

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 26, 2013

COMMITTEES:  
ARMED SERVICES  
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND  
TRANSPORTATION  
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC  
WORKS  
INDIAN AFFAIRS  
SMALL BUSINESS AND  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Honorable Mark Pryor  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,  
Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies  
U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee  
265 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,  
Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies  
U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee  
260 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Pryor and Senator Blunt:

I write to urge support for drought mitigation funding in the Fiscal Year 2014 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee appropriations bill.

A majority of the United States is currently experiencing drought conditions, and the economic repercussions—particularly in rural areas—are significant. In 2012, 67 percent of U.S. counties received a disaster designation due to drought; U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) paid approximately \$15 billion in crop insurance indemnity payments as a result of crop and livestock losses largely due to drought. Drought is expected to create major agricultural losses again in 2013.

Expanded and enhanced drought mitigation research and strategies for dealing with drought are necessary to help farmers, ranchers, food processors, crop insurers, consumers, and state and federal agencies better address the serious threats and losses from drought. As such, I encourage support for critical applied research focused on drought, drought planning methodologies, and drought impact assessments with a goal of strengthening early warning/monitoring systems; modernization of tools such as the U.S. Drought Monitor Map decision support system; and drought preparedness education and outreach activities.

Advances in applied climate variability research have resulted in reductions in drought vulnerability through implementation of research-based drought risk management techniques and database technologies and tools, such as the U.S. Drought Monitor. This research supports development of innovative drought monitoring approaches that more quickly identify onset of drought, extent and impact of drought, and abatement of drought for the benefit of producers, communities, natural resource managers, agribusinesses and crop insurers, and state and federal agencies. Risk management decisions improve with earlier and more complete information, lessening the impact of drought and the cost of drought response, drought recovery, and disaster assistance.

Thank you for your attention to my request. I will be glad to provide any further information that you or the Appropriations Committee may require.

Sincerely,



Deb Fischer  
United States Senator