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FORESTS AND FOREST HEALTH

September 27, 2006

Majority Leader John Boehner
Capitol H-107
Washington, D.C. 20502

Dear Leader Boehner:

I am writing to express my opposition to providing supplemental disaster aid for farmers and rural areas without a commensurate level of offsets in agricultural spending.

It has been reported that many areas of the country, including my home state of Arizona, experienced difficulties last year due to flooding or this year due to drought conditions. However, as the House of Representatives continues to make efforts to exercise fiscal restraint and control deficit spending, allowing this supplemental spending is simply unacceptable.

As majority leader, I hope that you will encourage the House of Representatives to continue to resist bringing any supplemental disaster spending measure to the floor without offsets. In addition, I urge you to join me in opposing any proposal that would designate supplemental disaster aid as emergency spending or that would simply tack this expensive proposal onto an unrelated legislative vehicle. The approval of additional agriculture-related spending using one of these methods would undoubtedly satisfy some. However these types of fiscal trickery would send exactly the wrong message to the American public.

While I did not support it, the 2002 farm bill was passed with the understanding that it would stop ad hoc disaster assistance payments. However, Congress has approved billions of dollars in supplemental funding to farmers in the form of economic or farm disaster assistance since 2002. In closing, I would like to highlight the upcoming farm bill reauthorization as an opportunity to address the persistence of expensive supplemental agriculture spending.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeff Flake".

JEFF FLAKE
Member of Congress