June XX, 2021

The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

Thank you for your commitment to supporting American families and agricultural producers throughout their recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. As the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) continues to assist farmers through the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP), we respectfully request that the Department expedite the rulemaking process to administer direct payments to contract chicken growers. We also encourage you to ensure that adequate funding is available for USDA to deliver these payments in full.

COVID-19 has severely affected the bottom lines for agricultural producers across the country, including many chicken growers in our home states. On December 21, 2020, Congress passed the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, which included additional resources for USDA to continue supporting American farmers. The bill also included funding for USDA to provide direct payments for contract chicken growers who previously had been excluded from assistance provided by the CFAP. We are concerned by the fact that these chicken growers still have not received federal assistance since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. We recognize that it is challenging to determine how losses and payments should be calculated fairly, given variations in the timing of when growers receive and finish raising their flocks. Still, we encourage you to proceed swiftly with making fair payments.

We appreciate USDA’s commitment to administering fair payments to contract chicken growers and your efforts to coordinate with industry stakeholders. Thank you for considering our request to expedite this process. We look forward to continuing to work with you to support our nation’s farmers.

Sincerely,

Steve Womack  
Member of Congress

John Rose  
Member of Congress
Dan Meuser  
Member of Congress

Markwayne Mullin  
Member of Congress

Barry Moore  
Member of Congress

George F. Murphy, M.D.  
Member of Congress

Steven Palazzo  
Member of Congress

Guy Reschenthaler  
Member of Congress

Mike Rogers  
Member of Congress

David Rouzer  
Member of Congress

Austin Scott  
Member of Congress

Pete Sessions  
Member of Congress

Gregory W. Steube  
Member of Congress

Bruce Westerman  
Member of Congress

Richard Hudson  
Member of Congress

John Joyce, M.D.  
Member of Congress