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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

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COMMITTEES:
AGRICULTURE
APPROPRIATIONS
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
INDIAN AFFAIRS

The Honorable Jovita Carranza
Administrator
U.S. Small Business Administration
409 3rd Street, SW
Washington, DC 20416

Dear Administrator Carranza:

Thank you for your work on behalf of small businesses across the country as we seek to assist them in weathering the challenges brought forth by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. As the Small Business Administration (SBA) works to implement the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (Public Law 116-136), we must ensure that the provisions of the law also benefit America's farmers and ranchers. That is why I urge you to ensure that agricultural businesses and farmers are eligible for Emergency Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL).

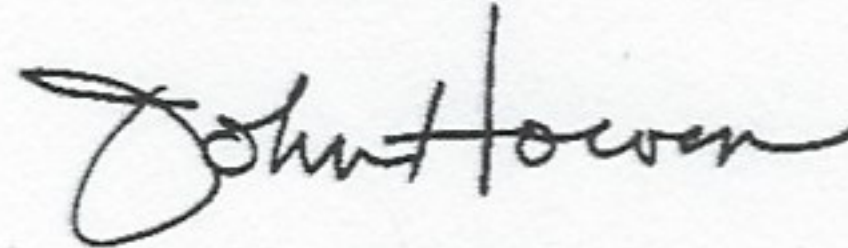
As you are aware, the CARES Act (Public Law 116-136) was approved by the Senate on March 25, 2020, and subsequently signed into law on March 27, 2020. This legislation provides direct financial help to the American people, relief for small businesses and their employees, and supports health care workers and patients. Small businesses, including our nation's farmers, ranchers, and agricultural businesses, are facing unprecedented challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is essential that they receive the support and relief provided in the CARES Act to help deal with the current economic impacts.

Specifically, Section 1110 of the CARES Act allows certain businesses with fewer than 500 employees to apply for an Emergency EIDL. These loans will allow eligible businesses to immediately receive financial assistance, including a loan advance of up to \$10,000 that does not need to be repaid. It is noteworthy that the CARES Act does not include language excluding farmers from being eligible to utilize this option. In fact, it is Congress' intent that many types of businesses, including farmers, be eligible for this Emergency EIDL program, given the uniquely challenging circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Farmers are facing significant disruptions such as declining market conditions and decreasing export and domestic demand, challenges that have been ongoing and which are further exacerbated by the pandemic. Food security equates to national security, and we must ensure the continuity of our country's food and fuel supply by providing additional support and flexibility.

For this reason, I again urge you to make explicitly clear that agricultural businesses and farmers are eligible for the Emergency EIDL program. Having this option will offer farmers another tool in their kit as they work diligently to overcome the challenging economic circumstances associated with this unprecedented public health emergency. Thank you for your prompt attention to this concern and for SBA's work to provide vital assistance to alleviate the economic uncertainties during this time. SBA's decision to allow farmers to participate in the Emergency EIDL program will benefit our farmers, who are the backbone of this country. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



John Hoeven
U.S. Senator