



COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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September 6, 2007

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
361 A. Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator McConnell:

I hope you had many great experiences during your August Congressional recess and visit to Kentucky. Though it is always a pleasure to travel our Commonwealth and interact with our citizens, I am sure you noticed that many regions of the state were considerably hotter and drier than usual. In fact, this has been the third driest May through August period in the past 113 years. This year's weather has dealt our state's farmers numerous challenges.

Record breaking frigid temperatures in April devastated our fruit crop and significantly impacted our grain and forage production. This summer's intense heat and lack of rainfall has further distressed our agricultural producers. Many livestock farmers are being forced to liquidate their herds because their access to pasture, hay, and water has been depleted. Much of our state's soybean crop is being abandoned or harvested for hay because the pods are missing or are un-filled.

This year, adverse weather conditions have prompted me to send two letters requesting disaster assistance to Mike Johanns United States Secretary of Agriculture. The first letter sent on April 17, 2007, referenced the severe spring freeze and the second sent on August 29, 2007, documented our current extreme drought conditions.

On May 25, 2007, President Bush signed into law legislation that created the Agricultural Assistance Act of 2007. Although each of our counties qualified for assistance through this Act for various weather related issues between January 1, 2005 and February 28, 2007, the financial hardships endured during this growing season are not addressed.

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Disaster legislation for our nation's farmers has been enacted three times since 2002. As a member of the United States House of Representatives, I voted in support of the Agricultural Assistance Act of 2003 which provided disaster help back to January 1, 2001. This year's dual weather disasters in Kentucky will have a devastating effect on our rural communities if it is not addressed promptly.

On behalf of our agricultural community, I request that Congress initiate swift legislative action to include this year's weather disasters in the Agricultural Assistance Act of 2007 or in another bill that provides our state's farmers meaningful financial assistance in a timely manner. Financial losses this year have already exceeded several hundred million dollars for our farmers and quick aid is needed to alleviate further hardships.

Thank you for your full consideration of this request. If I may be of further assistance, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Ernie Fletcher

cc: Senator Mitch McConnell  
Senator Jim Bunning  
Congressman Ed Whitfield  
Congressman Ron Lewis  
Congressman John Yarmuth  
Congressman Geoff Davis  
Congressman Harold Rogers  
Congressman Ben Chandler