

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2602

January 22, 2013

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Chairwoman
Senate Appropriations Committee
The Capitol, S-128
Washington, District of Columbia 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Vice Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
The Capitol, S-146A
Washington, District of Columbia 20510

Dear Chairwoman Mikulski and Ranking Member Shelby:

As 2012 came to a close, the United States experienced one of the most widespread and extensive droughts since the 1950's. About 80 percent of agricultural land, or over 2,000 counties, across the country experienced drought conditions last year.

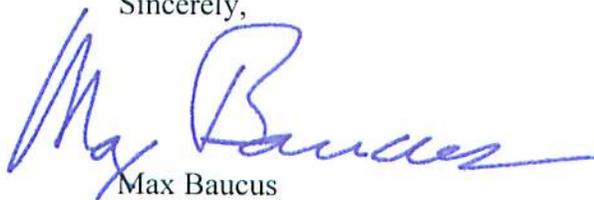
During the beginning of the drought last summer, the Senate came together to pass S. 3240, the Agriculture Reform, Food, and Jobs Act of 2012. The Senate's Farm Bill continued disaster assistance for producers whose livestock has been affected by high mortality rates caused by severe weather, disease, or other acts of nature. It also continues assistance for natural disasters that destroy grazing land.

The American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-240) extended most of the 2008 Farm Bill (Public Law 110-246) which expired in September 2012; however, it only authorized appropriations for the three livestock disaster programs: the Livestock Indemnity Program, the Livestock Forage Program, and the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, & Farm-raised Fish.

These livestock disaster programs expired in September 2011, leaving our livestock producers with no safety net. For over a year and a half, through one of the worst droughts in recent memory, our producers have been left to fend for themselves.

While the authority for these programs was extended in the American Taxpayer Relief Act Congress, funding was not. I request the Senate Appropriations Committee considering funding the livestock disaster programs for fiscal year 2012 and 2013 when the (Public Law 112-175) expires and Congress completes the 2013 Fiscal Year Appropriation bills.

Sincerely,



Max Baucus
U.S. Senator