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Joe Courtney
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April 27, 2020

The Honorable Steven Mnuchin
Secretary of the Treasury
U.S. Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20220

The Honorable Jovita Carranza
Administrator
U.S. Small Business Administration
409 3rd Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20416

Dear Secretary Mnuchin and Administrator Carranza:

Thank you for all of the work that your agencies have done to assist our country's small businesses who are suffering from the effects of the COVID-19 epidemic. Your work is appreciated by my constituents operating local businesses who are in dire need of financial assistance.

As you know, the *Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act* passed the House with my strong support on April 23, 2020, and was signed into law by the President on April 24, 2020. This new law expands the ability for farmers and other agricultural enterprises to utilize the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program (Sec. 101), and now allows any agricultural enterprise as defined in statute with fewer than 500 employees to receive Economic Injury Disaster Loans or EIDL Emergency Grants.

Unfortunately, as of the writing of this letter, SBA and Treasury have yet to open up the EIDL portal to agricultural enterprises. Our local farms are essential to maintaining our food supply chain and yet they are some of the last businesses who will be able to receive funds through this critical program. Our Connecticut dairy farmers are especially vulnerable at this time, having lost much of the demand of dairy products through the closure of restaurants, universities, and public schools. The *Hartford Courant* reported just yesterday that as many as 50% of Connecticut's dairy farms could go out of business this year without further assistance provided to them, threatening an essential sector of Connecticut's economy and generations of family farms in our region. Additionally, greenhouse growers in my district supplying plants to independent garden centers, landscapers, and wholesalers are suffering a dramatic financial hit from the COVID-19 pandemic. These producers are unique in that they supply seasonal and perishable products, and therefore are also in desperate need of this financial assistance due to the nature of this work.

I urge you to immediately publish guidance enabling agricultural enterprises with fewer than 500 employees to have access to the Economic Injury Disaster Loan and EIDL grant programs.

Additionally, I request that you ensure that agricultural enterprises – who only recently gained eligibility to this program through the *Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act* – are not required to wait until all other existing businesses in the queue receive the funds in order to take advantage of this new assistance. If this guidance is not issued soon and farmers are not provided with an expedited approval track, it is extremely likely that our farms in need will not be able to access the new appropriated funds to these programs, and massive closures of local farm businesses will undoubtedly result.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joe Courtney". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Joe" and last name "Courtney" clearly distinguishable.

JOE COURTNEY
Member of Congress