

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 12, 2026

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
H-307, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Collins, Vice Chair Murray, Chairman Cole, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As a bipartisan group of Members of Congress, we urge that tobacco be explicitly included in any forthcoming agricultural disaster relief package. Tobacco farm families across North Carolina have endured a convergence of economic hardships in recent years — rising production costs, weakened export markets, scorching droughts, and depressed commodity prices — that together constitute a genuine agricultural emergency. We believe the evidence strongly supports targeted relief for this community, and we respectfully request your support in ensuring tobacco producers are not left behind.

I. Tobacco Farm Families Face Disproportionately High Production Cost Increases

According to an independent analysis by Dr. Jeffrey H. Dorfman, Hugh C. Kiger Distinguished Professor of Agricultural and Resource Economics at NC State University, production costs across U.S. agriculture rose 18 percent from 2021 to 2025, based on Bureau of Economic Analysis data on intermediate inputs. However, for tobacco farm families, production costs rose 30 percent over that same period — from \$4,148 per acre in 2021 to \$5,398 per acre in 2025, representing a rate of cost increase that is two-thirds higher than the national agricultural average.

II. Export Market Disruptions Have Severely Depressed Tobacco Prices

In a normal year, approximately two-thirds of American tobacco production is exported. Any reduction in global demand, therefore, has an outsized impact on domestic prices. Dr. Dorfman's analysis, including a report prepared for the John Locke Foundation identifying North Carolina commodities most vulnerable to export disruption, found that a 33 percent reduction in export demand for tobacco would be expected to produce a price decline of approximately 11 percent. With 2025 contract prices in the range of \$2.40 per pound, that translates to a price loss of 26 to 27 cents per pound. The estimate is corroborated by 2025 market conditions: many tobacco farm families received prices at least 20 percent lower than the prior year on their non-contracted production.

China has long been one of the top buyers of U.S.-grown tobacco, purchasing 159.3 million pounds valued at more than \$481 million between 2024 and 2025. That market has now been virtually wiped out: China canceled the vast majority of its purchase contracts last year and has made very few new purchases this year. Because North Carolina is by far the largest tobacco-producing state in the country, the loss of these contracts falls directly on our growers and the rural communities that depend on them.

III. Combined Losses Exceed the National Agricultural Average

When the above-average production cost increases are combined with the above-average price decline, it is estimated that tobacco farm families suffered total losses exceeding the national agricultural average by approximately 39 cents per pound: 27 cents attributable to disproportionate cost increases, and 12 cents attributable to the excess price decline beyond what comparable commodities experienced. These are not marginal differences — they represent a structural disadvantage that places tobacco growers in a category of agricultural distress that clearly warrants congressional attention.

IV. Our Request

We respectfully urge the inclusion of tobacco in any disaster or supplemental agricultural relief legislation under consideration, or that could come together during the rest of the 119th Congress. Specifically, we request that eligibility criteria account for the full scope of losses suffered by tobacco producers, including disproportionate input cost inflation driven by increased labor costs and suppressed prices resulting from reduced export demand. Tobacco farm families have played a vital economic role in rural communities across North Carolina, the Southeast, and beyond for generations. They deserve the same recognition and support being extended to other commodity producers facing hardship.

We appreciate your leadership on these issues and stand ready to work with you to ensure equitable treatment for all agricultural producers affected by recent economic disruptions. Please do not hesitate to contact our offices should you require additional information or wish to discuss this matter further.

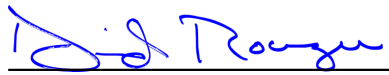
Sincerely,



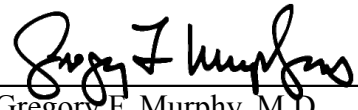
Donald G. Davis
Member of Congress



Thom Tillis
United States Senator



David Rouzer
Member of Congress



Gregory F. Murphy, M.D.
Member of Congress



Pat Harrigan
Member of Congress



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Member of Congress