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United States Senate

Richard Fordyce, Administrator
Farm Service Agency
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

November 27, 2018

Dear Administrator Fordyce:

I write to express disappointment in the Farm Service Agency's (FSA) October 30 decision to deny Montana State FSA's request to treat October 1st, 2017 through April 30th, 2018 as one eligible adverse weather event under the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP). I respectfully request that FSA immediately reconsider this decision that unfairly harms Montana producers.

Last winter, Montana producers faced constant cold weather conditions and unprecedented snowfall. The relentless winter conditions directly caused thousands of livestock losses, and forced producers to apply for relief through the LIP. The weather not only decimated adult livestock, but also caused hundreds of calves to perish almost immediately.

LIP is a vital program when mother nature strikes and livestock producers experience excessive loss. While it is critically important to administer LIP fairly and accurately, some of the qualifying requirements can be impossible for adverse weather affected producers to meet. In this circumstance, the burdensome level of proof on adverse weather data is problematic because large rural states like Montana do not have nearly enough weather stations to provide adequate data. That's why FSA must consider the entirety of last winter as an adverse weather event.

I frequently traveled across Montana last winter from October through April. I can assure FSA first hand that the impacts of the cold and snow devastated Montana producers. Please reconsider the decision to disapprove the Montana State FSA request to treat last winter as one adverse weather event. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jon Tester

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