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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-2504**

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The Honorable Teresa Lasseter  
Administrator  
Farm Service Agency  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Ms. Lasseter,

Last weekend, areas of Missouri were devastated by severe winter weather, with significant ice accumulation wreaking havoc on many Show-Me State residents. The southern portion of the Fourth Congressional District, which I am privileged to represent, was especially hard hit. Downed trees and power lines have left thousands of citizens without power, have crippled farm fences, and have damaged personal and public property.

On January 15, 2007, the President declared a major disaster for several Missouri counties, including 11 in the Fourth District. I applaud the Administration's quick action regarding this winter weather disaster and remain hopeful that Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) officials will work swiftly with state and local leaders to ensure resources are made available to qualifying public entities. The people of Missouri are counting upon the government for quick and effective action.

The distribution of FEMA's public assistance grants is an important step for the people of Missouri, but the government must also look to other means to help individuals in need. While everyone is enduring hardship as a result of this storm, farmers are especially worried that the Administration's disaster declaration will not adequately address their pressing agricultural interests. After visiting with local leaders, farmers, and law enforcement officials, it is clear that dairy operations have halted due to a lack of power, that fences have been demolished, that debris has blocked access to farming operations or destroyed property, and that livestock have suffered from a lack of available hay and feed.

As damage assessments are reported to the Farm Service Agency State Executive Director, I expect requests will be made of you to authorize emergency low-interest loans for farmers who have experienced physical losses. When physical loss notifications are submitted to USDA, I urge you to immediately authorize these loans for qualifying Show-Me State farmers who have suffered physical losses.

Further, I encourage the Administration to re-examine its opposition to an emergency disaster appropriations bill on which Members of the House and Senate have been working over the past year. In light of recent winter storms and the ongoing problems associated with years of drought, I fully expect the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress to debate emergency disaster legislation in the days ahead.

With kindest regards, I am

Very truly yours,  


IKE SKELTON  
Member of Congress