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Fair Access to Agriculture Disaster Programs Act

Increasingly frequent and catastrophic floods, fires, freezes, and other disasters are threatening the long-term sustainability of farms across the country. To ensure producers can get back on their feet following natural disasters, the Farm Bill authorizes a number of safety net programs.

However, the current implementation of adjusted gross income (AGI) limitations disproportionately prohibits producers with high input costs from participating in U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs in a meaningful way.

- USDA currently prohibits payments to growers with combined farm and nonfarm AGI in excess of \$900,000 for most disaster, commodity, and conservation programs. **As a result, the vast majority of specialty crop growers, large and small, who produce higher value specialty crops are excluded from standing disaster programs.**

Current AGI limitations fail to account for high input costs or inflation, and leave producers growing, for example, strawberries in California, citrus in Florida, apples in North Carolina, or livestock in Texas without access to critical safety net programs in the wake of disasters.

So-called “specialty crops” are vital to human nutrition and to the agricultural economy—in fact, fruits, vegetables, nuts, and nursery crops, as well as culinary herbs and spices, medicinal plants, and floriculture and horticulture crops support over 220,000 farms across the U.S. and provide fresh, nutritious food for consumers worldwide. Given the wide variety of specialty crops and the unique methods utilized in their production, specialty crop producers generally have fewer effective risk management and relief options than growers of major field crops.

The “**Fair Access to Agriculture Disaster Programs Act**” aims to ensure that basic safety net programs for producers are readily available to full-time farmers to get back on their feet following natural disasters.

Specifically, this legislation would:

- Waive the adjusted gross income limitation for farms that derive 75% of their income from farming, ranching, or related farming practices for the following disaster programs:
 - Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP)
 - Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP)
 - Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)
 - Tree Assistance Program (TAP)
 - Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)

Endorsed by the Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance, Western Growers, California Farm Bureau, Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association, and American Honey Producers Association.

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