

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 31, 2018

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary of Agriculture
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue,

We are writing to request that you provide a 30 day extension for re-enrollment in the Margin Protection Program (MPP) for dairy farmers from the current deadline of June 1, 2018. We understand that farmers are in the middle of spring planting season, many of whom are also dairy farmers. An extension would provide dairy farmers in our states the additional time needed to evaluate the MPP program and the changes that were made in the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 (P.L. 115-123).

The MPP changes included in the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 make a significant investment in the dairy industry that will help mitigate the serious challenges many producers are facing. We are thankful that USDA followed congressional intent and implemented the new MPP retroactive to January 1, 2018. Data released by USDA is already indicating that many small and medium sized dairy farms enrolled in 2018 coverage will receive payments for the low all-milk prices during the earlier months of this year. Additional time for enrollment will give producers the opportunity to evaluate how the new program may work for their farm. USDA has provided similar extensions in 2014 and 2016.

Previous extensions have shown evidence that enrollment grows when the sign-up period is extended, and we urge USDA to continue further outreach and assistance in a farmer-friendly way should an extension be granted.

Thank you for the work you do on behalf of America's farmers and ranchers, and thank you in advance for considering our requests.

Sincerely,



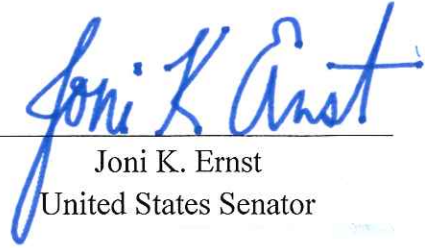
Tina Smith
United States Senator



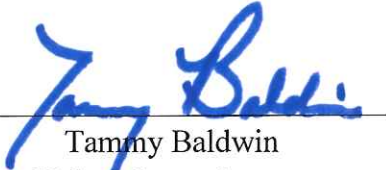
Rob Portman
United States Senator



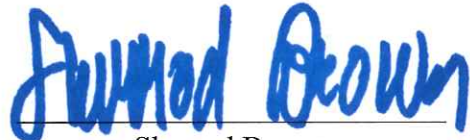
Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



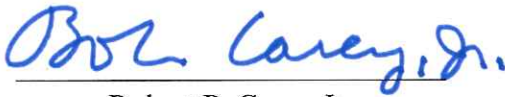
Joni K. Ernst
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



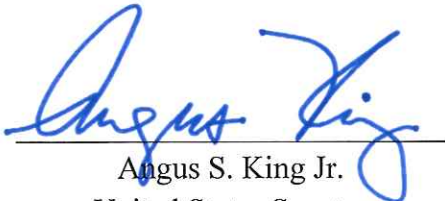
Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



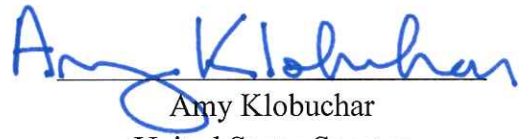
Robert P. Casey Jr.
United States Senator



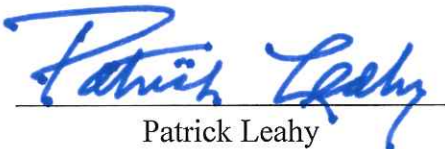
Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Angus S. King Jr.
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Patrick Leahy
United States Senator



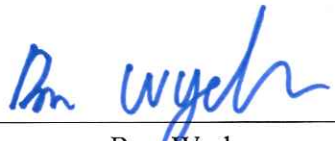
Jack Reed
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator