



March 19, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, and Leader McCarthy:

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) applauds your efforts to mitigate the economic threats posed by the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic. As the largest segment of the U.S. agriculture industry, cattle production accounted for \$67 billion (18 percent) of the \$371 billion in total cash receipts from agricultural commodities in 2018. We are present in all fifty states on 729,000 farm operations that are the lifeblood of our rural economies.

The market disruptions caused by COVID-19 have not been limited to the financial markets. Commodities, in both the futures and spot markets, have also experienced significant shocks, which have led to depressed prices for both live and feeder cattle across the country. This price disturbance has created tremendous uncertainty in the cattle industry, and has come at a time when cattle producers are singularly focused on maintaining adequate supply to meat and food processors. As retail beef demand continues to soar in the wake of temporary restaurant closures, it is critical that cattle producers are empowered to maintain operational certainty as they work to ensure our nation's food security during this crisis.

To that end, as Congress considers additional measures to combat the effects of COVID-19, it is imperative that a future funding package include a meaningful safeguard for our nation's farm and ranch families during this public health emergency. To that end, NCBA respectfully requests that Phase III, or any future deal, provide for an increase in the U.S. Department of Agriculture Commodity Credit Corporation's (USDA - CCC) borrowing authority from \$30 to \$50 billion, fully fund the replenishment of CCC, and ensure that livestock producers will be eligible for assistance in this time of need.

NCBA has already been in contact with USDA leadership to ensure CCC funds can be disbursed appropriately and expeditiously through existing programs. We are confident in their ability to provide financial assistance to those cattlemen and women who need it most. Rest assured, we will continue that dialogue in furtherance of this effort if Congress will provide them the tools needed to carry out this mission.

America's cattle-producing families are no stranger to market disruptions or financial hardships. Through this pandemic, they are continuing to work long hours to provide others with a safe and nutritious protein which can be easily prepared at home. In making these policy requests, our hope is that Congress will

provide sufficient, one-time assistance to these producers so they can continue this vital work. NCBA remains ready and willing to assist you in bringing that objective to fruition.

Sincerely,



Ethan L. Lane  
Vice President, Government Affairs  
National Cattlemen's Beef Association

CC:

The Honorable Sonny Perdue, Secretary, USDA  
The Honorable Richard Shelby, Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations  
The Honorable Nita Lowey, Chair, House Committee on Appropriations  
The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Appropriations  
The Honorable Kay Granger, Ranking Member, House Committee on Appropriations  
The Honorable Pat Roberts, Chair, Senate Committee on Agriculture  
The Honorable Collin Peterson, Chair, House Committee on Agriculture  
The Honorable Debbie Stabenow, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Agriculture  
The Honorable Mike Conaway, Ranking Member, House Committee on Agriculture  
The Honorable John Hoeven, Chair, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture  
The Honorable Sanford D. Bishop, Chair, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture  
The Honorable Jeff Merkley, Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture  
The Honorable Jeff Fortenberry, Ranking Member, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture