

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

April 06, 2020

The Honorable Sonny Perdue  
Secretary  
United States Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20250

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

Dear Secretary Perdue and Administrator Carranza:

As your agencies work to respond to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and implement provisions included in the CARES Act, as well as any future stimulus bills signed into law, we request that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Small Business Administration (SBA) coordinate on assistance available to agricultural producers.

Hawaii's agricultural producers are small business owners who are in need of relief during these challenging times. While many of them may be familiar with USDA programs and have existing relationships with USDA officials in Hawaii, very few are familiar with navigating SBA programs. They have found the current guidance difficult to navigate, and are asking very simple questions: who is eligible for these programs, what is available to them, and how do they go about applying for relief. They are also concerned about how applying for programs through SBA might impact their eligibility for relief from USDA and vice versa. It would be of tremendous value to our producers if SBA could leverage the existing relationships that our producers have with USDA officials by working together to provide much needed guidance to our agricultural community.

As such, for the recently signed CARES Act and any additional stimulus package going forward, we request that SBA and USDA, both at the national level in Washington, DC as well as on the ground in Hawaii, coordinate regarding assistance made available to agricultural producers across both agencies. We also request that USDA and SBA jointly produce a single document that provides comprehensive guidance to producers on relief available to them. SBA should also provide their own clear guidance for farm businesses that may otherwise be unfamiliar with new and existing SBA programs, beyond what the agency has provided so far. Such guidance should similarly include information about whether these businesses are eligible for assistance, what assistance is available, and how these businesses can apply for assistance—including SBA's grant and loan programs. Limited guidance from SBA has caused confusion on the eligibility of agricultural businesses to receive assistance through the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) and the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), and we encourage SBA to align with Congressional intent within the CARES Act by making these programs available to our farmers and producers.

We understand that both of your agencies are hard at work providing assistance to many Americans across the country who have been impacted by COVID-19. Coordination and clear communication is of paramount importance, especially to those like our small farmers that are working night and day to provide food during these challenging times. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



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Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator



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Brian Schatz  
United States Senator



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Tulsi Gabbard  
United States Representative



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Ed Case  
United States Representative