

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 24, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515

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

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515

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

Thank you for your tireless work and dedication to the American people during the ongoing public health crisis and time of economic hardship. As Congress continues to provide aid and assistance to those impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, we respectfully ask that funding for the USDA's Milk Donation Reimbursement Program be included in any future Coronavirus response legislative agreement.

The Milk Donation Reimbursement Program partners dairy producers with non-profit organizations that distribute food to low-income individuals. Through the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, Congress directed USDA to use the program to reduce food waste in the agriculture industry by providing reimbursements for these partnerships to cover expenses related to fluid dairy product donations. These reimbursements not only encourage dairy producers to donate excess product to foodbanks, homeless shelters, and other organizations that provide food for those in need, but they also help dairy producers survive exogenous shocks to their industry.

Since its onset, the COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented challenges to livestock, dairy, and specialty crop industries. Economists estimate that the dairy industry will suffer billions in losses, on track to have its worst year since 2015. Further compounding the problem is the disruption of our nation's food supply chains, which has drastically decreased demand for dairy products. Without the typical flow of dairy from farmers to restaurants, grocery stores, and schools, millions of gallons of milk have been dumped and gone to waste while thousands of Americans in need go hungry.

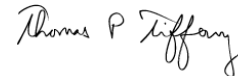
We urge you to include robust funding for the Milk Donation Reimbursement Program as it provides financial relief to farmers, prevents food product from going to waste, and offers desperately needed nutrition assistance to low-income individuals hit especially hard by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you again for your continuous efforts to address the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. We look forward to working with you on further legislation to help address the many challenges this pandemic created for millions of Americans.

Sincerely,



Mike Gallagher
Member of Congress



Tom Tiffany
Member of Congress



Glenn Grothman
Member of Congress



Bryan Steil
Member of Congress



F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr.
Member of Congress