

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

April 16, 2020

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

Dear Secretary Perdue,

We write to bring your attention to the closure of the Smithfield pork processing plant in Sioux Falls, SD and to urge the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to take action to assist pork producers and maintain the pork supply chain.

On April 12, 2020, Smithfield Foods announced it will indefinitely close its Sioux Falls plant due to a COVID-19 outbreak. This plant provides approximately 130 million servings of pork per week, and we are concerned about the impact this closure will have not only on the plant employees, but also on the more than 500 independent family farms who supply the plant.

To assist pork producers during this difficult time, we request that USDA conduct pork purchases and provide financial assistance to producers. We request that assistance be provided in an equitable manner that recognizes the various challenges pork producers are facing due to COVID-19 and limits market distortions.

We hope this component of the supply chain is restored quickly. However, in the event that producers are unable to schedule harvest of their hogs, we request that you consider how to use your existing authorities and available funds to compensate producers for losses. Furthermore, we request that Natural Resource Conservation Service consider how to provide financial and technical assistance through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program for affected producers, if needed.

It is critically important that we maintain our pork supply chain to ensure that consumers continue to have access to high-quality pork products in grocery stores and supermarkets throughout the country, especially during the COVID-19 crisis. Thank you for your continued efforts to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 on U.S. agriculture and for your prompt attention to our request.

Sincerely,



JOHN THUNE
United States Senator



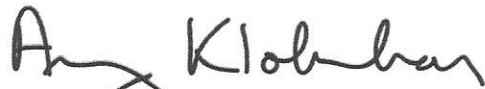
DUSTY JOHNSON
Member of Congress



CHARLES E. GRASSLEY
United States Senator



BEN SASSE
United States Senator



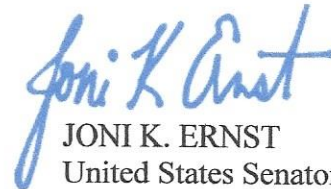
AMY KLOBUCHAR
United States Senator



ROY BLUNT
United States Senator



TINA SMITH
United States Senator



JONI K. ERNST
United States Senator



DEB FISCHER
United States Senator



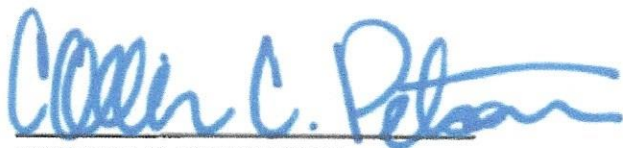
JOSH HAWLEY
United States Senator



JOHN HOEVEN
United States Senator



M. MICHAEL ROUNDS
United States Senator



COLLIN C. PETERSON
Member of Congress



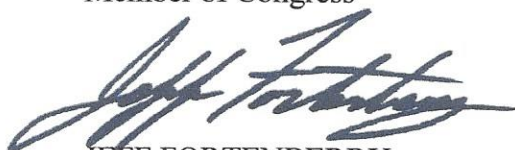
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BILLY LONG
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VICKY HARTZLER
Member of Congress



JEFF FORTENBERRY
Member of Congress



ADRIAN SMITH
Member of Congress



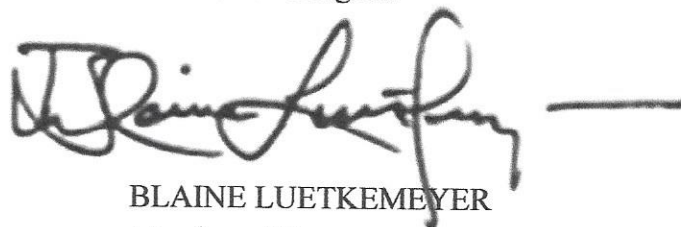
SAM GRAVES
Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



ANGIE CRAIG
Member of Congress



BLAINE LUETKEMEYER
Member of Congress



JASON SMITH
Member of Congress

/s/ Abby Finkenauer
ABBY FINKENAUER
Member of Congress



TOM EMMER
Member of Congress



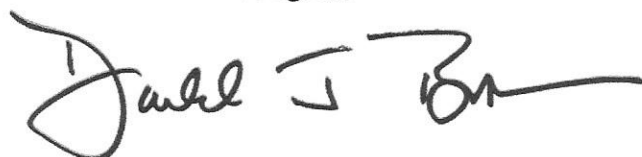
DAVE LOEBSACK
Member of Congress



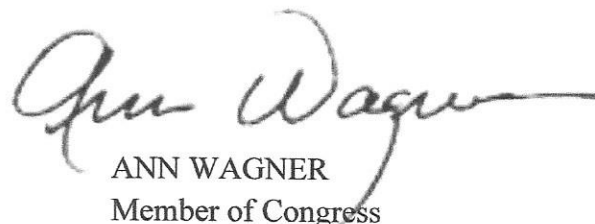
PETE STAUBER
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Member of Congress



DON BACON
Member of Congress



ANN WAGNER
Member of Congress



EMANUEL CLEAVER, II
Member of Congress