

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20515

January 15, 2009

The Honorable Edward Schafer  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We are writing to urge you to approve the State of Tennessee's request for an agricultural disaster declaration for Giles and Macon County in Tennessee to help farmers who have suffered crop and livestock losses as a result of persistent drought conditions. To date, USDA has designated 55 other counties across Tennessee due to the effects of the 2008 drought.

Governor Bredesen is requesting the declaration so that qualifying farmers would be able to apply for a variety of federal farm disaster programs – including supplemental farm revenue payments, livestock assistance and low-interest emergency loans – through their local USDA Farm Service Agency office.

In these counties, below normal rainfall, low water levels and a rainfall deficit carried over from last year have caused farmers to lose as much as 35-65 percent of this year's crop. Corn, soybeans, tobacco, hay, nursery, fruits and vegetables are among the major crops affected.

Thank you for your consideration of Tennessee's request for assistance. Please feel free to contact our offices should any additional information be needed.

Sincerely,



Lamar Alexander  
United States Senator



Bob Corker  
United States Senator



Bart Gordon  
Member of Congress



Lincoln Davis  
Member of Congress