



STATE OF MICHIGAN
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

GARLIN GILCHRIST II
LT. GOVERNOR

June 29, 2020

VIA EMAIL

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue,

I write on behalf of Michigan farmers who are once again facing challenges due to weather. From freezing temperatures to flooding caused by dam failures and high-water levels following periods of prolonged rainfall, many of our producers are finding themselves in the midst of yet another difficult growing season. As governor, I request that you expedite a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Disaster Designation for Michigan counties impacted by this severe weather, as well as make available any other possible assistance under the Federal Crop Insurance Program or other USDA programs to help Michigan's hard-working farmers recover.

This spring, Michigan experienced a significant period of freezing temperatures after many warm days, which negatively impacted several crops at a key time in their development. For example, we are hearing that some farms will have no cherries and that the overall crop could be 50 percent or less of a normal year. This is especially significant as Michigan is the largest tart cherry producing state in the country. And this is just one crop. Damage assessments are still coming in, but early reports show varying degrees of damage to other crops including, but potentially not limited to, peaches, wine grapes, apples, blueberries as well as row crops. In fact, the effects of the cold temperatures have prompted 20 counties to initiate disaster designations from the USDA already.

Michigan farmers have also been impacted by flooding caused by periods of heavy rainfall that led to dam failures and rising high water levels. Earlier this month, I asked the President to issue a Major Disaster Declaration for the five counties directly impacted by the dam failures, in efforts to help those impacted by the catastrophic flooding – including our farmers –rebuild and recover.

Thank you for considering my request for a USDA Disaster Designation and for all available assistance under the Federal Crop Insurance Program and other federal

programs to be made available for all Michigan counties impacted by severe weather this year. My team has been in close contact with Farm Service Agency staff in Michigan, and we look forward to continuing to work together to make sure our Michigan farmers have access to all available assistance during this difficult time. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide any additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Gretchen Whitmer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "G" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Gretchen Whitmer
Governor