

BYRON L. DORGAN
NORTH DAKOTA
713 HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3405
202-224-2551
202-224-9378 TDD

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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3405

August 30, 2004

STATE OFFICES

312 FEDERAL BUILDING
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President George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

On August 27, in Miami, Florida, you announced your intention to make a request to Congress on September 7 for \$2 billion in emergency spending to respond to the recent damage done by Hurricane Charley.

I will support that request. But your emergency request also needs to include help for farmers and ranchers in the northern Great Plains. They too have been victims of weather related disasters in recent months.

In North Dakota and other states in our region, we have had an unusual series of weather events beginning this spring and continuing through the summer which have caused massive damage to agriculture crops. Family farmers and ranchers who have been victims of these weather disasters also need some help.

Here is what happened in my state. Similar circumstances exist in neighboring states:

- In early March, one storm brought six inches of rain to parts of North Dakota.
- Over the Memorial Day weekend, we had an additional four to eight inches of rain over the central and northern part of our state.
- Another two inches followed in a matter of days.

The Farm Service Agency estimated that 1.7 million acres of cropland could not be planted, and many additional acres were planted and washed away by the rains. Still other fields were planted very late in the growing season, hurting the chances for a good crop.

Obviously, these severe weather events caused very serious problems for many farmers and ranchers.

- Then, on August 18, 19, and 20, just at a time when our beans, corn and other crops were in need of heat units for their growth, we had an extremely unusual

weather event that caused additional, substantial damage. An unprecedented cold spell hit with temperatures dropping to freezing temperatures and frost temperatures. Although we don't know yet the full extent of the impact from these events, what we know so far indicates that this cold spell has destroyed or severely damaged a significant portion of our crops.

- Finally, in the southwest corner of our state, our producers have faced a severe drought. In some areas, they had only 2.2 inches of moisture from January 1 to July 1. This has been devastating to the small grains crops and the hay crops.

I have just recited the difficult circumstances faced by farmers and ranchers in my state. Similar circumstances exist in a number of neighboring states as well.

As you construct your proposal to the Congress to provide emergency funding for the victims of Hurricane Charley, I urge you to include a request for funds to respond to the weather related disasters that have occurred in our region of the country over the past six months. A disaster – whether by a fast moving hurricane or a slow motion series of devastating weather events over several months – leaves victims in the same place. They just can't make it through these tough times without some help.

Again, I will support the assistance needed for the hurricane victims, and I will work to include some help for our family farmers who have also been victimized by severe weather events. I hope you will include that additional help in your request to Congress on September 7.

Sincerely,



Byron L. Dorgan
United States Senator

*Thank you for your attention to
this request!*