

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

April 2, 2020

The Honorable Jovita Carranza  
Administrator  
Small Business Administration  
409 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SW  
Washington, DC 20416

Dear Administrator Carranza:

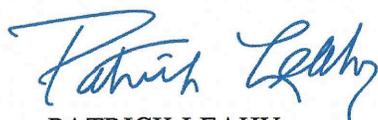
In rural states like Vermont, farms are not only a cornerstone of our economy, they are critical to our local food system, particularly during times of crisis. As all small businesses across the country continue to suffer significant losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we write to urge your immediate action to ensure that farmers are eligible for the emergency small business relief that Congress has provided.

The CARES Act (P.L. 116-136), passed unanimously by the Senate, by voice vote in the House of Representatives, and signed into law by the President days later on March 27, included over \$377 billion to assist small businesses as they face ongoing and unprecedented economic disruption. Included among the bill's critical provisions for small businesses, Section 1110 provides \$10 billion for the Small Business Administration (SBA) to create a new Economic Injury Emergency Grant Program for immediate advances to small businesses and private non-profits that apply for an Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL). Congress also expanded the eligibility criteria for EIDLs in order to serve all of those impacted by the ongoing crisis, including all businesses with 500 employees or fewer.

Unfortunately, in SBA's initial guidance, farmers appear to be among the only small business owners excluded from the EIDL program. Specifically, SBA has stated that, in order to be eligible, applicants must certify that they are "not an agricultural enterprise (e.g., farm), other than an aquaculture enterprise, agricultural cooperative, or nursery." Not only is this contrary to congressional intent and lacks any statutory basis in the CARES Act, it also threatens the survival of many farms and the rural economies that rely on them.

We urge you to immediately remedy this inequity and work swiftly to ensure that SBA implements Section 1110 of the CARES Act in a way consistent with clear congressional intent. Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



PATRICK LEAHY  
United States Senator



BERNARD SANDERS  
United States Senator



PETER WELCH  
United States Representative