

United States Senate

November 9, 2017

Steve Peterson, Acting Administrator
Farm Service Agency
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Acting Administrator Peterson:

I write to urge the Farm Service Agency (FSA) to expeditiously release Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) disaster funding to Montana farmers and ranchers. Montana is experiencing a devastating drought that is threatening the livelihood of countless farmers and ranchers and causing substantial economic hardship in the small rural communities responsible for feeding America. In addition to the drought, devastating wildfires destroyed crops and infrastructure across several Montana counties this summer. As such, it is critical for the FSA to distribute the ECP funds that Congress authorized in the farm bill to combat these types of disasters.

Eligible farmers and ranchers from across Montana are submitting ECP applications to repair damaged farmland and establish new methods for water conservation. I am hearing from producers who are eager to begin land recovery projects and deploy conservation practices to prepare for the next growing season. While I know FSA is working hard to serve farmers and ranchers across America, I urge the Agency to prioritize releasing ECP funds to applicants in the following Montana counties:

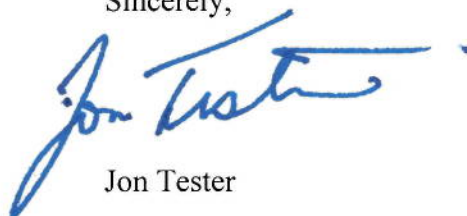
Blaine
Carter
Custer
Daniels
Fallon

Fergus
Garfield
Musselshell
Petroleum
Phillips

Richland
Roosevelt
Rosebud
Sheridan
Valley

Local FSA employees in Montana are doing a tremendous job working with producers on applications, providing technical assistance and developing strategies to deal with the current drought hardships. To support the excellent work happening at the state and county level, the FSA headquarters must get application funds distributed as soon as possible. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jon Tester