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United States Senate

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November 14, 2017

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

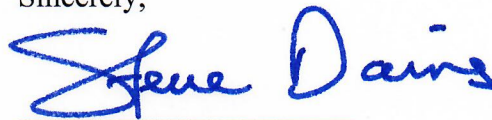
Dear Secretary Perdue:

I write to request that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) provide additional relief to farmers and ranchers across Montana who are seeking to recover from this year's severe drought and wildfires by extending the deadline to complete rehabilitation work on eligible Emergency Conversation Program (ECP) projects by 120 days. While I appreciate USDA's efforts to provide sufficient flexibilities this past year to impacted producers, the conditions on the ground in Montana warrant additional time to fully recover.

As you know, counties and American Indian reservations across much of Montana experienced record low levels of precipitation, high temperatures, and wildfires which have had substantial impacts on harvests and infrastructure for farmers and ranchers in the region. Many producers have participated in the ECP to repair their farmlands and improve water conservation, including the replacement or repair of damaged wells. The combined effect of winter conditions already impacting the state and delaying projects and few licensed well drillers in the region has resulted in substantial concerns that the initial 120 days provided to complete projects will be insufficient.

As Congress continues to work to provide USDA with the necessary resources to effectively respond to these natural disasters, I urge you to grant a 120 day extension to eligible producers across Montana and the Northern Plains to complete ECP rehabilitation work. Thank you for your consideration and the actions USDA has taken thus far, and I look forward to continuing to work with you to assist Montana farmers and ranchers on this and other critical issues.

Sincerely,



STEVE DAINES
United States Senator