



March 31, 2020

Jovita Carranza  
Administrator  
U.S. Small Business Administration  
409 3rd St, SW  
Washington DC 20416

Dear Administrator Carranza:

On behalf of National Farmers Union's nearly 200,000 family farmer, rancher and rural members, we write to urge you to ensure that in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, farmers and ranchers are eligible for key Small Business Administration (SBA) programs, especially the Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL) program. Small farm and ranch businesses are experiencing intense market uncertainty and instability as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and must be able to easily and swiftly access programs that can support them.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was passed on March 27, 2020 to address the deleterious economic impacts resulting from the social distancing measures necessitated by the public health response to the pandemic. The CARES Act includes several provisions to support small businesses facing strong economic headwinds as a result of the current crisis.

We are deeply concerned that SBA is not currently considering farms, ranches, and most agricultural enterprises as eligible enterprises for the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program. Section 1110 of the CARES Act expands eligibility for the Economic Injury Disaster Loan program and creates an emergency grant program. NFU believes it was congressional intent to include in that expanded eligibility farms, ranches, and other agricultural enterprises.

It is our understanding that most "agricultural enterprises" are typically excluded from this program in order to avoid duplication of programs from other federal departments or agencies; in this case, to avoid duplication of disaster assistance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). However, the disaster relief programs offered by USDA are typically related to natural disasters, especially those related to weather events. There are not currently any disaster

programs available to farmers and ranchers from USDA made available in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We urge SBA to immediately clarify that agricultural enterprises are eligible for the EIDL program and the related emergency grant program. We also ask that SBA issue clear guidance regarding whether it views agricultural enterprises as eligible for other SBA programs included in the CARES Act, including the Paycheck Protection Program.

Farmers, ranchers, and rural communities are essential to the food and energy security of our nation. Small farm and ranch businesses are relying on SBA to help them stay afloat during this time of heightened market unpredictability and economic hardship. The families that run these businesses cannot afford the further unpredictability of uncertain SBA program access.

Thank you for considering our request. We look forward to hearing from SBA regarding this matter. And we stand ready to work with you to ensure family farmers and ranchers can access EIDL and other SBA programs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob Larew". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Rob Larew  
President

CC: Sonny Perdue, Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture