

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 15, 2020

Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue:

We write today concerning the ongoing public health crisis caused by the spread of COVID-19 and its impact on the agricultural industry. We appreciate all the work USDA is doing to ensure farmers, ranchers, and the entire food and agricultural industry can continue to operate during this uncertain time. As you know, American agriculture has suffered greatly in recent years, and the economic strain from the COVID-19 pandemic has presented further challenges for our producers. While all sectors of the agricultural economy have been impacted by this public health crisis, the U.S. cotton industry has been particularly hard hit during this time.

Since the beginning of 2020, cotton futures prices have declined 30 percent. As retail stores around the globe have shuttered, orders from U.S. textile mills have dropped as much as 90 percent in the last month. Cotton merchandisers and distributors are also facing additional costs for storage, interest, and other carrying costs as worldwide demand is significantly depressed. Cottonseed, a majority of which is used as a feed ration for dairy and beef cattle, is in a tenuous situation as its main customers – dairy and beef cattle producers – are also facing severe economic losses because of the ongoing public health crisis.

We understand the cotton industry has reached consensus on a package of recommendations to assist all segments of the industry. We encourage you to work with the industry, so that needed aid can be delivered in a timely manner. In responding to the current crisis, Congress and the Administration have acted swiftly to assist the people of our country during this time. We ask that you use that same approach to ensure that this critical industry represented throughout our states receives the necessary assistance.

Thank you for your ongoing efforts to provide relief, and we look forward to working with you in this regard.

Sincerely,



John Boozman
U.S. Senator



Mark Warner
U.S. Senator



Doug Jones
U.S. Senator



Cindy Hyde-Smith
U.S. Senator

/s/ **Tim Kaine**
Tim Kaine
U.S. Senator

/s/ **Thom Tillis**
Thom Tillis
U.S. Senator



John Cornyn
U.S. Senator



Kirsten Sinema
U.S. Senator



Bill Cassidy, M.D.
U.S. Senator



James M. Inhofe
U.S. Senator



Martha McSally
U.S. Senator



Jerry Moran
U.S. Senator



John Kennedy
U.S. Senator



Kelly Loeffler
U.S. Senator

/s/ **Roger F. Wicker**
Roger F. Wicker
U.S. Senator



Tom Cotton
U.S. Senator



Richard Burr
U.S. Senator