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Congress to Consider Over \$3 Billion in Agriculture Disaster Relief; Overdue Aid for Drought & Storm Stricken Georgia Farmers

*12th District Georgia Congressman John Barrow praises the funding,
but raises concerns over its ties to withdrawal timelines in Iraq*

Washington, DC – The House Appropriations Committee today agreed to add over \$3 billion in agricultural disaster relief to the upcoming Iraq supplemental appropriations bill. When news of the funding was announced, 12th District Georgia Congressman John Barrow (D-Savannah) praised the move as providing “long overdue relief,” but raised concerns over the decision to tie critical disaster relief for America’s family farmers to military withdrawal timelines in Iraq.

“It’s about time Congress got its act together on agriculture disaster relief,” Barrow said. “Those of us who represent rural and farming communities have been demanding this money for quite some time now. However, I’m concerned that this funding has been tied to withdrawal timelines for Iraq, instead of being a clean, stand-alone bill. With our family farmers suffering, Congress needs to keep our priorities straight and avoid lumping things together.”

Last August, Barrow joined Georgia Agriculture Commissioner Tommy Irvin in Sylvania, Georgia, to hear firsthand from farmers facing severe drought damage. After the tour, Barrow introduced House Resolution 998, a discharge petition to try and force the House of Representatives to consider “the Emergency Agricultural Disaster Assistance Act of 2006.” In a letter to former House Speaker Dennis Hastert, Barrow described conditions in Georgia as “dire” and urged the Speaker to “address this problem as soon as possible in order to alleviate the catastrophic impact of this drought.”

“The last Congress dragged their feet and refused to take up this important issue,” Barrow said. “But there’s a new crew in charge now, and they’re focused on doing what’s right for our family farmers. Today’s news is a big step in the right direction. And even if this bill does not pass, I’m confident that we will find another way to get our farmers the disaster relief they need.”

The agriculture disaster relief funding provided in the upcoming supplemental appropriations bill will cover damage due to weather, crop disease, insects, and delayed harvest. The bill is expected to be voted on by the House of Representatives sometime next week.

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