

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 8, 2020

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

Dear Secretary Perdue,

Thank you for your continued support of our farmers and food supply chains during this unprecedented health crisis. As you know, Congress provided the USDA with \$9.5 billion in the CARES Act to support agricultural producers impacted by the Coronavirus. As Members of Congress from Louisiana, we wanted to highlight an industry that has been acutely impacted by the virus and should be considered for assistance: crawfish.

The U.S. crawfish industry is largely seasonal and relies heavily on direct-to-consumer markets, such as restaurants, large social gatherings, caterers, festivals, and farmers markets. Government orders to close restaurants to dine-in customers and CDC limitations on social gatherings have directly impacted this industry. Many producers have seen prices plummet by more than \$1.00 per pound and face average losses of more than \$400 per acre by season's end. Taken together, this amounts to a roughly 60 percent loss in market value during the peak of crawfish season. The Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation, the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, and the Louisiana State University AgCenter are working to further quantify the impact of these losses.

The crawfish industry provides more than \$305 million to Louisiana's economy and, although the industry is mostly concentrated in our state, Louisiana crawfish farmers provide crawfish to restaurants and Americans for consumption all across the country. Without assistance, the short-term losses caused directly by the Coronavirus could lead to permanent loss of markets and impact the long-term health of the industry. We urge you to give strong consideration to the U.S. crawfish industry for assistance under the CARES Act.

Thank you for your work on behalf of our farmers and for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Bill Cassidy, M.D.
U.S. Senator



John Kennedy
U.S. Senator



Steve Scalise
Member of Congress



Cedric Richmond
Member of Congress



Ralph Abraham, M.D.
Member of Congress



Garret Graves
Member of Congress



Clay Higgins
Member of Congress



Mike Johnson
Member of Congress