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SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT

April 12, 2016

Brandon Willis, Administrator
Risk Management Agency
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Administrator Willis,

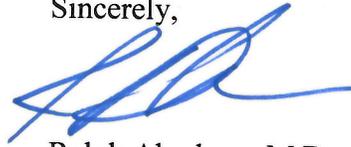
In March of this year Louisiana experienced historic flooding, to the extent that on March 13th President Obama issued a Major Disaster Declaration for the entire state. This flooding has been devastating for our farmers and producers, coming just as many were in the process of putting crops in the ground. While the waters have been slowly receding, continued unseasonably heavy rain has further threatened the ability of farmers and producers to recover from this disaster.

Farmers in the 5th District have until the April 20th final planting date to replant corn. Following the final planting date farmers may continue to plant during the 15-day late planting period until May 5th, but face diminishing crop insurance benefits. After May 5th farmers may replant a secondary crop such as soybeans, but the late planting date will have a serious impact on yields. Planting a secondary crop prior to May 5th, inside the primary crop's late planting period, will threaten crop insurance benefits.

Due to the extraordinary circumstances surrounding the unique timing and severity of the flooding, I request that you seriously consider abbreviating the penalty period for planting a secondary crop, from post-May 5th to post-April 28th. Permitting farmers to plant a secondary crop even just a week sooner will lead to greater yields and give our farms a better chance at recovering from the disastrous flooding we've experienced. Maximizing yield for any crop is always important, however, it is essential considering our current situation and the economic environment in which farmers operate.

As time is of the essence I have asked my staff to transmit this letter electronically, and hope to hear back from you soon about any steps you can take to help ensure our farmers and producers are able to successfully recover from this disaster.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. Abraham', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Ralph Abraham, M.D.
MEMBER OF CONGRESS