

United States Senate

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June 23, 2011

Chief Dave White
Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20050

Dear Chief White:

I am writing to urge the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to extend the deadline for the 2011 Cover Crop Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Special Initiative. The current deadline for enrollment, June 24th, will exclude many Montana producers who could utilize this program, but cannot meet the deadline because of flooding across the state this year. I ask for your immediate consideration to extend this signup deadline until the high waters recede.

Rising water levels across the state of Montana have forced many residents out of their homes, and the resulting damage is wreaking havoc on the backbone of Montana's economy, agriculture.

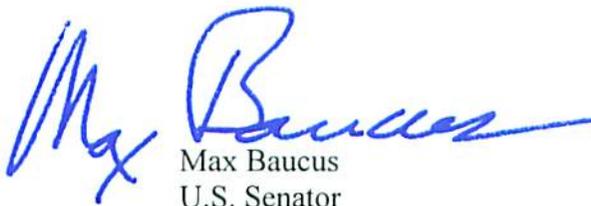
I have personally witnessed some of the devastating flooding across the state which has shut down major highways and displaced entire towns. As the snowpack in the mountains of Montana continues to melt and rain continues to fall, the situation will continue to cause hardship on citizens of the state.

The purpose of the Cover Crop EQIP Special Initiative is to provide financial and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers who face threats to their soil and other natural resources of the land. The program was designed for the very situation Montana finds itself in right now, and the initiative must be available to all of those who require its assistance.

I understand that applications are continually accepted throughout the year, but as it states on the NRCS website, "cutoff dates will be established to allow for ranking, prioritization, and selection of applications for funding." The deadline should be extended so that every eligible applicant can be fairly considered for governmental assistance during this trying time.

Thank you for your consideration of our request and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Max Baucus
U.S. Senator