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5TH DISTRICT, LOUISIANA

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1805

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The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Jefferson Dr. SW
Washington, D.C. 20024

Dear Secretary Perdue,

Over the last several days I have heard from many farmers in my district about a developing crisis with soybeans. Currently, many of my farmers who have grown late soybeans are being told by elevators that unless the soybeans were previously booked or are of uncommonly superior quality, they cannot and will not accept them. The practical effect of this policy is that farmers must choose between harvesting soybeans with no place to bring them, or letting them rot in the fields.

This crisis appears largely due to three factors: The rerouting of a significant volume of soybeans from the West Coast to the Mississippi River due to the recent trade disputes with China; the wetter weather resulting in higher percentage damaged soybeans than normal; and finally, to a record-setting harvest. Most significantly, this reroute of a significant volume of soybeans from the West Coast to the Mississippi has heavily taxed the existing infrastructure in the South-Central United States, leaving elevator operators and merchants with little to no space to take in any additional, locally grown crops.

I urge you in the strongest terms to utilize the significant resources of the U.S. Department of Agriculture to find a way to bring relief to these farmers, whose only role in this unfolding disaster was to raise a record-setting crop of soybeans at a time when unprecedented trade actions have caused widespread disruption in the agricultural economy. The USDA has been supportive of our farmers during these trade negotiations, and I am hopeful that it will continue to be.

Sincerely,

RALPH ABRAHAM, M.D.
Member of Congress