

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 2, 2023

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

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

We are writing to urge you to take immediate action by issuing an extension of the Time-Limited Trial for pork processing plants in the New Swine Inspection System (NSIS), avoiding another unnecessary hit to our nation's hog farmers and the pork processing capacity they rely on.

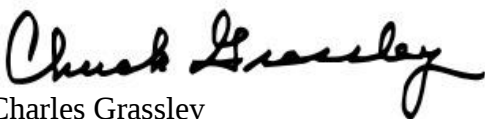
As you know, on June 30, 2021, an estimated 2.5 percent of the pork industry's slaughter capacity was taken off-line. Plants that had been operating for years under the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) Inspection Models Project (HIMP) program were required to reduce production despite compelling data about the safety of NSIS workers.

On March 4, 2022, nearly 9 months after the court-ordered slowdown, the first NSIS plant was allowed to return to its former line speed, through a 12-month Time-Limited Trial. We commend you for your work to ensure these NSIS facilities were able to get back to their full operational capacity, as well as the subsequent extension of the program through November 30, 2023. However, we are rapidly approaching the end of the respective extension period for the plants participating in the trial, and without a permanent program in place, we are again in need of another extension.

Without an extension, producers will again be facing lost market leverage and fewer options for selling their hogs, potential contract cancellations, and greater transportation costs. Our family farmers, the food supply chain, and consumers need the certainty that our pork processing capacity will remain strong and plants will not be forced to reduce production and thereby hog purchasing.

Accordingly, we strongly urge you to issue an extension of the Time-Limited Trial and provide written notice to NSIS plants prior to November 30. As we implored you in our February 28, 2023 letter, we again urge you to establish a permanent solution for these facilities that allows them to function at full operational capacity rather than continued short-term trials. Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,


Charles Grassley
United States Senator


Brad Finstad
Member of Congress



John Boozman
United States Senator



Glenn "GT" Thompson
Member of Congress



Joni K. Ernst
United States Senator



Ashley Hinson
Member of Congress



Deb Fischer
United States Senator



Tracey Mann
Member of Congress



Pete Ricketts
United States Senator



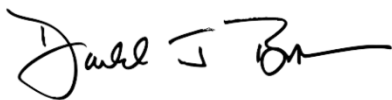
Sam Graves
Member of Congress



Roger Marshall, M.D.
United States Senator



Adrian Smith
Member of Congress



Don Bacon
Member of Congress



Mariannette Miller Meeks, M.D.
Member of Congress



Mark Alford
Member of Congress



Mary Miller
Member of Congress



Mike Flood
Member of Congress



Dusty Johnson
Member of Congress

A stylized, handwritten signature in blue ink, likely belonging to Mike Bost. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent 'M' and 'B'.

Mike Bost
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink, likely belonging to Randy Feenstra. The signature is cursive and includes a large, looped 'R'.

Randy Feenstra
Member of Congress