

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 26, 2024

The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack  
Secretary of Agriculture  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

In response to extreme drought conditions impacting Ohio farmers, we are writing to urgently request additional flexibility for emergency haying of eligible Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres, including those in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) program.

Ohio is currently facing its worst drought on record since the early 1930s, with USDA natural disaster declarations in place for 28 counties. Farmers struggling to stay afloat have resorted to depleting winter hay supplies and prematurely selling off their livestock. With few options remaining and hay reserves running low, a temporary expansion of emergency eligibility will greatly reduce long-term negative impacts stemming from this historic drought.

While the current allowance for emergency haying and grazing of CRP acres has been a benefit to many struggling farmers, most CRP acres in Southeast and Southern Ohio (where drought conditions are most severe) are ineligible due to their enrollment in CREP or SAFE. Allowing these additional acres to be utilized would provide farmers with desperately needed relief as they fight to keep their livestock fed.

We remain appreciative of USDA's continuing response to this unprecedented drought and are hopeful you will act on this important request. Thank you for your urgent consideration.

Sincerely,



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Michael A. Rulli  
Member of Congress



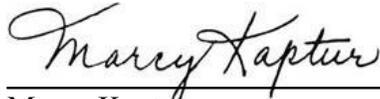
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Warren Davidson  
Member of Congress



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Mike Carey  
Member of Congress



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Marcy Kaptur  
Member of Congress



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Brad R. Wenstrup, D.P.M.  
Member of Congress



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Greg Landsman  
Member of Congress



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Troy Balderson  
Member of Congress