

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 20, 2012

The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

On July 19, 2012, Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker wrote requesting that you declare 23 Wisconsin counties agricultural disaster areas as a result of production losses caused by severe drought. We respectfully request that you immediately approve that request.

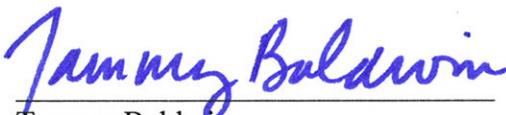
Drought conditions have caused significant crop damage throughout the state. By declaring these counties disaster areas, farmers in the impacted counties will be eligible for emergency loans administered by the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA). This financial assistance is necessary to ensure that agricultural operations and family farmers in Wisconsin are able to manage these severe losses.

While southern Wisconsin has been hardest hit by the extreme drought, its impacts are being felt throughout the state. Forecasts continue to indicate low precipitation and high heat into the near future, increasing the likelihood of extreme drought conditions extending across most of the state. If conditions continue to deteriorate and additional counties are added to the Governor's request, we ask that you quickly expedite their approval.

Local FSA offices have begun to receive producer requests for the release of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres for emergency haying and grazing. Many counties have already reached the D2 drought threshold on the U.S. Drought Monitor, thereby qualifying them to apply for the emergency grazing designation, while others have achieved the D3 drought threshold, thereby qualifying them to apply for the emergency haying designation. These requests will be made by the Wisconsin FSA Executive Director and we ask that you quickly review and approve these requests as soon as possible.

Thank you for your prompt consideration of these requests. If you would like more information, please feel free to contact our delegation. We look forward to working with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Tammy Baldwin
Member of Congress



Herb Kohl
United States Senator



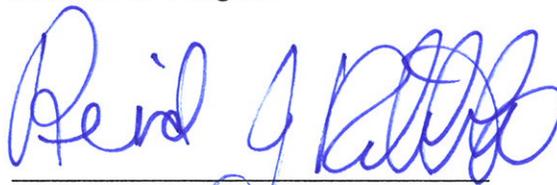
Tom Petri
Member of Congress



Gwen Moore
Member of Congress



Ron Kind
Member of Congress



Reid Ribble
Member of Congress



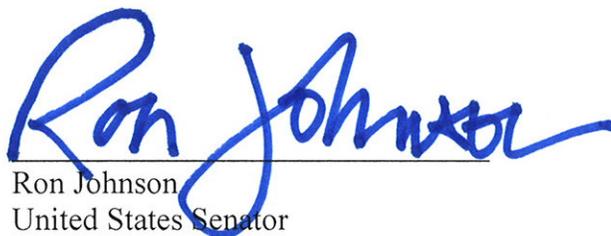
Paul Ryan
Member of Congress



F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr.
Member of Congress



Sean Duffy
Member of Congress



Ron Johnson
United States Senator

Cc: Scott Walker, Governor of Wisconsin
Brad Pfaff, Wisconsin Executive Director, Farm Service Agency