

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 5, 2006

The Honorable Michael Johanns
Secretary of Agriculture
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Mr. Secretary:

On September 1, 2006 North Dakota Governor John Hoeven wrote to you requesting that all 53 North Dakota counties be designated as primary agricultural disaster counties. We write in strong support of that request, and urge that you announce this designation as soon as possible.

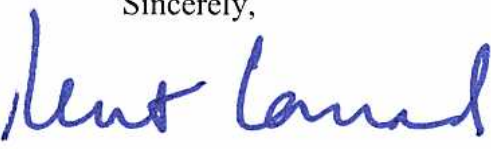
As you are aware, North Dakota's farm and ranch families have suffered substantial losses of crop and forage production this year as a result of adverse weather conditions throughout the growing season. These losses have been carefully identified and quantified in the Damage Assessment Reports provided to you by Governor Hoeven. You acknowledged a portion of the damage by approving emergency haying and grazing on Conservation Reserve Program acreage for many of North Dakota's livestock producers. You also had an opportunity to view the seriousness of the drought in the Great Plains during your recent trip to South Dakota.

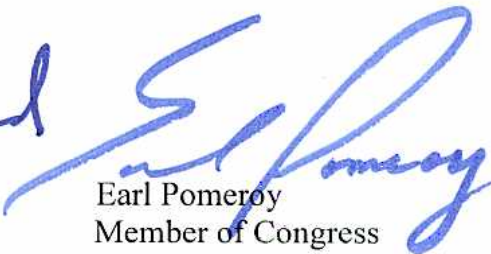
In addition to forage, livestock feed and water supplies and other losses suffered by North Dakota's livestock industry, the crop sector has also been severely impacted by the drought. The National Agriculture Statistics Service has projected substantial yield reductions for many of the grain, oilseed and pulse crops across much of North Dakota. While North Dakota has among the nation's highest crop insurance participation levels, the indemnities that will be paid for these production losses will not be adequate to address the seriousness of the situation.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this important issue. If we can provide additional information to help expedite your decision to designate all North Dakota counties as primary disaster areas please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,


Byron L. Dorgan
U.S. Senator


Kent Conrad
U.S. Senator


Earl Pomeroy
Member of Congress

Cc: The Honorable John Hoeven, Governor, State of North Dakota