



September 24, 2018

The Honorable Pat Roberts
Chairman
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
United States Senate
Washington, DC, 20510

The Honorable Michael Conaway
Chairman
House Agriculture Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Ranking Member
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
United States Senate
Washington, DC, 20510

The Honorable Collin Peterson
Ranking Member
House Agriculture Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Roberts, Ranking Member Stabenow, Chairman Conaway and Ranking Member Peterson,

On behalf of the National Corn Growers Association's (NCGA) 40,000 grower members and representing the interests of the broader community of 300,000 corn farmers, I am writing to express concern over the approaching farm bill expiration.

As you are well aware, the current farm bill expires on September 30. Press reports indicate the increasing likelihood that members of Congress will return to their districts without passing a new bill. We strongly urge you to finish the bill before this deadline.

A new farm bill would provide some much-needed certainty to farmers, and their bankers, during very uncertain times. USDA recently forecast 2018 net farm income to decline by 13 percent from 2017, to \$65.7 billion, half of the 2013 record of \$123 billion.

Farmers are also bearing the brunt of trade tariffs and retaliation. An NCGA-commissioned economic analysis found a 44 cent per bushel loss in the price of corn from the beginning of May, right before tariffs were announced, through July, when tariffs were implemented. This is a \$6.3 billion loss to corn farmers alone. In this environment, the support provided by the farm bill's Market Access Program (MAP) and Foreign Market Development (FMD) Program is increasingly important. Unfortunately, if the farm bill is not finished by September 30, FMD will lose baseline, cutting off vital market development resources.

It is unfortunate that it appears agriculture is being held hostage to politics. Farm bills have traditionally been bipartisan efforts and for a new bill to be passed this must again be the case. It is time to get past partisan politics and find the common ground needed to pass a bill. There is no good reason for delay.

A new farm bill, signed into law before the current farm bill expires, would go a long way to easing economic tensions across farm country and providing certainty to farmers facing challenging times. NCGA encourages your continued cooperation and stands ready to be of assistance to meet this goal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Skunes". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kevin" and last name "Skunes" clearly distinguishable.

Kevin Skunes
President
National Corn Growers Association