

United States Senate

April 13, 2020

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue:

I write today regarding the three recently passed laws in response to COVID-19 and the importance of strong oversight of the taxpayer dollars being used to confront this crisis. I urge your agency to immediately update its protocols to ensure that appropriated funds are targeted to the most affected businesses and individuals, and that you review and update your procedures as appropriate to prevent and identify any incidents of waste, fraud, and abuse.

Our country faces an unprecedented public health and economic turmoil from the COVID-19 pandemic. Congress is passing aggressive measures to provide real and immediate relief to our health care workers, businesses, workers, and local governments. In recent legislative packages, Congress appropriated significant funds to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to help respond to the spread of COVID-19.

This is a critical time in our nation's history and USDA plays a vital role in our recovery. Given the President's recent removal of the Chairman of the Pandemic Response Accountability Committee and trillions of tax payer dollars going out the door, it is critically important for your agency to be fully transparent and open to independent oversight. As you work to implement COVID-19 legislation, I ask that you provide Congress a detailed plan on how USDA plans to execute these funds and what accountability measures are being put in place to ensure our taxpayer dollars are being spent efficiently and effectively.

Thank you for your urgent attention to this matter. I look forward to your swift response.

Sincerely,



Jon Tester