

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

August 21, 2019

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

Dear Secretary Perdue:

We write requesting the United States Department of Agriculture Risk Management Agency review the extraordinary circumstances surrounding the Nebraska and Wyoming irrigation tunnel collapse and determine this irrigation disruption to be an insurable event qualifying for crop insurance protection. It is our understanding the lack of irrigation supply is an insurable event within the rules and regulations of the Risk Management Agency. We request you make an expedited determination based on the ongoing lack of adequate water supply and its damaging effects on crop growth and maturity.

As you know, on July 17, 2019, a 2,200 foot long tunnel partially collapsed along the Fort Laramie Canal. This tunnel and canal system carries water served by the Goshen Irrigation District in Wyoming to the Gering-Fort Laramie Irrigation District in Nebraska. The water disruption has affected approximately 107,000 acres of corn, sugar beets, dry edible beans and alfalfa crops grown in the region.

This region relies on the availability of surface water irrigation. Since July 17, the canal has been inoperable and no water for irrigation of the agriculture acres has been available. Farmers in this region continue to care for their crops, but the lack of irrigation water and adequate supplemental rainfall has taken a serious toll on the planted areas, crop yields and crop quality. As farmers are moving toward harvest, it would be beneficial to know their crop insurance will cover crop losses that resulted from the lack of adequate water supply.

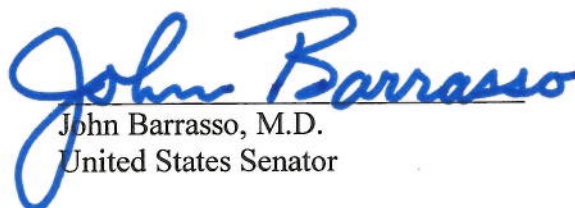
On behalf of the producers in Wyoming and Nebraska, we request USDA Risk Management Agency evaluate available reports and make a prompt determination to qualify these extraordinary circumstances as an insurable event resulting from adverse weather conditions and failure of the irrigation water supply for purposes of crop insurance coverage.

Thank you for your attention to this manner.

Sincerely,



Ben Sasse
United States Senator



John Barrasso, M.D.
United States Senator



Deb Fischer
United States Senator



Mike Enzi
United States Senator



Adrian Smith
Member of Congress



Liz Cheney
Member of Congress

CC: USDA Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation Bill Northey
USDA Risk Management Agency Administrator Martin Barbre