



June 4, 2019

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

Dear Secretary Perdue,

On behalf of the Agricultural Retailers Association (ARA), I submit the following comments regarding S.572 - Additional Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief, 2019. We believe there is a risk of unintended consequences of the legislation and request your efforts to implement the legislation in a way that does not harm agricultural retailers and others who serve farmers across the country.

As you know, ARA is a not-for-profit trade association that represents America's agricultural retailers and distributors. ARA members provide goods and services to farmers and ranchers which include: fertilizer, crop protection chemicals, seed, crop scouting, soil testing, custom application of pesticides and fertilizers, and development of comprehensive nutrient management plans. Retail and distribution facilities are scattered throughout all 50 states and range in size from small family-held businesses or farmer cooperatives to large companies with multiple outlets.

First, let me state that we wholeheartedly support the efforts of congress to pass supplemental relief to those farmers across the country devastated by natural disasters. Our members will always have the farmers' best interest at heart because if farmers don't succeed, retailers don't succeed. However, we have concerns regarding the negative impact of widespread prevented planting payments may have on the agribusiness community. Agricultural retailers own and sell fertilizer, treated seed, and crop protection products; should farmers choose not to plant in 2019 and instead take prevented planting compensation, the retailer who positioned to provide seed, seed treatment, fertilizer and crop protection for that crop will be left holding product which will either drop in value, or worse, as in the case of treated seed, be of no value at all.

Encouraging farmers to alter their planting intentions drastically will have a significant detrimental impact on agricultural retailers and other businesses who serve farmers. In our view, delaying the prevented planting date in the affected states for the 2019 growing season, or in the future, would be an excellent resolution to accommodate

grower needs while also considering the interests of those who serve the growers. We believe the American farmer wants nothing more than to be able to put crops in the ground and produce a plentiful harvest, and this action would hopefully assist to that end.

We hope you will take these concerns into consideration when providing guidance for implementation of the disaster relief funding mechanisms. ARA also respectfully requests time to meet with you and your staff to discuss these matters in the near future.

Thank you for your continued support of American farmers and the agribusiness community and we look forward to working closely with you on the guidelines associated with the disaster relief funding implementation.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. Daren Coppock". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

W. Daren Coppock
President and CEO
Agricultural Retailers Association

and the undersigned

National Agricultural Aviation Association
Southern Crop Production Association
Agribusiness Council of Indiana
Kansas Agribusiness Retailers Association
Minnesota Crop Production Retailers
Oklahoma Agribusiness Retailers Association
South Dakota Agri-Business Association
Texas Ag Industries Association

Cc:
USDA Under Secretary Bill Northey
USDA-RMA Administrator Martin Barbre