this winter have killed tens of thousands of cattle.

Although the vast majority of the producers we represent carry crop insurance to help them manage the risks inherent in agriculture, crop insurance was never designed to cover repeated years of devastating weather or livestock losses sustained by ranchers. As a result, many farm and ranch families badly need an agricultural disaster relief package if they are to stay on the land.

This country has always acted to help those affected by disasters. We, along with many of our colleagues in Congress, have been working for two years to secure emergency assistance for agricultural producers who have experienced serious losses due to circumstances that are beyond their control. You have not been supportive of our efforts over the past two years, but we believe that after hearing about some of the hardworking farmers and ranchers who have faced devastating weather conditions, you will help us in providing desperately needed assistance for agriculture producers across the country.

We look forward to the opportunity to discuss this important issue with you and we hope you will be willing to meet with us when your schedule allows.

Sincerely,

Byron L. Dorgan

Kent Conrad

Patrick Leahy

Dick Durbin

Dianne Feinstein

Barbara Boxer

Harry Reid

Ken Salazar

Carl Cadell

Max Baucus

Charles Hager

Kit Bond

Jon Tester

Amy Klobuchar

E. Benjamin Nelson