

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 8, 2021

The Honorable Tom Vilsack  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

Congratulations on your recent confirmation to serve as United States Secretary of Agriculture. We wish you success in your mission, which is so important to America's farmers, and we look forward to working with you to find solutions to the many challenges facing American agriculture.

We have been advocating for targeted relief for the biofuels industry since last spring when we were first made aware of the demand collapse for ethanol and other renewable fuels due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As you know, additional funding was added to the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Stabilization (CARES) Act. However, the previous administration argued that congressional intent was not clear with regard to support for biofuels and did not use its discretionary authority to assist biofuels producers through available CCC funding.

As a result, we worked to ensure specific language was included in December's COVID relief bill that explicitly clarifies that USDA may provide direct payments to biofuels producers hard hit by the pandemic. Providing aid to the ethanol industry would provide much-needed financial assistance for these key agriculture processors and help keep these critical markets open to farmers. It is for these reasons that we are supportive of the proposals the biofuels industry and key agricultural organizations have put forward to stabilize the market from last year's macroeconomic shock.

As the Department prepares a proposal for providing assistance to the agriculture industry using CCC and other resources, we ask that you use this explicit authority to aid the nation's biofuels industry. Keeping biofuels plants open is vital to the states we represent. We have been encouraged by your recent statements at your confirmation hearing that you will fully utilize USDA resources to get biofuel producers back on track and will aid the Biden Administration in restoring the integrity of the Renewable Fuel Standard.

Thank you for considering our request and for your dedication to rural America. We look forward to working with you to further protect American agriculture in response to the ongoing pandemic.

Sincerely,

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/s/ **Charles Grassley**  
United States Senator

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/s/ **Amy Klobuchar**  
United States Senator

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**/s/ Joni K. Ernst**  
United States Senator

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**/s/ Richard J. Durbin**  
United States Senator

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**/s/ John Thune**  
United States Senator

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**/s/ Tina Smith**  
United States Senator

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**/s/ Deb Fischer**  
United States Senator

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**/s/ Roger Marshall, M.D.**  
United States Senator

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**/s/ M. Michael Rounds**  
United States Senator

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**/s/ Mike Braun**  
United States Senator