

# United States Senate

January 11, 2024

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
Chairwoman  
Senate Committee on Agriculture,  
Nutrition and Forestry  
328A Senate Russell Building

The Honorable John Boozman  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Agriculture,  
Nutrition and Forestry  
328A Senate Russell Building

Dear Chair Stabenow and Ranking Member Boozman:

We write to you regarding the importance of addressing long-term drought in the upcoming Farm Bill reauthorization. Drought remains a severe risk for American farmers and ranchers and threatens farmland and local economies that rely on dwindling water resources. We must ensure that any multi-year Farm Bill adequately addresses the heightened production risks posed by a hotter, drier future, particularly in states West of the 100th meridian.<sup>1</sup>

Agriculture is the economic backbone for rural communities in our states. However, severe, long-term drought is devastating these rural areas. During periods of droughts, our farmers and ranchers face diminishing crop and livestock outputs. These negative effects reverberate through the community, affecting not just individual producers, but the broader local economy and food system.

A changing climate has further altered the natural pattern of droughts, making them more frequent, longer, and more severe.<sup>2</sup> Since 2000, the Western United States has experienced some of the driest conditions on record and the American Southwest, in particular, continues to suffer an unprecedented period of extreme drought. These conditions have altered the landscape and have had a lasting effect on all those who rely on the land. This urgently requires Congress to invest in water and agricultural resilience. While drought conditions eased in many states this year, we cannot become complacent when our farmers and ranchers are in severe need of an appropriate drought safety net that ensures their long-term resiliency.<sup>3</sup>

We urge the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee under your leadership to consider these risks as you draft the upcoming Farm Bill. The farmers and ranchers in our states are counting on a multi-year Farm Bill that provides support to conserve water, improve

<sup>1</sup> <https://journals.ametsoc.org/view/journals/eint/22/5/ei-d-17-0011.1.xml>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.usgs.gov/science/science-explorer/climate/droughts-and-climate-change#:~:text=Climate%20change%20has%20further%20altered,unprecedented%20period%20of%20extreme%20drought.>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/chart-gallery/gallery/chart-detail/?chartId=106899#:~:text=This%20is%20down%20from%20June,the%20area%2C%20notably%20in%20California.>

watershed scale planning, upgrade water infrastructure, protect land from erosion, and create long-term resiliency on changing landscapes for growers in drought-affected regions.

We look forward to continuing our partnership to address these issues. Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter and we look forward to hearing from you on these topics.

Sincerely,



Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator



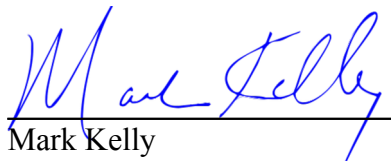
Deb Fischer  
United States Senator



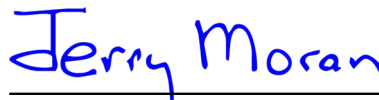
John Hickenlooper  
United States Senator



Mike Crapo  
United States Senator



Mark Kelly  
United States Senator



Jerry Moran  
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Jacky Rosen  
United States Senator



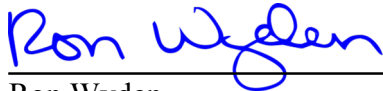
James E. Risch  
United States Senator



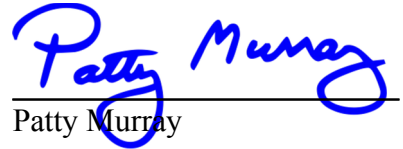
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Laphonza Butler  
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Patty Murray  
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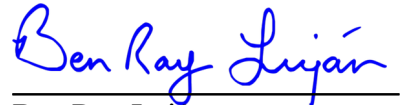
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United States Senator



Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator



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United States Senator



Ben Ray Lujan  
United States Senator



Alex Padilla  
United States Senator