

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 6, 2019

The Honorable Bill Northey
Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Under Secretary Northey:

We are writing to request that you explore all possible authorities to help farmers manage their cash flow by allowing them to pay their crop insurance premiums later than December 1, 2019. This flexibility could be accomplished by shifting the current deadline of September 30, 2019, or forgoing interest penalties. A similar deferral of interest on crop insurance premiums was provided in 2012 due to widespread severe drought.

Flooding, unusually high rainfall, and related extreme moisture conditions have seriously delayed or outright prevented planting throughout the farm belt. All reports are that a large percentage of crops are in fair to poor conditions, much higher than the historical average conditions in the country, which presents more financial uncertainties for farmers regarding the quality and timing of harvest. Delaying the crop insurance premium deadlines will provide many farming operations with additional financial flexibility in the coming months.

We know that you are aware of these serious economic difficulties faced by farmers, which is why we ask that you consider every policy possibility to lessen these pressures and provide farmers with additional options. Your prompt evaluation of this request would be greatly appreciated. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Gary Peters
United States Senator