

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 31, 2002

Senator Tom Harkin
Chairman
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition,
and Forestry
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Richard Lugar
Ranking Member
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition,
and Forestry
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

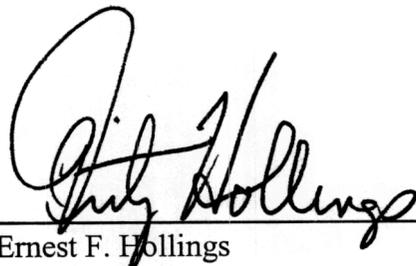
Dear Chairman Harkin and Senator Lugar:

It is our understanding that you are considering a bill to provide disaster assistance to our Nation's farmers and ranchers. We write to make you aware of the critical situation facing our South Carolina farmers.

South Carolina is experiencing the worst drought in 100 years. Since May of 1998, the Secretary of Agriculture has issued drought disaster designations effectively covering all of the State of South Carolina. Indications are that the drought will get worse.

South Carolina farmers have experienced severe losses in crop years 2001 and 2002 for the following crops: cotton, soybeans, wheat, and all feed grains except corn in 2001. For 2002, the corn crop is a total loss. Additionally for both years, our fruit and vegetable production, including our State's valuable peach crop, has been especially hard hit. Our livestock producers are suffering from loss of hay and pasture.

While welcome, a Secretarial drought disaster designation only permits South Carolina farmers to get low interest loans. After five years of drought, the last thing our farmers need is another loan to repay. We ask that you remember the plight of our South Carolina farmers in your deliberations and undertake to craft a bill that contains effective and equitable disaster relief for both program and non program crops and livestock.



Ernest F. Hollings

Sincerely,



Strom Thurmond