

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 25, 2022

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

We write to request the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) use available authorities to provide support to producers facing increased risk caused by disrupted spring planting. Specifically, we ask payments be made to offset any reduction in the crop insurance guarantee incurred by producers planting after the final planting date. This action is necessary to encourage robust planting of in-demand commodities whose production is threatened by heavy precipitation that is keeping farmers out of their fields.

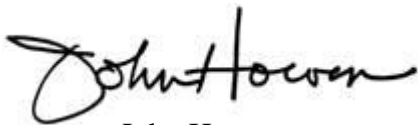
Farmers across our states are struggling to plant crops as a result of significant late spring precipitation. These challenging conditions are reflected in the National Agriculture Statistics Service's (NASS) latest Crop Progress report. The current pace of corn planting nationwide is the third-slowest of all time. In our states, it is even more delayed, with plantings for major crops like corn, soybeans, spring wheat, and sugarbeets all well behind their five-year averages. In the most extreme cases, planting progress for some crops is more than 50 percent behind last year's pace. Under current policies and absent a dramatic improvement in weather conditions, unplanted acres in our region will be significant.

These delays come at a time of great concern for global food supplies. USDA's May 12th World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE) show global wheat stocks tightening due to the war in Ukraine and weather challenges in the U.S. Additionally, India's recent decisions regarding wheat exports continues to disrupt markets and adds uncertainty to global supplies. Leaving thousands of acres unplanted across the Upper Midwest will worsen this already perilous situation.

Currently, producers planting after the final planting date face a one percent reduction in their crop insurance coverage level per day. To mitigate increased risk to farmers and incentivize planting, payments should be made to producers with qualifying losses equivalent to any reduction in their crop insurance guarantee. Providing this assurance to growers would help ensure domestic production remains robust and able to meet global demand. Importantly, payments should be made from sources other than the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC) to maintain the actuarial soundness of crop insurance while shielding Approved Insurance Providers (AIPs) from any increased liability.

USDA has made clear its commitment to ensuring American farmers have the tools needed to feed the world during this time of uncertainty. Accordingly, we urge you to provide certainty and support to producers facing planting delays. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



John Hoeven
U.S. Senator



Amy Klobuchar
U.S. Senator



Kevin Cramer
U.S. Senator



Tina Smith
U.S. Senator



Kelly Armstrong
Member of Congress



Michelle Fischbach
Member of Congress



Angie Craig
Member of Congress



Pete Stauber
Member of Congress